

*Risto ruined everything*  
**Exposing the Greek myth**



**By Risto Stefov**

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***Risto Stefov***



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[rstefov@hotmail.com](mailto:rstefov@hotmail.com)

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## Table of Contents

<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Macedonia is NOT Greece .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>What the Greeks don't like to talk about!.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>About the Modern Greek language.....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>How did Macedonia become Greek?.....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>My personal experience with Greeks in my village back in Greece .....</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>My personal experience with Greeks in Canada .....</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Facts the Greeks don't want you to know!.....</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>Who are the Greeks .....</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>DO THE SO CALLED SLAVS HAVE MACEDONIAN</b>	
<b>ROOTS?.....</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>Exposing the Greek myth.....</b>	<b>61</b>
<b>Who were the Ancient People that once lived in today's Greece</b>	
<b>and Macedonia? .....</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>Who were the ancient Macedonians?.....</b>	<b>72</b>
<b>Who are the Modern People that live in Macedonia and Greece?</b>	
<b>.....</b>	<b>78</b>
<b>Nationalism in the Balkans .....</b>	<b>84</b>
<b>The Nationalities of the Lower Balkans.....</b>	<b>85</b>
<b>The Political Agenda.....</b>	<b>87</b>
<b>Origins of the modern people in the southern Balkans.....</b>	<b>93</b>
<b>The Modern Dilemma.....</b>	<b>96</b>
<b>Denationalizing the Macedonians in Greece .....</b>	<b>98</b>

## Introduction

I apologize to the decent Greeks who may find my writing and this book offensive. My goal here is NOT to insult the Greeks or to create tension between the Macedonian and Greek people, but to highlight a problem that exists within the Greek state and its institutions. As long as the Greek state and its influencers deny the existence of the Macedonian people as Macedonians with rights and privileges, I will continue to publish these kinds of articles and books.

Today, there is no ethnic Macedonian from Greece or from anywhere in the world for that matter, who does not know what “Greece” and “Hellenism” mean for the Macedonian people. Macedonians know exactly how Greece and how the Greeks were created. One does not need to look further than one’s own village or extended family to see the process of “Hellenization” in action.

I grew up in Greece with children whose relatives were Macedonians, today these same children as adults swear that they are Greeks related to the “ancient Greeks”.

Macedonians know exactly how Greece and the Greeks were created and have no problem with that. The problem is that while “Greeks” are created from Macedonians and from other ethnicities by assimilation, the Macedonians are being robbed of their heritage and identity. Greeks see no problem with Macedonians voluntarily registering or being forced to accept an artificially imposed Greek identity, but they will not accept the fact that under that veneer they are Macedonians. And these same Greeks insist that Macedonians don’t exist...

Besides being robbed of their lands the Macedonians from Greece are denied their identity, culture, language, heritage, and all other basic human rights. These are some of the conditions under which Macedonians live in Greece and now all around the world, including in the Republic of Macedonia.

To those numerous Greeks who have written me to ask “Why are you still doing this?”, referring to why I continue to write articles attacking the Greek identity, I say the following:

For almost a century, we Macedonians have been talking to you Greeks, defending our Macedonian identity and pleading our cases before your governments and influential people pleading with them to equalize the conditions for Macedonians in Greece, but so far we have seen no progress. In fact, we continue to see the same old denials and the same old attacks on Macedonians and on the Macedonian identity. Therefore, once again, I must ask Greece to “recognize the Macedonian identity in Greece and everywhere in the world, including in the Republic of Macedonia!” Give the Macedonians in Greece their rights to be Macedonians and to speak their native Macedonian language!

But, over and over again, all we hear from the Greeks is the same old story: “There is no such thing as Macedonians!” You try to explain our existence by calling us “Paleovulgars” (ancient Bulgarians), “Bulgarians”, “Slavs”, “Skopjeans”, “Fyromians”, “Gypsies”, “Tito’s creation”, etc., etc.

In other words, every time Macedonians demand their rights, including the right not to be insulted on social media, you Greeks ignore us and continue business as usual, insisting that Macedonians do not exist and treating us like second-class citizens without even the slightest basic human rights.

So, the real question is “Why are YOU still doing this?”

# **Macedonia is NOT Greece**

Macedonia is neither Greece nor Greek. Macedonia is Macedonia and belongs only to the Macedonian people. Macedonia, according to Western history books, has existed since 800 BC and it will remain this way forever. So, since Macedonia belongs to the Macedonians then why do some Greeks insist that “Macedonia is Greece” or “Macedonia is Greek”? Are they saying this to reinforce their lies or to convince themselves?

If these modern Greeks are so sure that Macedonia is Greek why do they have to echo it and reinforce it at every opportunity? Why is there such a need? Is it because they feel insecure or are they trying to hide the idea that Macedonia never belonged to them?

How does Macedonia belong to Greece? Wasn't Greece just created for the first time in 1832? And wasn't the word Greece uttered for the first time in the 16<sup>th</sup> century?

Greece is a modern creation, created for the first time in the 19<sup>th</sup> century by mother England and by France and Russia while Macedonia has existed since 800 BC.

Why was Greece created during the 19<sup>th</sup> century you ask?

Greece was created by the above-mentioned Western European Powers for two primary reasons.

1. To convince the world that the Western Europeans were a “superior” and “civilized” race that had acquired their civilization from a race of white people that lived in the European Balkan Peninsula and therefore deserved to rule the world and colonize Africa and Asia and to make it easier for their populations to justify slavery.

2. None of the Western European Powers wanted a large state to be formed in the Balkans when the Ottoman power finally relinquished its

hold of the region. In other words, the Western European powers made sure that the Balkans would be divided up into equal sized small countries and polarized (made different) so that they would fight one another and depend on their Great Power benefactor to support them. That way they would always fight and no country could dominate the others. The breakup of the Ottoman Empire in the Balkans resulted in the creation of Greece, Serbia, Bulgaria and later Albania and, since their creation, they have been fighting one other in a never-ending conflict.

The Western European Great Powers did not want Macedonia to resurface and they did everything in their power to extinguish everything that was Macedonian and to erase the Macedonian nation.

Macedonia is a historical entity that existed as a state since it was consolidated by the Macedonian King Philip II just before he died in 336 BC, which extended from the Black to the Adriatic Seas and from the Mediterranean Sea to the Danube River. This region was called Macedonia until the 18<sup>th</sup> century until history was rewritten to fit the narrative of the Western European Great Powers and their projects.

Now about the Greeks being Greek!

The modern Greeks have nothing to do with the ancient city states to whom the European civilization is attributed or with the ancient Macedonians. The modern Greeks, however, have very much to do with their existence on the lands where Greece is now located. The raw material from creating modern Greece came from the indigenous people living in the region, consisting mainly of Albanians, Vlachs, Turks, Macedonians and all others who lived on those lands.

When the Great Power project was initiated to show that the world's civilization began in Europe, the people living in today's Greece became victims of a perpetrated scam. That scam has obviously taken root because today they all think they are Greeks, descendants of the so-called "ancient Greeks" who never existed in history before the 18<sup>th</sup>

century. However, those Greeks who know their real history would know that no Greeks existed before 1821 and those who fought the Ottomans in the 1800's fought to liberate the Balkans and create a large Christian state, not Greece. Greece, and the idea of Greeks, was imposed on them by mother England, France and Russia also mostly by Germany, and like the way they learned their fake Greek history they also learned their fake Greek language, not from their mothers but in school.

And guess what that state would have been called if the Balkan people freed it themselves from the Ottomans without Great Power interference? It would have been called Macedonia of course! It would have taken its rightful place where Philip II's Macedonia once existed. But to make sure that would never happen the Western European Great Powers made sure that Macedonia was brutally invaded, occupied and in 1913 partitioned by Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria and later Albania. After which time Greece made sure that everything Macedonian was erased (culture, language, toponymia, etc).

And, while we Macedonians fight for our existence there are ignorant fake Greeks today on social media who, with their taunts and promotion of falsehoods, take pleasure in tormenting the Macedonians.

## **What the Greeks don't like to talk about!**

The modern Greeks never miss an opportunity to drag us Macedonians back to ancient times to teach us the same old myth that the ancient Macedonians were Greek. However, they know very well, or should know, that there are no such things as Ancient Greece and ancient Greeks because the terms Greece and Greeks were not invented until the 16<sup>th</sup> century AD. There were however, according to classical history invented by the west, independent City States each with its own culture and ruler.

But why do the Greeks like to drag us back to ancient history?

For two main reasons:

1. No one in the world really cares what happened over two thousand years ago and those who do care about that have nothing better to do. By taking us back to ancient times the Greeks trivialize the Macedonian people's concerns and dispute with them and make the Macedonians look ridiculous arguing about ancient history.

2. The Macedonian dispute with Greece or I should say the Greek dispute with the Macedonian people is not about ancient history but about what the Greeks have been doing to the Macedonian people since 1878 when the Western European Powers, ruled by monarchies, decided that there would be no Macedonia in the Balkans and that Macedonia would be "given" to Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria at some future time.

Then when the time came for Macedonia to be "gifted" to Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria, what did these states do? They brutally attacked the Macedonian people, driving out and exiling all those who refused to forcefully become Greeks, Serbians or Bulgarians.

The Macedonian people who fell under Greek control were further abused; many were killed, beaten and imprisoned. They were forced to

speak only Greek and their first and last names were changed to sound Greek. All the Macedonian toponyms were erased and replaced with Greek names. This included names of villages, cities, mountains, lakes, rivers, etc. On top of that the Greeks imported indigenous populations from Bulgaria and over a million from Turkey; the settlers and colonists imported from Turkey were NOT Greeks but Christian Turks. These people too were victims of Greek aggression and suffered the same fate as the Macedonians being uprooted from their native lands and forced to speak Greek. Over 600,000 of them were deposited on Macedonian soil.

Initially the Greek government gave the Turkish settlers lands belonging to the exiled Macedonians. Later, under a couple more land reforms, more Macedonian lands were given to them forcing Macedonian families into bankruptcy. Not able to survive, many Macedonians were forced to leave and go abroad to places like the USA, Canada and Australia. Life for the Macedonian people living in Greece after 1913, after Macedonia was brutally invaded, occupied and partitioned became a living hell.

The Christian Turks deposited in Greek occupied Macedonia were assimilated into the Greek fold and eventually became staunch Greeks. Now the Greeks claim that they are the “genuine” Macedonians; descendents of the ancient Macedonians.

Now let us have a look at “who those Greeks were who occupied Macedonia and abused (and still abuse) the Macedonian people”?

Were they the descendents of the ancient Greeks? Were they the descendents of the ancient Macedonians as they claim to be?

NO!

These so-called Greeks of today were the same people; Albanians, Vlachs, Turks, Macedonians, etc., who lived on those lands when Greece was first created in the early 1800s when they were “convinced”

by the Greek authorities and their patrons, the English, French, Russians but mostly by the Germans, that they were indeed the Greeks who had descended from the ancients and that they were the rightful heirs not only of the Peloponnesus, Thessaly and Epirus but also Macedonia and Thrace. In other words, the people who now call themselves “Greeks” were not Greeks at all before modern Greece was created. So, how then can they claim to be not only “Greeks descended from the ancient City States” but also “Macedonians descended from the ancient Macedonians?”

So, my Greek friends why don't you talk to us about your recent history and tell the truth about who you really are?

Why not tell us how Greek your great grandparents were?

Why don't you tell us why your recent ancestors called themselves Romei not Greeks and spoke Albanian, Vlach, Turkish and Macedonian but not Greek?

Why not tell us why your recent ancestors needed interpreters to speak with one another in your first parliament, in your first capital Naphplion when Greece was first created?

Why not talk about the beatings, the castor oil, the imprisonments, the banning of minority languages and cultures in Greece?

Why not tell us about the atrocities the Greeks committed against the Macedonian and Albanian minorities in Greece during Macedonia's occupation by Greece, the Metaxas years and during and after the so-called Greek Civil War?

Why not talk about the 28,000 children the Greek state exiled after 1948 and to this day those who were Macedonians are not allowed to return to their homes in Greece?

These are the kinds of topics that concern the Macedonian people about which they would like to talk to you.

## About the Modern Greek language

I have read posts from some Greeks ridiculing the Macedonians for not being able to read letters of the so-called “Greek” language, found on various ancient Macedonian stone artifacts.

There are two parts to the Modern Greek language:

1. The written part, and by that I mean the letters of the Modern Greek alphabet. The so-called Greek alphabet of today is not Greek at all; it is an adaptation of the ancient Phoenician alphabet which the ancient City States used. The Greeks took these letters from the Patriarchate church in Istanbul which was a Byzantine church, not a Greek church. Greece has its own church which is independent of the Patriarchate church in Istanbul.

2. The spoken part, and by that I mean the Demotiki language the Greeks speak today, was adopted by the Greeks just after Greece was created for the first time in 1832. The Demotiki was based on the Macedonian Koine language. The Greeks also adopted the Catharevous language, a dead Attic language, which they tried to resurrect to replace the Demotiki but were unsuccessful.

And why did the Greeks try to replace the Demotiki? Because it was not pure; it contained Macedonian words.

But before I talk about the Greek languages let me remind the Greeks, the ones who don't know their real history, of some facts. When Greece was first created it had no national language. How could it? There were no Greeks living in Greece at that time. Greece was just created for the first time out of the non-Greek people who spoke Albanian, Vlach, Turkish and Macedonian.

But because the majority of the first Greeks were Albanians, Greece contemplated using the Albanian language as its national language. And why shouldn't it? The majority of its people spoke Albanian. At the

time Athens was a predominantly Albanian village of about five thousand residents. Why should the national language not be Albanian? After all, the Greeks adopted the fustanella which was Albanian for their national military uniform, which is still worn to this day in some circles in Greece.

However, even though the people of the newly established Greek Kingdom were of many different ethnicities, each with a unique language and culture, the Great Powers instilled upon them the idea that they were the descendents of the ancient people who lived in that region over two millennia ago.

And so, after nearly a decade of contemplation as to which language to use, Greek authorities finally decided to adopt the Koine language as the literary language of their new nation. They disregarded all vibrant and living peoples' languages in favour of the ancient Koine, which they took from the Phanariots of Istanbul.

The Phanariots were a group of Christians, recruited from all the Balkan ethnicities, mostly from the wealthy classes of Christian families. Their base was located in the "Phanar" or lighthouse district of Istanbul. These people at the time worked for the Ottoman administration and conducted diplomacy, ran Ottoman ships, ran banks and served as ambassadors for the Ottoman Empire. They were also in charge of collecting taxes from the Christian Millet for the Ottomans. In other words, the Phanariots did all the jobs that Ottoman Muslims were not allowed to do inside and outside of the Ottoman Empire.

The Koine language was an old language used by the Balkan people since ancient times. It was used by the Macedonian court in Pella slightly before Philip II's time and later by Alexander the Great to communicate with outsiders from the various City States. Initially Koine was the language of intellectuals but some time later it became the language of administration and trade.

In Macedonia, Koine was strictly the language of the educated and was used by the court administrators and the international merchants. By the time Koine arrived in Macedonia it was already the “lingua franca” of administration and commerce in the Eastern Mediterranean world.

Koine in those days was like English is today. In Europe, for example, countries have their own languages which they use to communicate at home, but internationally they use English to communicate with other countries.

Alexander the Great was the first to take Koine out of the Mediterranean world to Asia, Africa and other worlds he conquered.

The real heroes for Koine’s success, however, were Alexander’s successors the Antigonids, Seleucids and the Ptolemies. It is well-known that the Ptolemies not only insisted on using Koine but they refused to learn any other language; not even the languages of those people they ruled.

Supported by the Macedonian Ptolemies the Koine language truly matured in Alexandria in Egypt where it was used as the official language in the Alexandrian library and museum. Even the bible was translated from Hebrew to Koine.

Cleopatra VII was the only Macedonian sovereign from the Ptolemaic dynasty who broke the Ptolemaic rule and learned several languages including Egyptian.

The Koine language was so deeply rooted in the old Macedonian empires that even after they were conquered by the Romans it continued to flourish. Koine was spoken by Roman intellectuals even in Rome. Almost all ancient literary works were written in Koine.

Let’s not forget that throughout the Macedonian and Roman periods Koine, in spite of its popularity with the educated and elite, remained a

language of administration and commerce. Koine was never a language of the common people.

After the Roman Empire split into East and West, Koine again resurfaced and replaced Latin as the administrative language of the Eastern Roman (Byzantine) Empire.

Koine remained active and served the administration and commerce of the Byzantine world for over a millennium.

Interestingly, Koine also became the administrative and commercial language of the Christians in the Ottoman Empire and continued to exist in the Patriarchate Church in Istanbul in a commercial and administrative capacity among the Christians during Ottoman rule as it had during Byzantine rule.

Let me also remind the Greeks that in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, during the Ottoman decline, the Phanariots were much in favour of toppling the Ottoman administration. The idea was to overthrow the Ottoman Sultan and his Muslim rule and replace it with Christian rule. Unfortunately the Great Powers did not favour that idea and it failed. After that, the Phanariots worked closely with the Great Powers to establish the Greek Kingdom.

For those Greeks who insist that Greeks today speak the same language as the Ancient City States, here are some simple and common everyday words in English, Ancient Attic and Modern Koine;

English	Catharevousa (Ancient Attic)	Dimotiki (Koine)
Horse	Ipos	Alogo
Donkey	Onos	Gaidaros
Hen	Ornitha	Kota
Goat	Ega	Gida (Katsika)
Kid (baby goat)	Erifi	Katsiki
Bread	Artos	Psomi

Do they sound like they are the same?

Let it be known to all Greeks that the Koine language belongs to all the Eastern Mediterranean people; not just to modern Greece.

Modern Greece took the Koine language for itself, which by rights belongs to all the Eastern Mediterranean people... and now calls it Greek.

Just because Greece adopted Koine as the literary language for its modern nation, does not make it Greek. Koine evolved as the language of administration and commerce in the entire Eastern Mediterranean and as such belongs to all the people in the Eastern Mediterranean.

If anyone should claim credit for Koine's effectiveness and long survival it should be the ancient Macedonians, the Ptolemais, who insisted on using it and enriching it.

The reason why modern Greeks today can read texts found on ancient Macedonian stone artifacts is because they learned the Koine language in school, just like I learned the English language in school and now can read and write in English. That, however, does not make me English. By the same reasoning the modern Greeks and recent descendants of Albanians, Vlachs, Turks and Macedonians have nothing to do with the ancient City States and ancient Macedonia. They speak their Greek language and can read and write because they learned all that in school.

## **How did Macedonia become Greek?**

Today's Greeks love to claim "Macedonia is Greek" but have they thought for a moment and do they know how Macedonia became Greek?

Before I get into the subject of how Macedonia, or part of it, became Greek I want to mention some facts.

1. The country. There never was a Greece before the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. In fact, according to Greece, its first uprising to overthrow the Ottoman Empire from its region began on March 25, 1821. However Greece, land wise, did not become the Greece it evolved to be today until 1947. The first part of Greece to be liberated from the Ottomans, with Great Power help, was the region today called the Peloponnesus. At that time the Peloponnesus was called Morea which in Macedonian means sea. Not only were the people living in today's Peloponnesus not Greeks but the entire toponymia (especially in the Peloponnesus) had Macedonian names. After Jakob Philipp Fallmerayer, a German Tyrolean traveler, journalist, politician and historian, exposed the Macedonian names in the Peloponnesus, the Greek government gave the toponyms Greek sounding names, some from the ancient period. The Kingdom of Greece was created for the first time in the Peloponnesus in 1832. More chunks of territory were liberated from the Ottomans between 1832 and 1913 and added to Greece. This included Thessaly, Epirus, Macedonia, Crete and part of Thrace. More of Thrace was added to Greece in 1919. Finally, the Dodecanese islands, belonging to Italy, were given to Greece in 1947. All this was done through war and conquest and with the blessing of the Great Powers.

2. The people. The people who today call themselves Greek were not Greeks at all nor did they speak Greek before the 1800's. These people called themselves Romai (Romans) and wanted to create a Christian state to incorporate all the Balkan people irrespective of their ethnic identity. Unfortunately the Great Powers did not want a single Christian state in the Balkans. They preferred to have equal sized, multiple states

with varying artificial nationalities. The first state to be created in the Balkans out of the remnants of the crumbling Ottoman Empire was modern Greece. The idea that the people living in this region were Greeks was introduced to them by the Great Powers, Greece's patrons England, France and Russia and implemented inside Greece by Germany. The raw material from which the modern Greeks were created came from the Albanians, the Vlachs, the Turks and the Macedonians who lived in that region at the time. Except for the indigenous Macedonians (which at the time were identified as Slavs) all other ethnicities living in the Peloponnesus, including some Slavs, came from outside of that region during the 11<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> century AD. They settled there with permission from the Byzantine Emperors. The Latins who came to that region later during the crusades, settled on the today's Greek islands. Over time, all of these ethnic groups were either expelled or assimilated and turned into Greeks, many by force.

3. The lands. Over time Greece renamed the entire toponymia on its territory so that every bit of Greece would sound Greek. And to make claims to ancient lands, the Greeks the toponyms ancient names. Even the peoples' names were changed to sound Greek. Then after depositing over one million Christian Turks (six hundred thousand were deposited in Macedonia), in 1928 Greece declared that the population living in Greece was 100% homogenous Greek consisting of 98% pure Greeks and 2% Muslim Greeks.

Macedonia started becoming Greek, Serbian and Bulgarian after 1878 when the Western European Powers decided there would be NO Macedonia in the Balkans. This was after the Russo-Turkish war ended, after the part of Macedonia that was liberated from the Ottomans was given back to the Ottomans by the Western Great Powers. After that it was open season on Macedonian territories and the Greeks, Serbians and Bulgarians wasted no time and invaded Macedonia with their churches and schools in an attempt to turn Macedonians into Greeks, Serbians and Bulgarians by force.

The Macedonians had their massive uprising in 1903 but were unable to drive the Ottomans out without outside help. No outside powers came to Macedonia's assistance. As a result, both the Ottomans and the Macedonians were weakened and became easy prey for Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria, who simultaneously attacked and invaded Macedonia in 1912 and partitioned it for themselves in 1913.

It did not take long for Greece to attack the Macedonian people forcing them to either declare themselves Greek or leave.

What people in the world and those Greeks who troll the social media don't know is that this was a perpetrated genocidal act to finally eradicate the Macedonian people from Greece. Unfortunately this not only brought disastrous changes to the Macedonian ethnic composition in Greece but it was never recognized or acknowledged by the world community as a genocide and nothing was done to punish the perpetrators or to learn lessons from it.

In fact even many Macedonians do not know the truth about the genocide that took place against the Macedonian people in Greece during these times because there were no Macedonian authorities to investigate or record these genocidal acts and the ethnic cleansing.

The descendants of those Greeks who perpetrated these acts say that Macedonians do not exist so how could their predecessors have committed such acts? How could people that don't exist experience genocide? But the fact remains that people died and were expelled from their homes during those wars regardless of what these Greeks say. This resulted in thousands of Macedonians being murdered, tortured and expelled because they were Macedonian. The situation was so bad that the Carnegie Endowment had to dispatch a Commission on a fact finding mission to find out what had happened. But by the time the Commission concluded its report World War One had started and everything that happened in Macedonia was set aside and literally forgotten.

To give you another example, before that, another genocidal atrocity was committed by the newly created Greeks against the Macedonian people while Macedonia was still under Ottoman occupation. This was when Karavangelis, the Greek Bishop of Kostur, ordered the massacre of the entire village Zagoricheni just because a few adults from that village had refused to turn into Greeks.

All the people of Zagoricheni that the Greeks could lay their hands on were massacred to the last person, including the unborn children inside the wombs of pregnant women. And even though this massacre, which qualifies to be called “collective punishment”, was publicized, it was forgotten and nothing was done to punish the perpetrators.

And this is how Macedonia became Greek!

## **My personal experience with Greeks in my village back in Greece**

I was born in a small village in the Greek part of occupied Macedonia. Both my parents belonged to Partisan families (fought on the losing side of the Greek Civil War). I was fortunate to be born after the Greek Civil War ended, avoiding the suffering others born before me had experienced. My father was one of those unlucky people who was caught by the Greek authorities and sent to prison in a concentration camp to prevent him from joining the Partisans. He was sent to prison in 1947 when he was twenty years old and was released in 1952, three years after the war had ended.

To stop the Partisans from recruiting new fighters, the Greek government arrested basically every man, capable of carrying a gun, who was not loyal to the Greek government or was affiliated with the Partisan movement and sent them to the dry Greek island prison camps.

My mother was also one of those unlucky people who qualified to be evacuated from the war zone in 1948 under the save the children program, but had no choice but to remain behind alone to look after her bedridden ailing mother who died before the Greek Civil War ended. My mother stayed with relatives until the war was concluded in August 1949.

When they were married my parents had nothing and had to rebuild their lives from scratch. But worse than that, both of my parents were isolated and blamed for the deaths, suffering and destruction the Partisans had committed because their families participated in the conflict. His family being on the losing side of the Greek Civil War and himself being imprisoned, my father was isolated by his neighbours and fellow villagers. They avoided him because he was viewed as a criminal (even though he had committed no crimes). My father was especially tormented by the Greek authorities. He was under house arrest for a year and was not allowed to go beyond the village limits. He was also required to report to the police initially every day and later once a week.

Life was great for me however, I was a happy child even though I had to work hard. Everyone had to work hard, but being born under these conditions this kind of life was normal for me and for everyone. The village was quiet and peaceful. The food was natural, organic, nutritious and wholesome. Our water, which came from a spring, was pure and clean.

Because I was born in that situation that kind of life was normal for me. It was normal to be suspicious of everyone, especially strangers, not to ask questions, not to speak Macedonian in public and to be very cautious and fearful of authority, especially the Greek police.

I remember one day a stranger arrived in the village and asked the people to gather around him. After many did he began to speak incoherently in Greek. He went on and on for many hours. I could hear people whispering: “When is he going to stop talking? I want to go and do my chores...” People were afraid to leave because they did not know who he was and were afraid to ask him. About six hours later he got tired and stopped. Everyone left. Later we found out that he was a mental patient...

Everyone knew everyone else in the village and after some time had passed our neighbours began to accept my parents and they often got together to do chores and socialize. There was very little time for play when I was growing up because most of the children in the village worked all the time, also there were not many toys to play with. Most of my toys from my early years were rusty old sardine cans and used bullet shells left over from the wars.

I began to attend Greek school at age six which I enjoyed and, other than the teacher punishing us for every little infraction, school life was great for me. Our teacher used a long birch twig and hit us on the head if we did not pay attention, or strapped us on our open hands for more serious infractions, like not having done our homework or being caught speaking Macedonian in the yard.

We were taught to speak, read and write Greek, rudimentary arithmetic, geography and our pride and joy, Greek history, of course. The teacher taught us that Greece was a democratic country, the best country in the world. There was no better life anywhere in the world than in Greece. The teacher taught us about our glorious ancient Greek heritage and about the Greek heroes who freed Greece and the Greek province of Macedonia from the dreadful Ottomans and from the terrible Bulgarians. Our teacher taught us Greek patriotic songs which we sang out loud and with much pride. I took those songs home and sang them with pride every day in front of my parents while emphasizing my Greek-ness and yelling “Greek I was born and Greek I shall die!” Of course I did not know that we were Macedonians and not Greeks and that that part of our country had been forcefully invaded and occupied by Greece. Neither did I know our true history, the genocides the Greeks committed against us or about our mass evictions from our homeland. All I knew was what I was taught and all I was taught, it turned out, was Greek fiction. And as it also turned out, I found out that I was one of those so-called “terrible Bulgarians” our teacher was talking about... The Greeks never referred to us as Macedonians, they always called us dirty Bulgarians, a derogatory term meant to denigrate us and hurt our feelings.

One day when my parents had had enough of my shenanigans and insults, they decided to tell me the truth about who we are... that we are not Greeks but Macedonians. My mother spoke first. My father was reluctant to say anything and said that I was too young to keep a secret and that I would unwittingly betray my parents. My mother however, made me swear that I would keep this secret to myself. All she told me at the time was that we were not Greeks and those heroes that I admired so much and sing about were nothing more than cut-throat thugs who killed many of our people, including relatives on both sides of our family... Later I found out we were Macedonians.

At the time my mother spoke to me I knew nothing... Not that we were Macedonians, not that there were Macedonian uprisings, not that

Macedonia was invaded, occupied and partitioned... and not even that there was a so-called Greek Civil War. In fact the Greeks called this war a “bandit war” and it was not classified as a civil war in Greece until the 1970’s, after we had left Greece. While living in Greece I was told we were not supposed to talk about this war... ever.

In school and in public the Republic of Macedonia was called Southern Serbia and we were taught that the people living in Northern Greece (Greek occupied Macedonia) were Greeks and those living in the Southern Serbian (Serbian occupied Macedonia) were Serbians.

Before my mother told me who we were I believed everything our teacher taught us. I believed that my mother was Greek and that my uncles, my mother’s two brothers, who had left her village during the Greek Civil War and now lived in Southern Serbia (now the Republic of Macedonia), were Serbian. That’s what I was told...and that’s what I believed before I found out that we were Macedonians.

I kept what I had found out a secret and continued my Greek education but did things with less enthusiasm and graduated from public school.

After I graduated from grade six I did not bother to apply for higher education because my father had told me that the Greeks would never allow me to go to higher education. Later I was told that even if I had applied the chances of someone like me, being a Macedonian and belonging to a family that had fought on the wrong (losing) side of the Greek Civil War, had no chance of being accepted into higher education.

Life in the village for me was wonderful and I very much enjoyed every bit of it, especially going to the mountains, tending our livestock and exploring new places further and further away from home. I did not have many friends because the people kept leaving the village and emigrating mostly to Canada, the USA and Australia. When I was born the village had over 60 residents and by the time we left only a few families remained.

After finishing grade six I took over some of my father's responsibilities, looking after the farm and especially the sheep. At age 12 I became a full time shepherd, looking after the entire flock 24 hours a day, taking the sheep to graze in the mountains in the summer and, after my father left for Canada, milking them twice daily with my mother and sister. I did this for over a year.

From very young we had learned to be productive and responsible and took our tasks very seriously because our lives depended on them. It was hard work, looking after the sheep day and night, grazing during the night and resting during the day with only a few hours of sleep. We milked the sheep twice a day, very early in the morning and in the evening. Sleep for all of us in the summer was a luxury.

I didn't know it then but life for us Macedonians in Greece was horrible. I had no idea what was festering in people's hearts and souls until I was much older and living in Canada.

We left our home and village in Greece, not because we didn't like it there or were economically poor, we left because we realized there was no hope of advancement for people like us, especially for Macedonian Partisan families.

## **My personal experience with Greeks in Canada**

I was thirteen years old when we left our village and immigrated to Canada. I didn't have much contact with the Greeks until much later in life. But when my family encountered Greeks even in Canada, the story was the same; the Greeks insisted that "Macedonians did not exist".

Many Macedonians from Greece were afraid to disclose their Macedonian ethnic identity for fear that their relatives back in Greece would be harmed.

Macedonians that immigrated to Canada, the USA and Australia at the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century organized village associations that assisted fellow immigrants in adjusting to their new countries. As post-Greek Civil War immigration accelerated, these village associations became a haven for new immigrants and their membership grew. Encouraged by their newfound freedoms, many of the new émigrés enjoyed their Macedonian culture and language in the Diaspora.

This was perceived as a threat to Greek influence both at home and abroad. As the associations grew in strength so did their threat to the Greek chokehold. To counter this, with help from the Greek Embassies and Consulates, pro-Greek factions began to infiltrate the Macedonian associations. The weaker associations were overpowered and rendered ineffective. Those that resisted managed to survive and preserve their unique Macedonian identity. For the ones that the Greeks could not subdue, parallel and competing pro-Greek associations were formed. The day a Macedonian association held an event, the pro-Greek association held a similar event, to divide the people.

Macedonians wishing to participate in events and prone to blackmail were discouraged from joining the Macedonian organizations and encouraged to join the pro-Greek ones. To this day many Macedonians will not go to any of the events fearing retribution from both the Greeks if they went to Macedonian events or fearing disappointment and disgust from the Macedonians if they went to a pro-Greek event. This is

precisely why the Macedonian community in the Diaspora has become a silent community. This suits the Greeks perfectly and leaves the Macedonians frustrated and disappointed.

The most anti-Macedonian organization to surface from all the Greek associations is the Pan Macedonian Association which aims to not only divide the Macedonian Nation but also destroy everything that is Macedonian. To this day this organization preys on the weak, innocent, naïve and those that can be bought and continues to spread hatred and lies at every opportunity. The Pan Macedonian Association is a “false organization” fully financed by Greek taxpayers most of whom are unaware of its discriminatory practices and the friction it creates between fellow Greek citizens.

In addition to disseminating anti-Macedonian propaganda and lobbying for “the Greek cause”, many of these so-called “Greek-Macedonian” organizations spy on Macedonian organizations and individuals, reporting their activities to the Greek authorities. Many activists and supporters of the Macedonian cause even though they are Greek citizens are barred from returning to Greece. Their cause is noble if they serve the Greeks at their own expense, but as soon as one attempts to serve his or her own cause, they suddenly become traitors.

One thing I learned in Canada about Greece and the Greeks that many Macedonians did not know was that Greeks did not exist before Greece was created for the first time in 1832. So, most of the things the Greeks were claiming about themselves and about the Macedonians, were false. I figured one way to expose this was to attack the Greeks at their core, that is, to expose them for who they truly were... fakes. I got a lot of flack from Macedonians for this because they believed the “Greek identity” was as solid as “a solid steel sphere” and could not be touched. They said I would be a fool to try it and that I would burn for it if I did. They were wrong... the Greeks turned out to be an apple; shiny in the outside but rotten in the inside.

It was not until the year 2000 that I began to write articles and books about the Macedonian cause and the Greek response to it. Sometime after I began writing my articles were picked up by the internet version of the American Chronicle. I wrote for the Chronicle for about three years, before it went out of business. The Greeks tried to shut me down by claiming that I was writing lies. When that did not work they claimed I was inciting violence and hatred. When that did not work they refuted my claims by personally attacking me and claiming that I was everything from a liar to a psychopath. These comments still exist on the internet to this day.

After I wrote several books on the subject I began to translate other people's books from Macedonian to English. When I visited the Republic of Macedonia for the first time many Macedonian authors who I met there wanted me to read their books. I came back home with two suitcases full of books. Before that I was under the impression that Macedonians did not write books... because I had not seen many. I was very wrong! There are thousands of books written by Macedonian authors. Unfortunately they don't promote them well enough for us immigrants to know about them. But after my history book "History of the Macedonian people from Ancient times to the present" was translated from English to Macedonian and promoted in Macedonia people began to notice me. My book was promoted in Skopje on television, radio and during one of the largest "refugee children" meetings of which I was a guest. Many people had heard of my books and some had already read them and wanted to discuss things with me. During our discussions many gave me their books as gifts, which I then parked in my library at home in Toronto because I thought I could not read them due to them being written in Macedonian and at that time I could not read Macedonian.

But soon I made an effort to learn to read Macedonian. When I went to Macedonia the second time I bought a couple of good Macedonian to English dictionaries and made good use of them over the years. I use those dictionaries even today.

My need to understand the Macedonian language well enough so I could translate articles became prevalent when I started writing my book “Macedonians in Greece 1939-1949”. I needed to access Macedonian sources. Even though a lot had happened, including the anti-fascist war and the Greek Civil War, in which the Macedonians in Greece were massively involved, there was not much written about them in the English language. And whatever information there was it was distorted to a point where Macedonians were not even mentioned. The Greek sources were even more skewed and unreliable so I had to turn to Macedonian sources, but first I had to learn to read in Macedonian.

By this time my internet readers wanted more, especially the kind of information that would respond to the Greek onslaught and propaganda accusing us Macedonians, especially me, of historical distortion and theft. The Bulgarians were doing the same and, to a lesser extent, so were the Albanians. Macedonians knew very well that all these accusations were false but did not know enough of history to respond to them, especially Macedonians born in Greece. Official Macedonian history in the Republic of Macedonia did not begin until the 6<sup>th</sup> century AD with the so-called “arrival” of the Slavs. This is what the Macedonians in Yugoslavia were taught in school, which did not correspond with the oral narrative passed on to us by our parents and grandparents.

In the meantime I was corresponding with Canadian born Alex Gigeroff, a triple PhD Macedonian, who wanted me to write a tiny book called “The Little Book of BIG Greek lies” and he would illustrate it for me. A one page lie with a one page illustration. The project unfortunately did not pan out because it would have taken too long to write and illustrate it. Instead I took Alex’s idea and title and ran with it on my own and without his illustrations. I identified and wrote about 20 Greek lies, Alex wanted 100. The book was a smashing hit with the Macedonians, especially the series of articles I released before having the book printed. It debunked many of the things the Greeks were claiming as theirs. This book was also heavily discussed in the forums

and inspired many Macedonians to do their own research on Greece's history written by foreign authors and in the end, about one hundred and fifty western authors and books were identified that had evidence that the Greeks were fakes, that they were a western creation designed to serve the Western Great Powers. I later wrote a book about this with hundreds of quotes that pointed to this fact. The book is called "Who are the Greeks?".

To prove that Macedonians, like myself, existed in Greece even before Macedonia was invaded, occupied and partitioned in 1912, 1913, and do exist to this day, I composed a dialectal dictionary called "English – Macedonian Dialectal Dictionary Based on the Lerin-Kostur Dialects As Spoken by Oshchimians". I wanted to prove to my Greek friends that I, born in Greece and never educated in Macedonian, spoke a Macedonian dialect, which I had learned in Greece from my parents, grandparents and from the people of my village. Unfortunately the dictionary did not catch on with either the Greeks or the Macedonians. Strangely, however, most of the paper copies I sold and electronic copies I gave away were acquired by linguists and academics as far away as Slovenia and Armenia. I was curious to know why these people were bothering to buy such a book and was told by one linguist that our Macedonian language that we spoke in Greece was archaic and was not polluted with foreign words or altered to fit current politics. It was genuine, pure and very valuable to the study of languages.

All my free books can be found at this link under the name Risto Stefov:

<https://www.pollitecon.com/html/ebooks/Index.htm>

## **Facts the Greeks don't want you to know!**

1. The Greeks don't want you to know that Macedonians of the Macedonian (NOT Greek) speaking kind live in Greece. I am a prime example of that. The Greeks to this day have not publicly acknowledged that I was born in Greece. Every time I mention "I was born in Greece" I hear silence... crickets... At the same time I am accused of being a Bulgarian, a Skopjan... a Slav whose ancestors came to the Republic of Macedonia during the 6<sup>th</sup> century AD... and that I have nothing to do with the Greeks... even though I was born in Greece and I was a Greek citizen (I have the papers to prove it... passport (now expired), birth certificate, travel pass, etc). Despite all that, Greeks insist everyone born in Greece is Greek. As of 1928, everyone was 100% Greek, that is 98% pure Greek and 2% Muslim Greek and since I am not a Muslim that makes me 100% Greek. I know this is Greek logic... you do not need to figure it out... you just need to trust it!

Greeks also say that the reason I claim to be Greek is because, as a Slav, I am envious of the glorious ancient Greek heritage. Do they really believe they are the descendents of the ancient nonexistent Greeks? Ask them and see what they say...

2. The Greeks don't want you to know that before 1829 there were no Greeks; they called themselves Romoi of the Albanian, Vlach, Turkish and Macedonian kind. Let me remind our Greek friends that we are all of the same Balkan stock; Macedonians, Albanians, Vlachs and Turks but in different proportions depending on in which region of the Balkans we live. The Macedonians are the indigenous people (and yes DNA has proven it) and the rest came from somewhere else. I can tell you where they came from but it will make this story too long. Some Greeks in the Peloponnesus (outside of the Slavs that lived there) have been proven by DNA to have come from Africa. Here too I can tell you where they came from and when... but then as I said this story will be too long.

Here is a question for the Greeks who love to harass Macedonians. If no Slavs lived in the Peloponnesus, as you Greeks claim, then ask yourselves this; where did the Slavic toponymia come from in that region. And if these names were not Slavic, then why did your Greek government have to change them? I just hope you are “pretending” to be Greek descendants of the ancient Greeks for selfish reasons because if you don’t, this puts you in a special category of being completely ignorant of your own true history and heritage.

3. The Greeks don’t want you to know that Turkish blood flows through their veins. They hate the Turks with a passion. They would rather pretend to be pure Greeks, descended from the fictional ancient Greeks than embrace their true identity and heritage. If you think it’s ridiculous for me to claim that there is Turkish blood flowing through the veins of many Greeks today, a people that was occupied by the Ottoman Turks for over 400 years and a country (Greece) which imported over a million Christian Turks from Asia Minor during the 1920’s, then which is more ridiculous...? Is it more ridiculous to say that the modern Greeks are pure Greeks and descendants of the non existent ancient Greeks or that Greeks have Turkish DNA in them? Again I just hope you Greeks are “pretending” to be Greek descendants of the ancient Greeks for selfish reasons because if you don’t know this then you are completely ignorant of your own true history and heritage.

Here is another question for the Greeks who like to troll social media and torment the Macedonian people who are fighting a noble and existential fight to safeguard their identity and heritage; why were your Peloponnesian ancestors called “Klefty” and what did they do to deserve that name?

It is a moral crime to attack people who fight for a noble cause... But since you are ignorant of your own past you don’t know any better. Let’s thank the Great Powers, Mother England, of the 19<sup>th</sup> century who took pity on your ancestors and gave you poor souls a country to call your own.

4. The Greeks don't want you to know that Greece has committed several genocides against the Macedonian people only because they were Macedonians. I can list them all from the time Macedonia was invaded, occupied and annexed by Greece right up to the conclusion of the Greek Civil War, but then again... this story would be too long. You could however read my book "Collective Punishment, Genocides committed against the Macedonian People" and find out more: <http://www.pollitecon.com/Assets/Ebooks/Collective-Punishment-Genocides-Committed-Against-the-Macedonian-People.pdf>

5. The Greeks don't want you to know that Greece and successive Greek governments throughout Greece's history, in an attempt to eradicate the Macedonians, have changed the Macedonian peoples' names, toponyms, hydronyms, have banned the Macedonian language, erased the Macedonian names of saints and tombstones to eradicate everything Macedonian and have tormented the Macedonian people, forcing them to leave their homes and villages to find freedom. And finally when they did find freedom abroad in foreign countries, the Greeks tormented them there too... just like the Greeks torment the Macedonians on social media today.

The paupers or "Klepty" of yesterday who lived at the bottom of the Balkan Peninsula robbed one another to survive. The Great Powers of Europe liberated them, took them out poverty and gave them a glorious identity, a future as Greeks and a chance to better themselves and all those who lived among them... The Great Powers then gave them the lands of other people and made them the custodians... But instead of showing kindness and cherishing the people whose lands they were given, the new custodians made every effort to choke, destroy and erase them...

Modern Greeks this is your true story.

## Who are the Greeks

“Every nation must think of its own history, being based on truth...”  
Dionysios Solomos 1847.

By Sotir Grozdanovski

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Brooklyn, New York, USA

Translated from Macedonian to English and Edited by Risto Stefov

<https://macedoniannewssite.wordpress.com/2015/10/15/%D0%B4%D0%BE%D0%BA%D1%83%D0%BC%D0%B5%D0%BD%D1%82%D0%B0%D1%80%D0%B5%D1%86-%D0%BA%D0%BE%D1%98-%D1%98%D0%B0-%D1%88%D0%BE%D0%BA%D0%B8%D1%80%D0%B0-%D0%B3%D1%80%D1%86%D0%B8%D1%98%D0%B0/>

Recently an unexpected video clip, at least for us Macedonians, suddenly appeared on Facebook which shocked the entire population of Greece. The clip was about the creation of the Modern Greek state; a result of the 1821 so called Greek Revolution. There would have been nothing unusual about it had it been based on what is known about ancient history and the historical processes familiar to people. But it was not like that. The reason it was shocking and disastrous for the Greek public was because this video clip revealed the lies and untruths upon which the rotten foundations of today's so-called “democratic” Greece was built, which has nothing to do with the ancient City States or the ancient Athenian culture, the so called centre of science on which today's Western civilization is based.

The video clip is a documentary which reveals the atrocities the Greek clergy had committed since the inception of the Greek state and continue to commit to this day; especially against the national minorities living in Greece, including the Macedonian people.

The facts that are boiling in this video clip are delivered by many participants, including by the Greek scientific elite, who are educated in higher learning institutions worldwide.

The video clip which I am discussing in this article was delivered in part in the Greek language but mostly in English. I believe many Macedonians, especially those in the Diaspora, had an opportunity to view this important document and follow its content without much difficulty. But there are also those who had difficulty understanding the English language, which is why I took the opportunity to present the clip's theme in the Macedonian language... as best I could.

Now let us begin with the story that describes the creation and development of today's Modern Greek state, one of Macedonia's supposedly "good" neighbours. Let us have a look at how Greece was truly created and how Greece treats the Macedonian people. Allow us to also remind the reader that no good could come from negativity; bad for bad, from which no one benefits and only leads to more harm. And even though this information comes too late for us Macedonians, the truth is slowly revealing itself and justice will surely prevail.

The conscience of honest people should not be underestimated, as can be seen from the professionals who themselves are representatives of the Greek scientific environment and who are important for the future development of good neighbourly relations between the Greek and Macedonian people.

Who are the Greeks: let us begin:

"On September 27, 1831 Ioannis Kapodistrias, the new Greek state's first president, was murdered on the main road to Naphplion (port city and first Greek capital). With his assassination the country hit a new cycle of civil war. It soon became clear that all the effort made by the Greek president to create a new functionally independent and virile state was fruitless. It came to light that the Greek people were incapable of having a state, let alone governing it successfully."

These were words spoken by the host of the Greek TV program “Sky”, referring to historical events that led to the formation of today’s Greek state, formed for the first time under the name “Greece”. He continued:

“Trapped in the Ottoman Empire they were unable to look the future in the eye. They made enormous efforts to keep the privileges which they had enjoyed until then, stubbornly opposing any changes in their status, which undoubtedly would have come with the new Greek state, in which the rule of law, order and justice would prevail.”

“Being particular about what was happening in that part of the world, the European powers were able to find a simple cure for the Greeks. All they needed now was to find a leader and an ideology to unite them. It was time to bring a monarchy and form the first Greek Kingdom. The cards were thrown on the table and the game began...”

## FORMATION OF THE FIRST NATIONAL MYTH

In 1832 the Greek royal crown was not something that was desired, its necessity was imposed from the outside. After continuous unrest and ruthless destruction, the country had nothing better to offer. Much more important than the formation of any new state was the idea that would link the present with the past; link the present people with the ancient City State culture, (dead in this region for many centuries). This idea was manufactured in the heads of the people in the present.

The Bavarian monarch Ludwig I, one of the great supporters of philhellenism, took this project even further. His comprehensive support of the Greek Revolution for independence and the formation of the Greek kingdom, headed by his still adolescent son Otto, was not a random act.

At the time when the English were stealing the marble legacies from the Parthenon and moving them to museums and private collections, most “distinguished” by Lord Elgin, Ludwig 1<sup>st</sup> carefully made copies of

them and placed them in prominent places in the German state. With that he created a new Athens in Munich, in the heart of Bavaria, whose beauty is present to this day, far from present-day Greece, as a perpetual memorial to his love of Hellenism and its values.

During Ludwig 1st's time, the educational system of this tiny German state introduced the Greek language as an obligatory subject, together with the literary and scientific legacy of the learned people of the ancient City States. Thus in 1830 Bavaria became the centre of the lovers of Hellenism and Munich looked more Greek than Athens. Many Bavarian artists, supported by Ludwig 1<sup>st</sup> himself, often traveled through the Greek lands and were inspired by the classical past of that country and the deep romanticism of the time.

Peter Von Ness, one of those Bavarian artists, received a special assignment. His task was to perpetuate the 1821 revolution by recording all important events with portraits and drawings. These portraits, especially those of prominent heroes and important events, remained the most important works of art in Greek history to this day.

According to William St. Clair from the centre of History at the University of Cambridge, in 1830 Greece was the first independent nation state in Europe, largely thanks to the "star" qualities of the Ancient City States. So according to the traditional views of the monarchic governments of that time, a free Greece meant the resurgence of the ancient civilization that was appreciated and respected all around the world.

"And so the dream of Bavarian monarch Ludwig 1<sup>st</sup>, the great lover of Hellenism, began to unfold. On the morning of February 6, 1833 Ludwig's 17 year-old son Otto arrived in Naphplion, and soon after that he landed in Athens; the new capital of the new Greek state. But of course the new king did not arrive alone. He arrived with more than 3,500 military and administrative instructors in order to establish an administrative model in the image of Bavaria. Despite those, young king Otto and his staff had other, more important objectives to

accomplish. They needed to conquer and annex the various separate parts of the Greek territory and unify them under the new Greek state and ultimately create a new national identity.”

“The new government that was hastily installed met with many difficulties and ran into various obstacles. It found itself in a divided society with a non-existent economy. Its priorities were not only to bring peace and order to the country but, above all, it was charged with the task of creating a new Greek national identity: an identity capable of uniting a society and bringing change to the traditional understanding of identity. In other words create an identity for a modern nation.” A fictional identity.

In his presentation Pashalis Kitromilidis, a political science professor at the University of Athens, explains.

There were valid and specific reasons for choosing Athens as the capital of the new Greek Kingdom. One of those reasons, highlighted as a key reason, was the international recognition of Ancient Athens and the other City States. This was the basis or starting point for the recognition of the new Greece. This idea was brought to life at the very beginning when Ludwig 1<sup>st</sup> initiated the Greek project to place his young son Otto on its throne. At that time the state bore the name Hellas and not Greece.

In their projects regarding the new Greek kingdom, the Bavarians had many other surprises; - To remove every trace and memory of the Ottoman past in Athens and beyond, thereby restoring all ancient monuments in the city and, amazingly, following the Munich model. But all this was not totally unexpected; the top priority of the new state and beyond was to recognize the Greek originality.

The first thing that Otto did after landing on Greek soil was to put public finances in order and restore the old drachma from 2,000 years ago, thus lifting the Phoenix which assassinated Ioannis Kapodistrias, the first Greek president elected in 1831. After that the new monarch

renamed all the streets in Athens and gave them the names of ancient philosophers, ancient playwrights and the names of the heroes of the 1821 uprising. So everything was linked to the Ancient City States, which became the symbol of the new Greek state overnight.

The Bavarians introduced the official Greek language of the time with great sensitivity and love, confident that they spoke ancient Athenian. And so the idealization of the Greek language became a foundation for the Greek intelligentsia. If that did not happen, today's Greeks would still be speaking "Arvanitika" (Albanian), as the vast majority did in those days in that part of the world.

Cooperation in the Greek kingdom was not an easy job. The newly created Greeks were constantly in conflict with each other and could not find common ground, not even for the most elementary needs of their society. Politically they existed amid lingering discords and it was simply impossible for their political parties to coexist. National unity among the newly created Greeks could only be achieved by mixing fantasy with history. They could only manage to draw the necessary energy for their survival from their alignment with myths.

In this kind of chaotic situation, while composing the newly created Greek society, it was necessary to invoke the assistance of legends in order to coexist and move forward. A new identity was needed that would unify all the subjects of the realm. But where could one begin in the case of the newly created "Greeks"? Of course the first thing to do was to "reduce" history in which facts that held no water were deleted.

It may sound a little strange when one talks about "reducing" historical "facts", but this practice did not start in Greece. In fact it began in Munich, in the new Athens in Ludwig's neo-classical Kingdom. In attempting to "reduce" Greek history by building memorials and neoclassical monuments in his own capital in Munich, Ludwig in fact reduced his own history. One such building that Ludwig 1<sup>st</sup> raised in his capital was the Propylaia. To honour the 1821 Greek Revolution, Ludwig built a grand monument in the centre of Munich and on it he

ordered all the names of those who participated in the Revolution, as well as the names of all those who played a significant role in the creation of the newly created Greek state, to be written in large Greek letters. Besides the names already mentioned, here he also wrote the names of all those who played an important role in the political, social, ideological and ecclesiastical importance in the liberation of Greece. Included side by side, the names Rigas Fereos and Patriarch Gregory were written even though they were ideological opponents. Other names included Ioannis Kapodistrias, Adamantiou Kora and many other “heroes” of the revolution who, on several occasions, fought each other and even shot at one another. But they were historical figures and contributed to the liberation of the newly created Greek state for which they were respected.

The Bavarian monument clearly shows the logic, the path and the way that the history of the 1821 Revolution would have to be written. This was the so-called “myth” of 1821. This also shows that the nation can be regenerated, renewed and live well despite all the types and sizes of tragedies experienced, despite the various acts of crimes committed and criminal organizations involved whose activities included various executions organized by senior government, army and church officials. This is how the legend of 1821 was created and based on something... in order to justify the evil done as something desirable and necessary for the “greater good”. However, all legends have a beginning and do not appear out of thin air like random events. This was the road and means to construct a platform for the unification of the Greek state and its ideology, which on the one hand confounded historians and on the other spread a sense of community and security to a people needing to survive.

After all that was said and done there was still discontent in the kingdom that would create problems in the future, but a powerful amalgam was found that would adequately give the masses peace and tranquility. This was the Greek Orthodox Church which, among other things, played a major role in the unification of Rumelia and the

Peloponnesus and, despite the irony, helped the Greek nation connect with ancient times.

Realizing the power of the Church, the Bavarians in 1833 created an autocephalous (independent) Greek church and then placed it in the service of the crown.

It was said that during the Revolution, the Church stood aside undecided. It did not want to take sides for fear of losing its acquired rights. Now it was put in a position to provide some recognition and thus began its story of the oversimplification of its former role. If the church did not support the revolution and its goals, it was said, it was because of some “tactical” reasons. Its dignitaries, it was said, were like-minded supporters of the struggle against the Ottomans from the start of the revolution, which in reality was not true.

When Patriarch Gregory V withdrew from the Revolution he cursed its leader Alexander Ypsilantis. Gregory did not do that for tactical reasons, as some would like to claim. He did that for more interesting reasons, noting ostensibly Church principles, claiming that the Church prohibits all violence and injustice; a fact that had never before preoccupied the minds of most clergy.

By cursing the Revolution, continued the documentary announcer on Sky TV, Gregory saved many Ottoman lives, a fatal mistake which church dignitaries never managed to understand. His move only inspired the other side to take part in the mass actions of the military revolution and come out as winners at the cost of enormous damage to the country as well as the many crimes committed against the innocent, unarmed Turkish population.

The degenerate role played by the Greek Orthodox Church during the most critical times in the formation of the new Greek state was very different from its glorified supposed role of being “the guardian of the national treasury and protector of the people since their enslavement,

when heroes lit the fire of national ideals and raised the masses to rebuild the Fatherland”.

Linking the Church with nationality corrupted modern nationalism and so did the national myths, of which the most famous was the myth of a secret school. The most important part of this myth is the suffering and “great sacrifice” priests had to make in order to disseminate the Greek language among the people, especially among children despite the ban by the Turkish authorities. This myth was perpetuated in the works of painter Nikolaus Gisis under the name “Secret School” released in 1886. Gisis belonged to the Munich School of art, which continued the Philhellenic Bavarian tradition of Hellenic painters projecting events from the 1821 Greek Revolution.

From a historical point of view, the “Secret School” message was totally false. No such school had ever existed. This was a false projection of the events of those times, created to provide a pleasing atmosphere. It was a strong message which read: “This is how it was then children! Even you, in your early youth, need to do everything for our country to be free again...”

The “Secret School” was an afterthought, a creation of the state, created in 1886 for specific reasons – to further consolidate religion and make it important, give it a place in the education of the country, as one of the State defense mechanisms.

The myth regarding the role of the Greek Orthodox Church in the new Greek society did not end there. It continues even today with much arrogance and brutality.

“After strengthening the newly established Greek state on the foundations of the 1821 Revolution, it was decided to find an active place for the Church in it. Of course, as is in many popular uprisings, some priests did take part in the Greek Revolution. This, however, does not entitle the official church hierarchy to appropriate their courage and patriotism and claim things that are not theirs to claim. The Greek

Orthodox Church in those days did not support and was not part of the Revolution. In fact, the Greek Orthodox Church was both spiritually and practically against the Revolution. Its material interests were against the interests of the people”. Wrote one of the participants and continued.

“I don’t think that the Turks were too concerned about what language the subjects of the Empire spoke, whether it was Greek or Macedonian. They only cared about their own people speaking the language of Islam. Whatever language the Christians spoke it was the same to the Turks. They did not care about anything other than keeping the peace in the Empire. I am confident that the language was not a major concern. Everything that was said outside of that was a fable for the children.”

## THE 1821 REVOLUTION

Seven years after the Revolution ended, the European governments inquired of President Ioannis Kapodistrias as to how many Turks lived in the Peloponnesus. Kapodistrias gave them two numbers, one for 1821 and one for after the Revolution. The number for 1821 was 42,000 and the other number was 0. Today’s Greeks do not want to believe or refuse to believe that a sizable Turkish population lived in the Peloponnesus and disappeared without a trace. Turkish families lived everywhere on the Greek territory in small communities working in farms, as craftsmen, traders, employees of state institutions, etc. Those families had lived there for many generations; this was their home. They did not know of any other country and would not have moved, yet they disappeared without a trace in a short time. What happened to these people? It would appear that, regardless of sex or age, they were all killed a few weeks after 1821. All 42,000 Turks; men, women, children, old and young vanished from the face of the earth. They faced no court and none was proven to be guilty of anything... And yet no one took responsibility for their disappearance...

This mass slaughter was perpetrated during the “glorious” 1821 Greek Revolution from which the Greeks have distanced themselves,

believing that they won their freedom through a “courageous” military struggle; yet another 1821 myth. To justify this dishonest barbaric act, some Greeks claim that “the Turks also committed such criminal acts” and that the slaughter was committed in retribution.

There are countless legends of events circulating in the schools, created to justify the terrible crimes committed against the innocent Turkish population. But such crimes are not easy to explain or to forget because they have left deep imprints in the souls, especially in the children. How can anyone explain to a child that his father, grandfather, or a close relative ruthlessly killed Turks? That they slaughtered innocent children along with their parents and then threw them into city wells? How could they explain the many items they had in their homes which had been stolen from the homes of those innocent people who no longer were alive to tell the truth about their untimely death? If they told their children the truth, they would have wondered what kind of people they themselves were and surely they would have asked: “Grandpa, how are we better than them? What is the difference between us and them? Where is our moral superiority?”

The island Chios rightfully became a true example of a heinous place which devoured thousands of innocent people. Chios became a heinous place of the Turkish tragedy during the Greek Revolution. Even though there are many other places where massacres were committed against innocent Turkish citizens by various regular and paramilitary formations, Chios remains the landmark of crimes and the most famous killing field in this world.

Violence in those days was a common event. It was not strange to enter some place and exterminate people as if they were not people. The bloodlust of the Greek gangs had no boundaries. The right to rule was gained by the blade and the bullet. Violence was a means of survival and a means to rule the weaker. Many well-meaning people today often wonder: “Is it true that heinous atrocities were committed in Tripolikas?” Yes indeed massacres were committed in Tripolikas, but didn’t the Turks also commit mischief and massacres in many places in

their empire? But for the sake of the truth, of all the mass exterminations of unarmed Turkish civilians, according to existing documents, the worst and most heinous was the one in Tripolikas. There were 35,000 Turkish people living in that city when the Greeks conquered it. Of these, no one was left alive.

The devastation and carnage that took place during these military acts in Greece was captured in one of Dionysios Solomos's poems of freedom. Forty years later Dionysios Solomos's poetry was used to fashion the Greek national anthem. From his entire collection of poems, totaling about 158 works, only a few stanzas are known. "If you read more than two stanzas," said one of the Greek participants in this documentary, "you will find that our national anthem is not only a hymn to freedom, but also a testament to the atrocities committed against innocent people. This is a graphic view of terrible events: "Look how desperate hands pluck life. They cast off the feet, the hands and the heads of the dead victims. Swords and chains mixed with the gray brains knocked out on the ground. Cracked skulls and parts of the internal abdomen... Everything in one indescribable horror. Oh, oh! What is enough, enough!"

"The knowledge and memory of these crimes will last a long time. Our national anthem contains everything else and least of all words about freedom. It contains the horrors and violence of the revolution. I believe that Solomos was not as naïve as he leads us to believe. Reading his verses about freedom in our national anthem, one begins to discover, in poetic terms, the real truth about what happened during our Revolution. Our 1821 Revolution, like every revolution, was a bloody story. It is a testament to the expulsions, revenge, epidemics, famine, murder, robbery, violent migrations and bondage. Both the Greeks and the Turks insisted that these events be put behind and forgotten. If they could be forgotten! A new government had to be organized and function on the ruins of a Revolution, but how could it achieve that if the past was deleted and forgotten? Well, this was done with ideological patriotism based on the Bavarian model, where uncomfortable events were replaced with the "glorious" heritage of ancient Greece.

Unfortunately reality is extremely difficult to change overnight. In Athens and everywhere in Greece, however, there were visible signs of hundreds and hundreds of crushed monuments that needed to be put back together; centuries old historical traces that were long gone. So the Greek state began to work to erase the existence of the Ottoman Empire and everything associated with it. All this work was done so that Greece could achieve complete purity and a continuous, long unbroken link with its ancient Greek culture.”

These invitations of the newly composed country can be considered invitations of people who lost their compass and common sense, who were funny and not serious, but mostly existing outside the norms of civilized behavior in historical science. As a matter of fact, other emerging countries made the same mistakes, some more and some less, in order to deny parts of their past and create a favourable present and future in the eyes of their people and before their common community. Some historians are saying that other people from science, even from the other side, opponents of such an approach to history, are grabbing their heads in disbelief that something like this is even possible. “This kind of direct connection with an ancient old culture contributes to resurgence without interrupting historical trends”, say the proponents while patting themselves on their shoulders as if they are miracle workers.

The false path that the new Greek state took began with the arrival of its Bavarian rulers. The people were already disfunctional in every respect when the Bavarians arrived in Greece. There was poverty and despair everywhere in frightening proportions. Their disappointment was great when they did not find a people with the Hellenic spirit with which they were in love. They instead found street beggars who spoke Arvanitika (Albanian) in place of ancient Greek. Many of the philhellenes who came to Greece were asking: “How can someone be a Hellene when they are a poor and desperate street beggar in Athens speaking Arvanitika (Albanian)?” The fact was that there was no logical connection between any of this on the ground. What the Bavarians believed and what they saw after their arrival were two different things.

Their discovery was disappointing and those who returned to Bavaria were inclined to say: “There is nothing we can do down there in Greece. No one can save this country. These are no connections and nothing in common between the modern Greeks and the ancient world.”

Even the Greek kingdom had difficulty standing on its feet. Fallmerayer, a Bavarian historian, came up with his own ideas, working against the theory that there was a continuous link between the ancient City States and modern Greece.

What was Fallmerayer’s purpose in all this? The fans of Hellenism at home were responsible for the “tie of the pillar of shame” because of their crazy ideas.

Fallmerayer argued that the current Greeks, as a race, have nothing to do with the ancient City States. Of course his claims and theories created great panic in the kingdom not just because he did not accept their desires to transform a lie into truth, but because he wanted to sabotage the promotions of legends favourable to the monarchist regime and the people in that country.

Fallmerayer bitterly blasted the philhellenes and their fans in Bavaria by taking another bold step; by producing evidence, solid evidence to show everyone that all the claims made by the then Greek government, that there was a continuous link between the Greek kingdom and the ancient City States, was just fiction and completely false.

For his deeds Fallmerayer soon found himself in trouble. He was named the greatest enemy of the Greeks because he went too far. He took the subject much further than what was expected from his opponents and the circles of power in Greece and particularly in Bavaria. In doing so Fallmerayer brought evidence to light stretching back to Roman times, to the deposits of Slavs in the Balkans and to the relocation of the Albanians to that part of the country in the 14<sup>th</sup> century.

So according to Fallmerayer the links that would link the present day Greeks with the City States from ancient times were invented, false and therefore did not exist. These links, according to Fallmerayer, were broken not once but three times. Therefore Fallmerayer rejected all links that would link today's Greeks with the ancient City States, as false and non-existent and the continuity of Hellenism as a nation, as fiction.

This well-known German historian and keeper of historical truths who had risen to piety was now "Greece's greatest enemy".

Two names that surfaced in the constellation of forces opposing each other on the Greek stage of Greek history were: Spiridon Zabeli expert on Eastern Roman Empire (Byzantine) history and folklorist and historian Constantine Papanikolaou.

According to what they wrote, the continuity of Hellenism in Greece was put in place before the 1850's. They alleged that there was no interruption of continuity in history. "But it was possible to have both unstable and stable periods, which their colleague Fallmerayer from Bavaria calls breaks or interruptions in continuity, which in fact are links."

Therefore, according to Papanikolaou and Zabel, "the nation is restored and continuity is established. Unfortunately disagreements between historians remain unresolved, not only ideologically or historically, but also politically. And thus a multi-ethnic society like Greece needs to create a single unified Greek Nation."

At this point they were thinking primarily of the Albanian minority being the most numerous, credited in many struggles for independence. The Albanians were a people divided into two groups; the Orthodox and Muslims or as some would call them Turko-Albanians. The most important leaders in the struggle for Greek independence in the 1821 Rebellion came from the ranks of Orthodox Albanians, who distinguished themselves with their great abilities and courage,

especially those from the islands of Hydra, Ostriva and Spetses, as well as the Souliots who fought on land. It is not too much to mention the fact that the people of those times were quite educated and capable of intellectual work. Markos Botsaris (Marko Bochfaro) compiled a Greek Albanian dictionary. A very interesting dictionary indeed! He knew both Greek and Albanian well and dared to engage in such linguistic adventures. I would say that Botsaris also knew the Turkish language and I can freely say that he served with Theodoros Kolokotronis.

While praising the Albanians for their compatibility and suitable features for integration into the new Greek society, historian Paparigolopoulos, as a scientist, went a little too far praising only the Orthodox Albanians and completely neglecting the Muslim Albanians rendering them unacceptable strictly because of their religious inclinations.

Further on in his “scientific” debate, Paparigolopoulos deviated from the path of science and entered the muddy waters of racism and intolerance, making things even more confusing in his controversy with historian Fallmerayer.

Arguing about the qualities of the two peoples, the Greeks and the Albanians, and the idea of combining them into the new Greek nation, he said that the Greeks were more civilized and intellectually and culturally more advanced than the Albanians and that the Greek race will get vitality, strength and unity. The unity of these qualities, even today, confirms the “notable qualities” of the “modern” and “democratic” Greek state. In this context it is worthwhile to mention the fact that, the Albanians who integrated into Greek society feel more Greek than the Greek Cypriots, something that speaks for itself. This confirms Fallmerayer’s thesis of a fully extinct connection between today’s Greeks with those of the City States from many centuries ago.

## LANGUAGE AND IDENTITY IN 1821

Language and identity are closely related. Without language there is no identity and there is no identity without a language; such an identity is worthless. That is why the struggle for a language is a constant and a priority. As it does in every nation, language played an important role in the Greek state. The language that was adopted for the new Greek people was first utilized by Orthodoxy and trade. Then, with the organization of the state's education system, it played a major role in the unification of the fragmented social groups in the Greek state. The language was the tool that created a common culture by which the nation identified. The language also contributed to the enlightenment of the revolutionary leaders who eventually won freedom and independence. Ioannis Kapodistrias, the first president of this new state, understood this even during the first year of the "heroic war" when, seeking to lay the foundation of the state, he opened a university and other schools which, at the time, played an important role in the development of war-torn Greece. Language and education are elements that have the power to unite the community and align the nation. We can freely say that education was the Greek state's strength in the beginning. Greek schools were the real winners.

What identifies the national unity of a society? It's culture of course! What then should identify the culture? Language of course! As it is now, that too was achieved and it opened the doors wide to progress. All who participated in one way or another in the Greek education system were and still are Greeks. The Isocratic concept, an open nationalistic concept of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, different from that of the 20<sup>th</sup> century but similar to the biological continuity concept professed by Fallmerayer's theory, was wide open and beautiful. A typical example of that beauty and acceptance was the men's dress worn in the Balkans, and only by the Albanians. (And what about the Macedonian dress? Were the Macedonians not integrated into the Greek nation... Yet? S.G).

The same Albanian dress and moccasins with pompons are worn even today by the Greek presidential guard.

In addition to the discussions offered, toward the end of the events that revealed the creation of a new and civilized spirit in the false Greek history, the documentary participants from the Greek side continued with conciliatory and flexible language.

“We are looking at this issue from the inside in order to find information that will allow flexibility for compromise. We believe that flexibility is needed for every nation to find suitable ways to personalize new circumstances. And perhaps in this lies our conscience that prevails today in Greece, passing through many changes and personalizing our way through time. Our adjustment has reached a high level. Even the Romei permitted us to officially call them by that name. Not just the children of Greeks and their descendants but also the modern Greeks.” (What about the Macedonians? Why are they not permitted to be called Macedonians? S. G.)

For this occasion it is worth mentioning the words of poet Giorgos Sefaris, spoken during the award ceremonies when he was awarded the Nobel Prize in Stockholm in December 1963. He said: “I don’t want to say that we have the same blood as the ancient Greeks, because I hate racist theories. But I do want to say that we live in the same country that they lived in and saw the same mountains they saw which end in the same sea.”

“Almost a century and a half has passed since 1821. Two Balkan and two world wars have also passed since we, according to the words of poet Sefaris, have renewed our Greek identity on an international level with a modern definition and, if there is something for which to be proud, it is the following: the place where we live, our history, the ability to decide our own destiny as much as possible. Finally, this was not possible without our 1821 Revolution, without struggle, without ideas for our future, without our legends. How we use this freedom depends on us. But there must be benefits for our patriotism, love for the place we live in, to shed just or unjust blood with respect and, above all, to enjoy the revival of our country, today’s modern Greece.”



## **DO THE SO CALLED SLAVS HAVE MACEDONIAN ROOTS?**

It has been said that a large segment of the Macedonian population fled Macedonia during the Roman-Macedonian wars, especially when Macedonia was defeated. These people went north. Of course there was no other direction to go because Macedonia, at that time, bordered the Mediterranean Sea to the south, the Adriatic Sea to the west, the Black Sea to the east and the Danube River to the north.

Taking the safest route out, the Macedonians escaping the horrors of wars fled north across the Danube River.

A lot of Macedonian people fled north! And where did they go? We are told they went north of the Danube River, where the Slavs were later found.

So, my first question is “What happened to these Macedonian people?” To these many Macedonian people who fled “north”?! Could they be the “Slavs” who later returned to Macedonia and found people there speaking the same language?

My second question is “How far north did these Macedonians go?” Did they go as far north as Siberia? If they did then that would explain why there are toponyms and people’s names in Russia that are exactly the same as the ones existing in Macedonia. Or is this a coincidence?

And most importantly: if these Slavs “from north of the Danube” and the Slavs from around Solun spoke a Slavic language then what does that tell us?

It tells us that there was a linguistic relationship between the Macedonians in Macedonia and the Slavs north of the Danube! Or is this too a coincidence?

Now we need to ask ourselves, how did this “linguistic relationship” come about and did the Macedonians who fled Macedonia during the Roman-Macedonian wars speak a Slavic language or a “Greek” language as the westerners and Greeks would have us believe? If the Macedonians spoke “Greek” then why does “no one” north of the Danube River speak “Greek” today... or at any other time in recorded history? There is no trace of “Greek” anywhere north of the Danube.

If I was asked: “Did the Macedonians fleeing the Macedonian-Roman wars speak Greek?” I would have to say “no” because if they did there would be some “traces” of Greek found somewhere north of the Danube. And there are none!

Many ancient authors have claimed that Alexander the Great and his Macedonians spoke “another” language outside of the Koine language and that language was not only unique to the Macedonians but was also their mother tongue. So, is it not possible that the “mysterious” language the ancient Macedonians spoke was in fact the Slavic language?! Why is this “constantly” dismissed by the Greeks and our western friends?

It was Herbert George Wells who said that the barbarian invasion of Europe started with the rise of the Great Wall of China. Migrating tribes of Mongolian nomads, who spent their summers on the Siberian plains and their winters in east central China, could no longer do so because the Great Wall of China prevented them. Unable to go to their traditional lands, the Mongolian tribes were forced to change their wintering patterns. Unable to cross into eastern central China, the Mongolian tribes began a westward movement putting pressure on the people whose lands they invaded. By the time the Great Wall of China was finished in the 6<sup>th</sup> century AD, many of the Mongolian tribes had abandoned their traditional eastern migrating patterns and were moving westward.

This westward Mongolian movement had a cascading effect on the local people who were forced to migrate southwards from beyond the

Danube River. It is my belief that these people did not move willingly but were pushed out as a consequence of this great wave of tribal migration. Who these people were and where they came from are still controversial questions, which hopefully will be answered in time with proper research. In the meantime, there are two emerging theories.

The first and more popular theory is that these people were descendants of the first Europeans. They are identified by many names. The second theory is that these people were a mixture of the indigenous people from those regions and the descendants and remnants of Alexander the Greats' settlers and soldiers as well as those Macedonians who fled Macedonia as a result of the Roman occupation. It is well-known that Alexander the Great established many cities and outposts wherever he campaigned in order to support his military needs. Settlers were brought from Macedonia and given lands to farm. When Alexander's empire collapsed, instead of returning home many of his people remained at their outposts and permanently settled the new lands. Many of the subsequent people who fled Macedonia because of harsh Roman rule also went north and some joined the original Macedonian settlements.

Archeological digs in India have revealed that Macedonian estates were still in existence two centuries after Alexander's empire collapsed. It is conceivable then that the Macedonian settlers of Europe also remained on their estates, living undisturbed for centuries, and migrated northward as their populations expanded. Being already civilized, the Macedonians had a well-established language and culture, which they disseminated among the native populations where they lived and from which they employed their workers.

These are, however, only theories and much evidence is needed to validate them.

But, at this point, let us digress and take a step back for a moment and think about this: If these people who western historians called "Slavs" were not Macedonians why then did historians of the 6<sup>th</sup> century AD say that when they came to Macedonia in wagons with their families

and tried to invade Solun they found a common tradition and language in the local people in the surrounding villages?

History offers no evidence of savage battles between Slavs and the 6<sup>th</sup> century descendants of ancient Macedonians nor does it show records of any massacres taking place. In fact history portrays the Slavs as peaceful people who, more often than not, were able to co-exist with other races in Macedonia. Outside of the unknown author of book II of the Miracles of St. Demetrius, who portrayed the Slavs as savage, brutish and heathen barbarians, there is little evidence of Slavs causing atrocities in Macedonia. “On the other hand, however, one gets the impression that the Slavs were a familiar presence. They are repeatedly called ‘our Slavic neighbours’” by the people of Solun. (Page 61, Florin Curta, *The Making of the Slavs, History and Archaeology of the Lower Danube Region c. 500 – 700*, Cambridge, New York, 2001) Slavs it seems, contrary to popular belief, were on good terms with the inhabitants of Solun, supplying them with grain and other goods. Also, according to Macedonian oral accounts, there is no mention of any Macedonians having migrated to Macedonia from somewhere else.

“Our present day knowledge of the origin of the Slavs is, to a large extent, a legacy of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. A scholarly endeavor inextricably linked with forging national identities....” (Page 6, Florin Curta, *The Making of the Slavs, History and Archaeology of the Lower Danube Region c. 500 – 700*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001)

“Instead of a great flood of Slavs coming out of the Pripet marshes, I envisage a form of group identity which could arguably be called ethnicity and emerged in response to Justinian’s implementation of a building project on the Danube frontier and in the Balkans. The Slavs, in other words, did not come from the north, but became Slavs only in contact with the Roman frontier.” (Page 3, Florin Curta, *The Making of the Slavs, History and Archaeology of the Lower Danube Region c. 500 – 700*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001)

The Slavs, as opposed to other hordes that invaded the Balkans in the first millennium AD, became very important during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, particularly in 1833 when Slavic languages were recognized as Indo-European. Like the English language of today, the Slav language of the 19<sup>th</sup> century linguistically linked many nations together. Some of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Slav academics, however, intentionally or unintentionally interpreted this linguistic commonality as an ethnic commonality, ethnically linking all Slavs together. In other words, if one spoke Slav then one must have belonged to the “Slav tribe”, which in modern terms is the same as believing that if one spoke English then one must belong to the “English tribe”.

Perhaps they did belong to the same tribe, perhaps they did not. Most likely they did not belong to the same tribe, just like all English speakers don’t belong to the “English tribe”. Having said that, one has to believe that there is or has to be some other kind of link between the Macedonians living in Macedonia, not only to the so-called “Slavs” who invaded or “returned” to Macedonia from beyond the Danube River, but also to all the people in Eastern Europe who spoke and still speak the Slavic language. If there is no connection between the Macedonians, Ukrainians, Poles, Russians, etc., etc., in other words between all the Slavic speaking people from the Mediterranean Sea to Siberia, then why do these people have a common language, common traditions and, most importantly, common names and toponyms? How does a Russian acquire a Macedonian name if he or she has no connection to Macedonia? And that’s not all. There are place names in Russia which are identical to place names found in Macedonia? Are these all “pure” coincidences?

As mentioned earlier, the “Slav phenomenon” is largely a political phenomenon with little historical significance. The reasons attributed to the Slavs as opposed to the Goths, Huns, Bulgars, Avars, etc., as being the culprits for the invasions and devastation of the Balkans is to explain the wide use of the Slav language. In other words, the “Slav phenomenon” is a modern 19<sup>th</sup> century creation designed to explain the prevalent use of the modern Slav languages. In other words the Slavs,

as westerners claim, violently invaded Europe all at once, killed off all the indigenous people and replaced them. And, as dominant conquerors, replaced their local languages with their own. This “theory” however not only defies logic but lacks much evidence.

It is most unfortunate, however, that modern scholars choose to ignore the evidence that links the 6<sup>th</sup> century Slavs to the ancient Macedonians.

“Archeological research has already provided an enormous amount of evidence in support of the idea that the Veneti were Slavs.” (Page 13, Florin Curta, *The Making of the Slavs, History and Archaeology of the Lower Danube Region c. 500 – 700*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001) Accepting the hypothesis that the Veneti and the Slavs were connected not only provides linguistic continuity for the modern Macedonians to the ancient Macedonians but also identifies the so-called “elusive” Macedonian language of ancient times. With this in mind, we cannot ignore claims that the Slav language was most probably spoken by Alexander’s Macedonian soldiers and settlers and was spread throughout the vastness of the uncivilized regions of Eastern Europe and northern Asia. Also, it would not be far fetched to hypothesize that Alexander’s Macedonians colonized parts of European Russia, which would attest to the many common toponyms that Macedonia and European Russia share.

So it is easy for me to conclude that, based on its widespread use in Eastern Europe and on the evolution it has experienced, the Slavic language must be a very old language which has probably existed from prehistoric times. This means that the Slavic language was spoken in Macedonia before the Attic and later Koine languages made their appearance.

I have been criticized and ridiculed for saying what I said above, that is, that the Slav language has its roots in Macedonia and that it existed in Macedonia millenniums before the so-called Slavs arrived in Macedonia. Worse than that I have been criticized and ridiculed for saying that the Slavs north of the Danube River were Macedonians. But

this is understandable, especially for those who have heard this for the first time.

I was one of those people who ridiculed people for making such “off the cuff” comments because I believed our “mainstream” history to be genuine. But then, from the same history, I found out that I don’t exist as a Macedonian.

## **Exposing the Greek myth**

Macedonia will remain occupied as long as the Macedonian people are unrecognized, abused and made to feel like strangers on their own native lands. It is a well known fact that Macedonia was invaded, occupied and illegally partitioned by Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria in 1912-1913 against the wishes of the Macedonian people. The Serbian occupied part, now known as the Republic of Macedonia, gained its independence in 1991 and is today a sovereign state while the parts annexed by Greece and Bulgaria remain occupied. Unfortunately, there are many Greeks who, to this day, argue that Macedonians do not exist, not only in Greece and Bulgaria but also in the Republic of Macedonia and the world over.

The Macedonian position is very clear and very simple;

Macedonians simply want to be acknowledged for who we are, Macedonians.

Macedonians want to be given back what was taken from them; our homes, lands, citizenship and dignity.

Macedonians want those who did harm to them in the past to acknowledge their wrongdoing and take responsibility for it.

The Greek (Greek State) position regarding the Macedonian question:

Even since 1878 when it became evident that the European Great Powers would not allow Macedonia to gain its independence from the Ottoman Empire, plans were made to partition Macedonia. Since then Greece, Bulgaria and Serbia (until 1945) refused to recognize the Macedonian identity.

Since then the Greek position has been that Macedonians do not exist. Census statistics produced in the past have never shown Macedonians to have ever lived in Greek occupied Macedonia.

Ever since Macedonia's invasion, occupation and partition, Greece, without acknowledging the Macedonian identity, has persecuted Macedonians. Those that Greece could not Hellenize, it forcibly evicted or outright murdered under the guise that they were Bulgars or Slavs not worthy of living on Greek soil (stolen from the Macedonians).

With regards to history, the Greek position is that the ancient Macedonians were Greek and the modern Macedonians are not really Macedonians but Slavs.

Greece, in spite of being a signatory to the 1913 Treaty of Bucharest, does not acknowledge the invasion, occupation and partition of Macedonia. The violent and forcible acquisition of Macedonian territory is justified on the basis that the ancient Macedonians 2,300 years ago were Greek and therefore Macedonian lands belong to Greece.

The Greek position is very clear and simple;

Macedonians do not exist.

Greece is a racially homogenous State and has no minorities.

The name Macedonia is Greek and the Slavs can't have it.

The Bulgarian (Bulgarian State) position regarding the Macedonian question:

The Bulgarian position is also very clear and simple;

Macedonians do not exist.

Macedonia is a province of Greater Bulgaria.

The people living in Macedonia (the Macedonians) are Bulgarians and speak a dialect of the Bulgarian language. (The Bulgarians are

forgetting that they are a Turkic tribe that spoke a Turkic language and the language the Bulgarians speak today is a dialect of the Macedonian language they adopted when they arrived in the Balkans during the 700's AD).

Neither the Greek nor the Bulgarian State has changed its position since these positions were established in the last quarter of the 19th century. (Bulgaria changed its position and did recognize the Macedonian nation for a brief period after World War II, but quickly reverted back to its old position of non-recognition).

So, why are Greece and Bulgaria refusing to budge on their positions?

So far Macedonians have pleaded their case, mainly through criticisms, to successive Greek and Bulgarian Governments and most recently to European and World institutions. This unfortunately has not worked for various reasons.

Neither Greece nor Bulgaria would admit to having Macedonian minorities living in their respective states so world institutions, in the way international laws have been established, have no case against them. Therefore, corrective change must come from within. Macedonian communities, particularly those living inside Greece and Bulgaria, because of repressive measures imposed on them by their governments, have not yet mustered the necessary will to force change from within.

Greek and Bulgarian Governments do not have the will on their own to affect change. Governments are elected on the basis of status quo and are not known for implementing revolutionary changes. Besides, these same Governments are responsible for creating the mess to begin with. To change would mean to admit to having made errors. How are the Greek and Bulgarian Governments going to fare if they, after lying to their voters for years, now admit that Macedonians do exist?

To adequately tackle these issues, we need to go as far back as the breakup of the Ottoman Empire and explore the political climate and circumstances under which the successor States, specifically Greece and Bulgaria were created. Who were the architects of these States and what purpose did they have in mind for them when they were created?

Why were Macedonians denied the right to exist in spite of their long history, heroic struggles and desire to create a Macedonian State?

Greece was a multicultural, multiethnic state at its inception in 1829 but instead of embracing its true and rich heritage, it opted for something unreal, mythical and bizarre. Why did modern Greece, a multiethnic Christian State abandon its true roots and instead opt to adopt a 2,500-year-old dead culture?

If Macedonia simultaneously belonged to Greece, Bulgaria and Serbia, as each claimed, why did they then agree to partition it? Why did they sign the 1913 Treaty of Bucharest agreeing to Macedonia's partition without any signs of protest?

To this day Greece and Bulgaria have done nothing to inform their citizens of the truth about Macedonia. Instead they continue to lie and deceive them maintaining that Macedonians don't exist. Worse, they label Macedonians as criminals and call them thieves for wanting back what is theirs; their lands, heritage, history, culture and language.

For the purpose of this essay I will only examine the historical realities of who the Macedonians and Greeks are and where they came from.

## **Who were the Ancient People that once lived in today's Greece and Macedonia?**

It is difficult for people to accept the idea that history, the way we know it today, may be biased to serve the interests of those who are in control. It is also difficult for people to believe that what they have been taught in school may not be the truth.

Do you not agree that there are Macedonians living throughout this world today and do you not agree that in Greece and Bulgaria people are still taught in school that Macedonians do not exist?

If you are a Macedonian why should you believe a history that denies your existence? If you are a Greek or Bulgarian why do you go along with and support your State sponsored education that is teaching you to hate Macedonians and deny their existence when you very well know they exist?

You can believe what you like but if you truly seek the truth then you must make every effort to be objective and be prepared to listen to all sides of the story.

Here I will attempt to objectively analyze the makeup of the people who lived in the southern Balkans from prehistory to today. It is my intention to provide you with a general overview and give you an alternative look at the age old problem of who these people were. In my analysis, I will provide you with summaries only, obtained from the most current sources and from old models that no longer fit the modern political agenda. For details, you are encouraged to read the original material (most of which is available on the internet) for yourselves. (I will not provide sources or source books because the last time I did that, those sources soon disappeared).

If you consult any standard history schoolbook on the southern Balkans it will tell you first that there were Greeks then Romans and then Ottomans. Later came the modern Greeks, Bulgarians, Yugoslavians and Albanians, but no Modern Macedonians. There will be a bit of

information about the Ancient Macedonians, mainly about Philip and Alexander, but only secondary to the so-called Ancient Greeks. There will be a bit of information on the Byzantines but mainly on how Roman and Greek they were. There will be plenty of information on the so called Greeks, their god-like activities, their brilliance and the various inventions they discovered, and how they are a real gift to our modern world.

After reading your standard history schoolbook you get the impression that no one outside of the Greeks and Romans ever existed in ancient times. You get the impression that no activities ever took place outside of Greece: not to the north, not across the Aegean, or south of the Mediterranean. It is as if an ice sheet and thick fog covered those lands inhabited only by Barbarians, a kind of people who could neither think nor speak but barked words of unknown tongues.

Why did these authors come to this conclusion? Why are the Greeks and Romans so important to history and the Barbarians so unimportant? Were the Barbarians truly that uncivilized and contributed nothing worth mentioning?

How did the so-called Greeks become so civilized and the Barbarians, living so close or even among them, so uncivilized? How can people living so close together be so far apart culturally?

Thanks to unbiased scientists and scholars and people with no political agendas, questions such as these are now being slowly answered and the answers might surprise you.

One such scientist and scholar is Professor Mario Alinei who has put forward a new theory called the “The Paleolithic Continuity Theory on Indo-European Origins”.

Basically, what Professor Alinei says, and backs with archaeological, linguistic and genetic evidence, is that people have always been where they are today. In other words, the indigenous people of any given region in eastern Europe and the Balkans have always been where they are today. By always he means they have been there for more than ten

thousand years and as long as thirty-thousand years, as far back at the great ice age.

If we accept Professor Alinei's assertions then we must also accept the idea that Macedonians, Serbians, Greeks, Bulgarians, Albanians, etc have always been where they are today and who could have been identified by different names. Naturally some things may have changed over time due to evolution and external influences, but the basic makeup or the under layer of people has remained the same.

Among other great scholars who have contributed immensely to the identification of the various ancient people living in the Balkans are Jozko Savli, Matej Bor, Ivan Tomazic, and Florin Curta.

Jozko Savli, Matej Bor and Ivan Tomazic, independent of Professor Alinei's model, have discovered that most of the ancient toponyms in and around the Balkans bear the original names given to them by the Barbarian tribes which lived there many millennia ago. The real surprise about these discoveries is that the toponyms have Slavic names.

Discoveries were also made in the Balkans and eastern Europe of Barbarian artifacts that bear inscriptions of Slavic origins. Ancient inscriptions found in south-eastern Europe, which scientists for years have been unable to translate, are in fact of Slavic origin.

Attempts were made by French paleo-linguists, who even went to Asia and Africa looking for ancient languages, to translate some of these inscriptions but without success. Too bad they didn't go to Macedonia or any part of the Balkans and consult with local Slav speakers.

Looking at the ancient puzzle from a different perspective, Odisej Belchevski, a student of Homer and of the Heroic Age, has also independently discovered words of Slavic origin in Homers poems and other works.

Before I continue allow me to clarify what I mean by Slavic origin. The inscriptions, Homeric words, toponyms, names, etc., of which I

mentioned above, are classified to be of Slavic origin because they are familiar only to Slav speakers. Modern Slav speakers by using the Slav language are able to read and decipher their meaning.

Naturally the question here is “How can that be?” Aren’t we taught in school that the Slavs are newcomers to the Balkans? Aren’t we taught that they started arriving in the Balkans around 600 AD?

What were Slavs doing in the Balkans long, long before that?

Judging from the large numbers of Slav speakers in Europe today and the vast regions they occupy, it only makes perfect sense that they have been there for a long time. Conversely, it makes very little sense to think that a group of barbaric people so backwards, so disorganized and so late coming to the Balkans could be so successful and gain so much in such a short time.

It is no surprise that when we put Savli, Bor, Tomazic, Curta, and Belchevski’s assertions together with Alinei’s model that the Slav question makes perfect sense.

The Slavs have always been where they are today! By Slavs I mean Slav speakers.

The many nationalities and ethnicities whom we today erroneously call “Slavs” are in fact “Slav speakers”. And today we can say with some certainty that they were the first Europeans.

As far as history can tell us the word “Slav” became widely known for the first-time during Emperor Justinian’s reign around 500 AD. I believe Justinian was the first Emperor to try and classify the various tribes inside and outside of his empire. He called them Slavs because they shared a similar/common language. In other words, they were called Slavs because they spoke a similar language not because they were ethnically related as mainstream historians would have us believe.

There are some today who believe that in the old days the Slavic language was an international language, just as English is today. The

fact that various nationalities and ethnicities spoke the Slav language in such a vast region definitely qualifies it to be called international.

Additionally, the Slavic language, because it was spoken by everyone (educated and common people), is truly a language of the people. That is precisely why it has survived for so many millennia and has maintained its integrity with little change over the ages.

It is not my intention here to debate the origin of all the Slav speakers but to give you a general overview only of those who lived in and around the southern Balkans and in Eastern Europe.

Who were these ancient Slav speakers who qualify to be called the first Europeans?

If we carefully examine our history books we will find, as mentioned earlier, “Barbarians” occupying the vast plains of the Balkans before there were any so called “Greeks” or Romans. These Barbarians lived tribal lives not worthy of any mention by our modern historians. If, however, we do some more research we find that these Barbarians were separate and distinct people who lived in and occupied their own territories and, most importantly, had names.

The least known of these ancient peoples were the Lyncestian and Paeonian tribes who, relative to geographical Macedonia, lived in the northern part of central Macedonia in the region where the Republic of Macedonia is today. South of the Lyncestians and Paeonians and along the entire central Greek Peninsula lived the Aegean Pelasgian tribes. West of the Pelasgians, Lyncestians and Paeonians lived the massive Illyrian tribes. East of the Lyncestian, Paeonians and Pelasgians lived the massive Thracian tribes.

Phrygians once also lived in Macedonia in the lush Vardar Valley but most of them left Macedonia long ago for their ancestral homeland in Asia Minor.

What is interesting about these groups of people is that they shared a common language. According to some who translated inscriptions from artefacts from all of these groups, their language was Slavic. By Slavic I mean it could be understood by modern Slav speakers.

Who were the so called “ancient Greeks”?

Mainstream history tells us that the Pelasgians lived among the so-called ancient Greeks and as I mentioned earlier, were indigenous to the region but not all of the so-called ancient Greeks were indigenous. The Dorians and Aeolians who made up most of the so-called Ancient Greeks arrived in the region from the north.

According to Bernal, the so-called ancient Greek culture, as we know it today, did not develop on its own but rather was influenced from the outside.

Bernal also claims, with overwhelming evidence, that the indigenous people living in present day Peloponnesus were culturally and linguistically influenced, mostly by the more civilized Egyptians and Phoenicians. It was this cultural influence that transformed the Dorians and Aeolians with an admixture of Pelasgians into what we today call the “ancient Greek” civilization.

About three and a half millennia or so ago during and perhaps after the Mycenaean civilization collapsed, Egyptians and Phoenicians also crossed over the Mediterranean and Aegean Seas and colonized parts of the Peloponnesus. The more civilized Egyptians overwhelmed the indigenous population so dramatically that it was completely transformed. As the Egyptian civilization in Egypt declined and the Egyptian colonists became assimilated into the new cultural melting pot, the region took on an entirely new character.

The Phoenicians, may also had colonies in the Peloponnesus. They gave the so-called Ancient Greeks the gift of writing. It is unclear whether the Phoenicians were colonists in the Peloponnesus or not but it is clear that the ancient Peloponnesians received their alphabet from the Phoenicians. It is also believed that the city Thebes was a Phoenician city.

I want to mention at this point that it is not my intention to debate the origins, ethnicities and nationalities of the so-called “ancient Greeks” but to point out that the under layer of ancient Greek society was Pelasgian, in other words, Slavic.

The effects of this cultural transformation were so profound that only in a few centuries the Peloponnesians became an entirely new and unique society with a unique language and alphabet and a new way of life. Its citizens mastered the arts and sciences, navigation and began to traverse the vast waterways and built self-governing cities.

## **Who were the ancient Macedonians?**

Geographical Macedonia as we know it today was the center or the hub, where the great tribes came together. Macedonia was where the lines between Illyrian, Lyncestian, Paeonian, Thracian, Pelasgian, Phrygian and other tribes overlapped.

The ancient Macedonians were a mix of all the people who lived in geographical Macedonia as we know it today.

It is unclear exactly to which tribe the first Macedonians belonged but history tells us they originated in the Kostur region and by Herodotus's time (450 BC) they expanded eastward and occupied the lush western Vardar Valley. Macedonians were a mixture of all the nations and tribes that lived in Macedonia. By Philip II's time, when geographical Macedonia was consolidated under one king and under Macedonian control, all these people came to be known as Macedonians.

Was there any relationship between the so-called ancient Greeks and the ancient Macedonians?

As mentioned earlier, the indigenous people of the Peloponnesus became the so-called ancient Greeks under the cultural influence of the Egyptians and Phoenicians. The people of Macedonia became Macedonians under the influence of various Macedonian Royal dynasties.

As most of the Phrygians left Macedonia, the Macedonians continued their easterly expansion taking over Phrygian lands and filling the power vacuum the Phrygians left behind. By Philip II's time all tribes within Macedonia were conquered and came under Macedonian control.

Before Philip II conquered the ancient Peloponnesians (the so called ancient Greeks) they were very protective of their culture. They treated outsiders with suspicion and disgust and those who did not share their values were labeled Barbarian and kept out of their affairs (Olympic games etc).

As the two communities grew and expanded they started to come in contact and began to trade. Being economically and militarily weaker the Macedonians for many years had to bend to the will of the more powerful Peloponnesians, but that eventually changed. The only relationship Macedonians had with the Peloponnesians, at the time, was trade.

Culturally the two communities were worlds apart and to suggest that they were similar would be irrational.

Problems between the two communities began to develop when the Athenians started colonizing Macedonian lands at Chalcidice. Macedonians being militarily weaker used diplomacy to defend themselves. As foreign intrusions continued, however, the Macedonians had no choice but to build up their military strength and fight back, eventually defeating the Peloponnesians (except for Sparta) and placing them under Macedonian political and military control.

For those who believe the Macedonians were Greek, here are some facts to remember;

The so-called “ancient Greeks” or Peloponnesians as I referred to them above, outside of their colonies at Chalcidice and a few other places at the tip of southern Macedonia, had never set foot on Macedonian soil.

The Peloponnesians (so called ancient Greeks) were never united as a single state with a single government as the Macedonians were. Each of their cities operated as a stand-alone state with its own independent government.

The allied Peloponnesian forces were defeated in battle at Chaeronea in 338 BC and subjugated by the Macedonians from which they never recovered. Their largest City States, including Athens, were occupied by Macedonian garrisons until 197 BC when they were freed and re-occupied by the Romans.

Since their defeat in 338 BC the ancient Peloponnesians, including Sparta, were politically subordinate to the Macedonians and for over 140 years were under Macedonian control.

Why did the ancient Macedonians speak “Greek” and not their Slavic language?

It is interesting to note that the so-called “Greek language” spoken in Macedonia before Philip II’s time was not indigenous to Macedonia and, according to inscriptions found, was identical to the Attic language spoken in Athens. So whatever Greek the Macedonians spoke was acquired from education in schools, not from their mothers.

For the Greek language spoken in Macedonia to have been a “Greek dialect” as modern Greeks would have us believe, it would have had to have some divergence from the original Attic just like other dialects found in the Peloponnesus. The fact that the Greek language spoken in Macedonia was exactly the same as the Attic, evidenced by the inscriptions found, can only mean that Macedonians acquired it through education in Athens or Athenian teachers taught it to Macedonians in Macedonia.

Another fact to remember, again as evidenced by inscriptions found, the Macedonians did not speak “Greek” until a later period. In other words, the Greek language came to Macedonia from Athens, a fair distance outside of Macedonia, long after it was spoken for centuries in the Peloponnesus.

The common Macedonians, which included the lower ranks of the Macedonian military, did not speak “Greek” because they were not educated in “Greek”. The common Macedonians spoke another language, a language indigenous to the region. We can now say with some certainty that that language was Macedonian, a Slavic dialect that belonged to one or more of the indigenous groups living in ancient Macedonia. We can also say with some certainty that the Slav language

spoken by the ancient Macedonians is the root language of modern Macedonian spoken by the Macedonians today.

Closer to Philip II's time when Macedonia became involved in trade and commerce with its neighbours, it began to more frequently use the Attic language, which evolved into the Koine or common language.

Koine was made famous by Alexander the Great after taking it around the world and making it his international language. Koine unfortunately did not take root with the people and as such always remained a language of trade and commerce.

Koine was elevated to a language of education in Egypt by the Ptolemies, they were Macedonians.

Before disappearing altogether, the Koine language resurfaced again the late 19th century when it was adopted by the modern Greek State as the language of its people. The key word here is adopted. Koine is not a mother language of the Greeks.

By then Koine had evolved so much and had acquired so many foreign elements that it had completely drifted apart from its Attic roots.

If the ancient Macedonians spoke a Slavic language then why did they not leave any evidence of it?

This is a question frequently asked by modern Greeks who refuse to accept the idea that Alexander the Great spoke anything but Greek. This is a valid question; however, I believe it should be reworded as follows;

We know from history that the ancient Macedonians spoke another language besides Koine. What we don't know is what that language was. So, the question should be;

Why haven't the modern Greeks and their supporters made any effort to identify this other language the Ancient Macedonians spoke?

Contrary to popular belief there is evidence left behind by the ancients. The problem is finding accredited scholars to verify it and admit to its existence. Most historians, paleo-linguists, philologists and archaeologists prescribe to the “Slav Migration Theory” and believe the Slavs arrived in the Balkans no earlier than the 6th century AD. They refuse to recognize a Slav existence in the Balkans before that. So, as far as they are concerned these writings are of unknown origin.

Some of these inscriptions were found centuries ago and were believed (labeled) to be of unknown origin.

Many of these inscriptions are now being slowly translated by a new group of scholars who are dedicated to pursuing the truth, not just accepting the status quo. Among these dedicated individuals is our own Macedonian paleo-linguist and pioneer Vasil Ilyov (also spelled Iliov).

Ilyov has translated a number of these inscriptions (some are displayed on his website) and has independently concluded that they are indeed of Slavic origin.

The myth that no Slavs existed in the Balkans prior to the 6th century AD was invented by the 19th century Great Powers and propagated by the modern Greeks.

Modern Greeks maintain that “if such inscriptions existed” Greek archaeologists would have found some by now.

However, I can say that I am certain Greek archaeologists have found such artifacts and have translated them. The problem of making such evidence known would have contradicted their political agenda so it was hidden from public view.

To prove my point: It is well known that Macedonia is the cradle of Slavonic Civilization yet the Greeks have not admitted to having discovered a single artifact that bears Macedonian Cyrillic writing in the Greek occupied part of Macedonia?

It is also well known that every Church in Greek occupied Macedonia had at least one Slavonic Bible and dozens of icons with Slavonic writing. Every cemetery had headstones with Macedonian Cyrillic inscriptions. Where are they now? Why is there not a single shred of evidence, not even in a museum, that proves Slav speaking Macedonians ever existed in Greek occupied Macedonia? Is it because these artifacts don't exist or is it because Greek authorities have systematically removed them and hidden them from public view?

If Greek authorities have lied to us about the existence of Slavonic (modern Macedonian) artifacts that we know existed, what makes you think they will admit to the existence of even more damaging evidence like very ancient Slav artifacts?

How can these artifacts (with very ancient Slav inscriptions) exist in abundance in the Republic of Macedonia just north of the Macedonian-Greek border and as far north as the Danube River and not exist in Greece?

But then again, since when is the Greek State known for telling the truth about Macedonia's past anyway?

## **Who are the Modern People that live in Macedonia and Greece?**

Previously I mentioned that the ancient indigenous people living in the lower Balkans were Paeonians, Lyncestians, Pelasgians, Phrygians, Illyrians, Thracians, Dorians, Aeolians and others. From these tribes, over time and through external cultural influence and through mutual contact, two distinct independent and powerful groups emerged as we know them today; the Macedonians and the so-called Greek City States.

The Macedonians, who were a monarchical society, organized as a single large state and were ruled politically by a royal dynasty and a single king.

The Peloponnesians or so called “Ancient Greeks”, who were a mixed democratic-monarchical society, organized in many (dozens) City States. Some were democratic and some were ruled by dynastic monarchies, which were very protective of their culture, xenophobic and closed to outsiders. The City States were never united and were never organized under a single political system or under a single universal leader.

Even though the two communities emerged and developed independently, they eventually came into contact and, to some extent, influenced each other politically, economically and culturally. For the most part, however, the two communities remained aloof until Macedonia conquered the so-called Greek City States in 338 BC. After that the City States lost their political independence and began to decline under Macedonian domination. Then in 197BC they were briefly liberated and re-conquered by Rome, from which they never recovered.

There is no question that Macedonia was culturally influenced by the more advanced City States but no one can say with any certainty how deep this influence penetrated Macedonian society. If language can be a factor of “cultural influence”, then we know that some Macedonians

were bi-lingual and only a small segment, mainly the educated elite, spoke Attic, later Koine. The vast majority, or common Macedonians, neither had the inclination nor the need to learn foreign languages. It is doubtful that the farmers and soldiers who came from rural Macedonia had any desire or need to learn more than their own indigenous mother tongue.

With regards to ethnic mixing, there is no historical evidence of any extraordinary ethnic mixing between Ancient Macedonians and so-called Ancient Greeks. There is, however, historical evidence that during classical times the number of slaves living in Attica and Sparta roughly equaled the number of free inhabitants. What this means is that even at the outset, the so-called ancient Greeks were multi-ethnic. There were no slaves in Macedonia.

I just want to mention here that many ethnicities, including blacks from Africa were among the Attic and Spartan slaves who during the Roman occupation were freed and became citizens and assimilated into the so called ancient Greek society. So, even the so called ancient Greeks were not “pure”, never mind the modern Greeks being pure descendants from the ancients.

To learn more about the differences between the Ancient Macedonians and the Ancient Greeks, I would recommend reading J.S.G Gandeto's book “Ancient Macedonians: Differences Between The Ancient Macedonians and the Ancient Greeks”. Gandeto has dedicated his entire book, using mostly ancient sources, to prove without any doubt that the Ancient Macedonians were not Greeks. None of the ancient historians believed that the Macedonians were so called Greeks.

For the 140 years or so between the time Macedonia conquered the so-called Greek City States and Rome annexed Macedonia, there were open borders and people could have moved back and forth but no one knows to what extent and how many, if any, moved.

What we do know is that a number of cities (18) were founded by Alexander III during his Eastern campaigns which in part were

populated with Macedonian settlers. These cities continued to exist for centuries after the Macedonian dynasties collapsed. We also know that sick and wounded Macedonian soldiers were left behind by Alexander as far back as today's Pakistan and never returned. You can draw your own conclusions from this.

Rome was a City State and did not have a large population to run its vast empire, so it tended to hire from the outside. Given that Rome just conquered the Macedonian kingdoms (three of them) with well established administrations and trained armies then it must have been natural for Romans to hire Macedonians. And they did!

Much of Rome's army, administration and leadership, including its Emperors, especially towards the end, came from the non-Roman but Romanized populations outside of Rome. Even the Romans themselves admitted that the Emperors from Macedonia were the most capable and progressive of all leaders. The Empire always expanded, prospered and gained magnificence under the leadership of Macedonian Emperors such as Justinian I and Basil II.

There is historic evidence of Roman colonization in Macedonia but to what extent and what ethnicities, is unknown. The only visible evidence of Roman presence in Macedonia today are Roman ruins and Latin speaking Vlachs, who I will address later.

After the Roman Empire split into West and East, the Western part disintegrated while the Eastern part continued to exist for another millennium or so. During this vast time span, much happened in the Balkans and the region experienced population shuffles and foreign invasions which greatly influenced its demographics.

The Eastern Romans or Byzantines (better known as the Pravoslavs to the Macedonians) were notorious for population shuffles. It is well known that invaders such as the Slav speakers, who entered Byzantine territories from north of the Danube River, were moved to Morea (modern day Peloponnesus) and to Asia Minor. These invading Slav

speakers, I believe, were refugees fleeing from other invading tribes. They came to the Balkans from beyond the Danube River.

When Bulgars from the north started crossing the Danube River, the Pravoslavs (Byzantines) moved populations from Syria and Armenia to fill sparsely populated areas in Northern Macedonia so that they would act as barriers against the invasion.

The Pravoslavs (Byzantines) were also notorious for displacing people from trouble spots. History has recorded a number of such displacements including the one of Tsar Samoil's ancestors who were moved from Armenia to Macedonia.

Besides internal population displacements, outsiders also invaded the lower Balkans over the years.

According to H. G. Wells who studied world history, it was the Wall of China that propagated displacements and caused demographic changes in Western Asia and Europe. The Wall of China, which was meant to end Mongolian invasions into Eastern China, was in fact the cause for the westward migrations.

The wall forced Mongolian migrants, who spent their summers in Mongolia and winters in China, to abandon their traditional annual migrating patterns and turn westward. Pressure from the westward Mongol invasions pushed some of the indigenous tribes further to the south thus causing a cascading effect, which was eventually felt in the Balkans.

Some of the tribes that invaded the south Balkans included the Visigoths who crossed the Danube around 376 AD, the Huns around 447 AD, the Avars around 560 AD, the Bulgars around 680 AD and so on. Slav speakers or Slav movements have also been recorded by history but they were simply refugees fleeing from the invaders. Many Slav families, due to economic hardships brought on by the invaders,

left their ancestral homes and traveled south into Pravoslav (Byzantine) territories.

As mentioned earlier, the Slav speakers were indigenous to the region. The Slav speakers are the original Europeans, the first people to settle the Balkans.

After the Bulgars, next to invade the Balkans were the Vikings. The Vikings made their trek from the north by water but were repelled by the Byzantines. At the turn of the first millennium following the Vikings came the Muslims. The Muslim invaders were successfully repelled and held at bay for at least another two centuries before they made their presence felt in the Balkans. By the 12th century AD the Muslims had mustered enough strength to cross over from Asia Minor, invade the Eastern part of Europe and keep parts of it occupied until the 20th century.

The Muslim invaders, better known as the Ottoman Empire, were numerically far inferior to the vast populations they invaded. To overcome their population shortages, they tended to assimilate local people from the occupied lands by converting them to Islam. Some converted voluntarily and yet others were forcibly converted regardless of their ethnicity. The only distinction that mattered to the Ottomans was whether their citizens were Muslim or not, everything else was unimportant.

By the 16th century, before nationalism had reached the Balkans, people could only be distinguished by their religion. There were Muslims, the dominant class, and others, the administrative and working classes. The reason I emphasize that there was a non-Muslim administrative class is because it played an important role in the emergence of the modern Balkan States.

By the 19th century, outside of religion and language (and to a small extent, traditions), it was impossible to distinguish between the various ethnicities living in the lower Balkans. People simply identified with

their religion and to some extent with their language. There were Muslim Turks who spoke Turkish, Macedonian, Albanian, Roma, etc. and then there were Christians who spoke Turkish, Macedonian, Koine, Vlach, Albanian, etc. So, it was impossible to determine ethnicities.

In the categories of “people classification” religion was number one, followed by social class, language and then by tradition. Nationality or ethnicity was not even a criterion until nationalism was introduced in the Balkans in the 19th century.

## **Nationalism in the Balkans**

As mentioned earlier, before the introduction of nationalism in the Ottoman Balkans, the Ottoman State classified its citizens by religion, Muslims and “others”. The “others” belonged to the predominantly Christian and Jewish faiths. Official Islam prohibited any other classification of its citizens outside of religion. No national or political groupings were allowed.

Within the Christian classification, unofficially there were two classes of people, the administrative or middle class and the working class.

In terms of language most of the working class was uneducated and spoke one or more of the indigenous languages of the region, which were orally passed on from generation to generation. The vast majority of the administrative class was educated and spoke two or three languages. They spoke their mother tongue, Turkish and Koine. The Ottoman administrative class was multicultural and multiethnic, similar to modern middle classes in multi-ethnic states.

The administrative class had to be educated in order to serve the Ottoman Empire in various capacities, from running the Empire’s banks to running Ottoman business outside of the Empire to performing domestic duties like purchasing goods, administering the Christian Churches and performing translating services for the Ottoman Empire. Muslims by law were not allowed to handle money, speak foreign languages, or venture outside Islamic borders.

The administrative class was educated in the ancient traditional language of administration and commerce, the Koine language. Koine was spoken in Tsari Grad (Constantinople or Istanbul) by the middle class since the city was created. Tsari Grad served as the capital of both the Byzantine and Ottoman Empires.

When nationalism was introduced on masse for the first time in the Balkans, the very concept was foreign and difficult for people to comprehend. People clearly understood religious affiliations, languages

spoken and social class structures but they could not tell one nationality from another because the concept was foreign to them.

## **The Nationalities of the Lower Balkans**

Up to this point we have given you a general overview of historical events that affected the demographics of the lower Balkans from the dawn of the Roman Empire up to the early 19th century.

I also want to mention that, from the 4th century BC up to the 19th century AD the lower Balkans have been without borders and internal travel and population movements have been without restrictions.

So, at the dawn of the 19th century we have two major religions dominating the lower Balkans, Islam and Orthodox Christianity. Among the two religions we have a very large population of Macedonian speakers and smaller populations of Turkish, Albanian and Vlach speakers. Among the Orthodox Christians we also have the middle class of Koine speakers.

It is very important to understand that before the introduction of nationalism in the lower Balkans, the Koine speakers, also known as the Phanariots, had no allegiance to any nation nor clung to any ideals of nationalism or nation building. They were simply the servants of the Ottoman Empire. However, as the Ottoman Empire began to crumble, the Phanariots, being educated and thus more enlightened on world affairs, were the first to “consciously awaken”. Their first thoughts were to replace the ruling Turkish class with themselves. They wanted to replace the Muslim Ottoman Empire with a Christian one and restore the Byzantine Empire to its former glory.

The idea of another “Large State” in Europe, especially in the Balkans, unfortunately created fear in the leadership of the European Great Powers whose only comfort was to see the Ottoman Empire dismantled and replaced with small, manageable “western style” States.

After failing to create “one Balkan State” out of the crumbling Ottoman Empire, the Phanariots refocused their efforts in creating several new states, the kind that fit in the agenda of the European Great Powers: the kind that could be manipulated by Western leaders and serve their interests. Following the Western example, the Phanariots began to employ nationalism as the line of division for making these new States. Nationalism unfortunately was a new concept for the Balkan people and the proposed dividing lines were but a blur at best.

## **The Political Agenda**

Earlier I said that just before the breakup of the Ottoman Empire, the southern Balkans were politically dominated by two religions, Islam and Orthodox Christianity. Even though Islam was the dominant religion, the majority of people belonged to the Christian religion which (supposedly) had the support and backing of the Great Powers. Within the two religions I said there was a linguistic division consisting of a majority of Macedonian speakers and minority Vlach, Albanian and Turkish speakers. Within the Christian religion I also said there existed two classes of people, the middle educated class which in addition to its multi-lingual mother tongue spoke Koine and Turkish and the multi-lingual working class which spoke Macedonian, Vlach, Albanian and Turkish.

Earlier I also said that the Great Powers had no desire to see a large Christian State succeed the Ottoman Empire. They preferred to see several smaller, equal sized, ethnically divided, Western style states emerge in its place. They needed to be equal sized and ethnically divided to ensure they would never merge and will constantly be in conflict with each other and dependent on the Great Powers to protect them.

The formation of the new Balkan States therefore was NOT a natural process but rather a politically motivated one designed to serve the interests of the Great Powers, mainly Britain, France and Russia.

I just want to mention here that the Christians belonging to the Ottoman middle class (also known as the Phanariots) were, in a modern sense, a multi-ethnic group of people. The fact that they spoke the Koine language and were associated with the formation of the Greek State does not make them ethnically Greek. In fact the word “Greek” at the time was a reference to a “class” of people and not to an ethnicity or nationality. Nationalism and ethnic affiliations are post 19th century concepts which were later introduced to the Balkans by the Great Powers and were absent in the religiously oriented Ottoman society.

The middle or Greek class, before the Greek State's formation, was prevalent not only in Greece but throughout the entire Ottoman Empire. Some families also existed outside of the Ottoman domain and operated businesses through southern coastal Europe and the coastal Black Sea.

As a side note I also want to mention here that the word "Bulgar", a derivation from the word "Vulgar", also defined a class of people and not an ethnicity. In pre-19th century Ottoman society a Christian working class existed which was referred to as the "Vulgar" class by the Latin and Koine speakers. The Vulgars or Bulgars were the uneducated commoners, people employed in agriculture and in menial jobs. They also belonged to a multi-ethnic community, in the modern sense of the word, and were prevalent not just in Bulgaria but all throughout the entire southern Balkans.

The breakup of the Ottoman State into smaller and diverse States initially had its problems. Many of the leading revolutionaries opposed the idea and for that they were labeled traitors and sent to prison. Most revolutionaries fought to liberate their lands and free themselves from Turkish oppression. They did not sacrifice themselves to serve the Great Power in their bid to breakup their lands. Unfortunately, in the end the strong got their way. The Great Powers were determined to break up the Ottoman State by any means possible. But by successfully creating "ethnic diversities" from the same stock of people and poisoning them with their nationalistic propaganda, they not only shattered the Ottoman State but they made sure these people would never again reunite.

Since there were no clear national or ethnic distinctions between the various people at the time, the Great Powers simply used whatever was convenient. Since there was already a clear class distinction between the Christians, they took advantage of it. The Christian middle class was defined as being "ethnically Greek" and later the Christian working class became the "ethnic Bulgarians".

The Great Powers sought their opportunity and when it presented itself they took it without giving much consideration to problems it might create for the new States. In other words, no consideration was given to the fact that this might divide people who were otherwise genetically and linguistically related.

The problems created were unfortunately solved by even more drastic measures. In Greece's case, the entire population had to be assimilated to fit this new, artificially created "ethnic profile".

Once the Great Powers forged the new Balkan States and defined the desired identities they then unleashed their plans on the entire Balkan population. It was only a matter of time before each new State assimilated everyone within its control.

When they were done with their own territories, the new Balkan States turned their efforts to Macedonia.

By then almost all European Great Powers were stakeholders in the European remnant part of the Ottoman Empire. While France saw the Balkans as an opportunity to invest and expand its failing political influence (since the Napoleonic wars), Russia saw the Balkans as a way to extend its shipping and naval might beyond the Black Sea and into the Mediterranean. Britain, the major power of the time, felt threatened by Russian westward encroachment and did everything it could to stop Russia from "contaminating its back yard"; the Mediterranean Sea.

Serbia was first to emerge as an autonomous state as a result of a number of political power plays between Russia and the Ottoman Empire. Next to emerge was Greece. Greece emerged as a result of a failed rebellion prompted by the Phanariots in an attempt to take political control away from the Ottoman authorities.

Even though Greece was simultaneously wooed by Britain, France and Russia, Germany had the pleasure of administering it first. Britain, France and Russia mistrusted each other and opted for Germany to take control of Greece because Germany at the time was most neutral with least personal vested interests in Greece.

While Germany strived to establish Otto, the young Bavarian prince, as King of Greece, the French and especially the British were hard at work creating a history for this new “Greek identity”. It was to be modeled after the so-called “Ancient Greeks” about whom the West had learned centuries ago from the Muslim Arabs in Spain.

The Modern Greek State was created by the Great Powers and exploited by Britain for the sole purpose of protecting its interests in the region. Since then and to this day Greece has been a British and Great Power protectorate and pawn. Evidence of this can be found in contemporary British Parliamentary debates.

When Greece was created for the first time in 1829 it encompassed a small region known as the Morea (modern day Peloponnesus). The tiny fledgling State was located on the lands where the so called “Ancient Greeks” once lived more than two thousand years ago.

The neo-Greek leaders, just molded from the upper stratum of a very diverse society, unfortunately had no notion of ethnicity let alone of belonging to an extinct race that had once lived and vanished two millennia ago.

The cultures, traditions and languages of the Moreans were so diverse that the newly formed Greek State had great difficulty not only containing itself as a nation but also choosing a course for its future. But after some years of struggle and a civil war, the tiny State finally overcame its problems. Unfortunately what emerged was neither real nor a reflection of its original self. Everything real was forsaken in favour of a fabricated mythical culture and an ancient dead language. The Greek State adopted a long-gone dead language to falsely connect itself to a past it never had. Today, Greece marvels at ancient artifacts as if they belong to it, ignoring that it usurped that language and culture and falsely made it its own.

Unlike Macedonia and other Balkan nations who have natural and vibrant languages, Greece artificially created and used (up until the

1970's) an imposed adaptation of the classical language called the Katharevousa. "Hellenizing" under these conditions not only rendered the Hellenized races mute but also imposed a meaningless and emotionless language on those doing the Hellenization. (If you want to learn more about the Greek language controversy read Peter Mackridge's book "The Modern Greek Language".)

When Greece was born for the first time in 1829 it was unclear what her national character was. To quote David Holden, "the Greek nation-state was a product of western political intervention- 'the fatal idea' as Arnold Toynbee once called it, of exclusive western nationalism impinging upon the multi-national traditions of the eastern world. By extension, therefore, at any rate in theory, it was a child of the Renaissance and of western rationalism. (Page 28, Greece without Columns)

Officially, Greeks call their modern state Hellas, and are officially known as Hellenes, but at the same time they call themselves Romios (from the Turkish Rum millet) implying that they are descendents of the Romans. Greece, however, is a derivation of the Latin "Graecia" (Page 29, Holden, Greece without Columns) the province of the Western Roman Empire which extended from Mount Olympus to the Peloponnesus. Again, to quote David Holden, "its international use to describe the sovereign state that currently occupies that territory is merely a reflection of the fact that 'Greece' in this modern sense is literally a western invention. (Page 29, Greece without Columns)

If philhellenism is a love affair with a dream, then Hellenism is a dream of a few "evil geniuses" who sought to destroy what was real in favour of creating something artificial, like a Frankenstein's Monster. Hellenism may be a dream for a few (mad men) but it has been a nightmare for the Macedonian people. Here is what Karakasidou has to say. "Greek natural identity was not a 'natural development' or the extension of a 'high culture' over the region of Macedonia, although now it is frequently portrayed as so. The ideology of Hellenism imposed a homogeneity on the Macedonian region and its inhabitants." (Page 94, Fields of Wheat, Hills of Blood)

It is important at this point to understand that the South Balkan demography at the turn of the 19th century was composed of pockets of Vlachs, Albanians and Turks among a sea of Slavs.

It is also important to understand that south of Mount Olympus, between Macedonia and the Peloponnesus in the western region known as Epirus, lived a large population of Albanians. The region east of Epirus known as Thessaly was populated mostly by Vlachs.

It was very rare at the time that any single identity occupied an area or a region larger than a village. Similarly, there was no consistency of overlap but definite overlaps of various identities throughout the entire region. In other words, there was no place larger than a village that was pure, diverse identities occupied all regions with varying densities. The Albanians, for example, were a majority at the very western fringe of the Balkan Peninsula near the Adriatic Sea and their numbers tended to fall exponentially towards the east. The Vlachs on the other hand were a majority in Thessaly but their numbers diminished into small pockets in the easterly and northerly directions. The Slav speakers, modern day Macedonians, Serbians and Bulgarians, were about the only identities that were consistently dense throughout the southern Balkans north of Mount Olympus.

Little is known of the methods Greece used to assimilate Albanians, Slavs, Vlachs and Turks in the Morea, Epirus and Thessaly but their methods became well known in Macedonia.

By the turn of the 20th century the Great Powers were so successful in breaking up the Ottoman State, through the creation of politically and diametrically opposed States that they decided to allow the process to extend into Macedonia. The Macedonian national consciousness and Macedonian desires for independence was completely ignored in favour of partitioning Macedonia between Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria and respectively assimilating the Macedonian identity to fit the new profiles of those states.

# **Origins of the modern people in the southern Balkans**

## **The Macedonians**

According to the old model, ethnically and linguistically speaking the modern Macedonians can trace their roots as far back as 1500 years before the time of Kiril and Metodi and the Slavonic renaissance.

According to new evidence, as described earlier, Modern Macedonian roots extend as far back as 3000 years.

## **The Greeks**

As previously mentioned, ethnically and linguistically speaking, the modern Greek nation is a 19th century artificial creation. The modern Greek ethnicity was created by the assimilation of Albanians, Slavs, Vlachs, Turks, Macedonians, Latins, Pontian Turks, etc. Ethnically and linguistically speaking, there were no Greeks before the 19th century. The people referred to as Greeks by the outside world, by the West in particular, were the multi-ethnic Ottoman Christian merchant class and the Church Clergy who spoke the Koine language.

## **The Vlachs**

There are three probable scenarios for the existence of the Vlach identity in the southern Balkans;

They were an indigenous Balkan people recruited and educated in the Latin language by the Romans to serve in their administration, and/or

They are remnants of the many garrisons Rome employed to maintain a hold on the region, and/or Remnants of Roman and other Latin speaking settlers.

There are also some who believe the Vlachs in the lower Balkans are Romanian migrants and settlers who over the years ventured south in search of pastures for their herds of livestock. Some abandoned their

traditional lifestyles and became the town and village merchants yet many still roam the mountainous countryside raising sheep and goats.

## **The Albanians**

As for the Albanian presence in the Balkans, there are also three probable scenarios;

They are a Byzantine transplant from Ancient Albania (modern day Azerbaijan) to the Adriatic coast of modern Albania.

They came with the Ottoman Empire as elite fighters and guards and were settled on the western part of modern-day Albania.

Being influenced by Italy they are a combination of Latinized Slavs and western migrants.

Or, all of the above.

It is unlikely however that modern Albanians are related to the ancient Illyrians.

On the question of the Albanian Tosk identity, there are some who believe that the Tosks may have come from Tuscany, Italy.

I want to mention at this point that Albanians are not indigenous to Macedonia. The Albanians living in Macedonia today are recent settlers and newcomers to the region. Some made their entry into Macedonia from Albania during the Ottoman era and others came from Kosovo during the open border Yugoslav era.

## **The Turks**

Ethnically, it is unknown who the Turks of the 19th century were. They were identified as Turks because they were Muslim. The Ottoman Empire was multi-ethnic and Turk was synonymous with Muslim. It is also well known that the Ottoman Empire assimilated many different peoples from many different places, including from Macedonia.



## **The Modern Dilemma**

It seems that the world has changed in the last century or so and old values are being replaced with new ones. When the religiously oriented Ottoman Empire was crumbling and nationalism was fashionable, it was fashionable to create monotone and homogeneous nations. Today nationalism is no longer fashionable and the world is busy creating new colourful fashions that are more politically correct and a better fit in today's reality.

While the world is trying to right the wrongs of the 19th century, Greece it seems is stuck in a time loop experiencing over and over the myths of its own creation. No one would have noticed or cared if it weren't for the fact that, while living its fantasy, Greece has created a living nightmare for the Macedonian people.

No self respecting, rational Macedonian would have ever wanted to tangle with Greece on such intangible and outlandish matters as ancient history, ancient flags and ownerships of names, but when Greece made these a life and death situation for the Macedonians, what choice did they have?

This bizarre Greek behaviour and distaste for Macedonians I will leave to the experts to analyze. But if I may be allowed to state my opinion, I would speculate that Greece fears the Macedonians not for historical reasons but for what it has done to them in the last two hundred years. Macedonians who see themselves as a real nation and the rightful inheritors of the Macedonian lands and heritage, Greece feels, are not only a threat to its integrity as a country but are also a threat to its artificial identity.

Greece as a State must realize that its actions have consequences and it can no longer hold on to a value system that's not only unfashionable but undesirable. Modern Greece must accept the reality that it is not "Ancient Greece" and its people are not "direct descendents of the

Ancient Greeks”. It must also allow its citizens to choose for themselves who they are and what they want.

Maintaining a 19th century status quo is not only anti-progressive; it is downright dangerous.

It is a fact that the Macedonian identity has survived in spite of all Greek efforts to extinguish it.

Macedonia was not invaded, occupied and partitioned by Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria in 1912, 1913 because of legitimate claims, it was invaded, occupied and partitioned illegally and brutally because of imperial ambitions and land grabs.

The Macedonian people lost their opportunity to create a Macedonian State in the 19th century not because they did not have the will, or a legal and moral right to do so, they lost their opportunity because the Great Powers desired it.

It has been over one hundred years since Macedonia was snatched from the Macedonian people but the Macedonian desire to unite Macedonia has not ceased. One hundred years later a strong Macedonian identity is emerging with a message to the world; “we want to live free and in peace with our neighbours”. It is our wish as Macedonians to invite the Great Powers to re-consider their past actions and decisions and to help the Macedonian people re-integrate in the society of nations and take their rightful place in this world. We are here to stay.

Macedonians want nothing from Greece except what is already theirs. We are not your enemies. We simply want to co-exist peacefully with you as Macedonians with rights and privileges. We simply want back what is ours; our name, our lands, our heritage, our history and our dignity.

There is no Macedonian in this world today who does not want to see Macedonia reunited. Most Macedonians however are realists and are

willing to accept less if given a chance. For starters they would like to see the Macedonian minorities in Greece, Bulgaria and Albania gain recognition with full rights and privileges.

Macedonians want the Macedonian minorities in Greece, Bulgaria and Albania to enjoy the same rights and privileges that the Albanian and other minorities enjoy in the Republic of Macedonia.

## **Denationalizing the Macedonians in Greece**

Even before Greece invaded, occupied and annexed 51% of Macedonian territories, it had begun its denationalization process converting Macedonians into Greeks. By denationalization I mean, indoctrinating Macedonian people into believing that they are Greeks related to the so called “Ancient Greeks” the people that live south of Mount Olympus two and a half millenniums ago. Greece was determined to gain Macedonian territories by proving to the world that “Greeks” lived in Macedonia and by rights Macedonian territories belong to Greece. Unlike today where Greece is indoctrinating people into believing that Greek-Macedonians are related to the Ancient Macedonians. In those days the Greek State was making claims that Macedonians did not exist and only “Greeks”, “Slavs” (Serbians and Bulgarians), Turks, Albanians, Vlachs, Roma and Jews lived in Macedonia.

Before the formation of the Bulgarian state, Greece took it upon itself to view all Orthodox Christians as “Greeks” on account that they all were affiliated with the Patriarch Church. But after Bulgaria became a country in 1878 and established the Exarchate Church it challenged the Greek views.

After the establishment of the foreign Churches (Greek, Bulgarian and Serbian) inside Macedonia and in the absence of a Macedonian Church, the three competing states began to divide the Macedonian people by affiliation to their Church. In other words, according to Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria, ethnic Macedonians affiliated with the Greek Patriarchate

Church would be counted as Greeks, ethnic Macedonians affiliated with the Bulgarian Exarchate Church would be counted as Bulgarians and ethnic Macedonians affiliated with the Serbian Patriarchate Church would be counted as Serbians. Since there was no official or legal Macedonian Church in Macedonia (the Ottoman authorities on the advice of the other Orthodox Churches inside Macedonia would not approve of one) there were no Macedonians to be counted as Macedonians inside Macedonia.

It was by this method that the demographic in Macedonia was established and published into various statistics in the late 19th and early 20th century.

I believe Greece is still using this method to this day to count people in its state. How else does one explain the Greek demographic of 98% “Pure Greek” and 2% “Muslim Greeks”?

Demographic statistics released by Greek authorities before the invasion, occupation and partition of Macedonia in 1912, 1913, were based exclusively on Church affiliations. All Macedonians affiliated with the Greek Patriarchate Church were counted as “Greeks” even though they were not “ethnic Greeks”. The fact that there were virtually no “ethnic Greeks” living in Macedonia before 1912 did not stop Greece from showing numbers as high as 40% to 50%. Even the massive expulsions carried out between 1912 and 1928 were based strictly on religion and “Church affiliation” and NOT on ethnicities.

During the second Balkan War Greece initiated a massive denationalization program to eradicate everything Macedonian which began with the ethnic cleansing of entire towns and villages in South Central Macedonia (Kukush, Doiran, Demir-Hisar and Serres).

The criminal activities perpetrated by the invading Greek, Serbian and Bulgarian armies were brought to world attention which prompted the Carnegie Endowment Commission to investigate.

Even though all three States, Greece, Bulgaria and Serbia committed atrocities against the Macedonian people during the 1912 and 1913 Balkan Wars, for our purpose here I will only focus on the Greeks. The Carnegie Endowment Commission was dispatched from Paris on August 2nd, 1913, shortly before the end of the second Balkan War and returned to Paris nearly eight weeks later, on September 28th. In spite of opposition from the Greek government, the commission arrived in time to witness much of the war's aftermath and record most accounts while they were still fresh in people's minds. The commission's findings were compiled and released in 1914.

In a statement dated February 22, 1914, Carnegie Endowment Acting Director Nicholas Murray Butler said:

“The circumstances which attended the Balkan wars of 1912 and 1913 were of such character as to fix upon them the attention of the civilized world. The conflicting reports as to what actually occurred before and during these wars, together with the persistent rumors often supported by specific and detailed statements as to violations of the laws of war by the several combatants, made it important that an impartial and exhaustive examination should be made of this entire episode in contemporary history. The purpose of such an impartial examination by an independent authority was to inform public opinion and to make plain just what is or may be involved in an international war carried on under modern conditions. If the minds of men can be turned even for a short time away from passion, from race antagonism and from national aggrandizement to a contemplation of the individual and national losses due to war and to the shocking horrors which modern warfare entails, a step and by no means a short one, will have been taken toward the substitution of justice for force in the settlement of international differences.

It was with this motive and for this purpose that the Division of Intercourse and Education of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace Constituted in July, 1913, an International Commission of Inquiry to study the recent Balkan wars and to visit the actual scenes where fighting had taken place and the territory which had been

devastated. The presidency of this International Commission of Inquiry was entrusted to Baron d'Estournelles de Constant, Senator of France, who had represented his country at the First and Second Hague Conferences of 1899 and of 1907, and who as President Fondateur of the Conciliation Internationale, has labored so long and so effectively to bring the various nations of the world into closer and more sympathetic relations. With Baron d'Estournelles de Constant there were associated men of the highest standing, representing different nationalities, who were able to bring to this important task large experience and broad sympathy.

The result of the work of the International Commission of Inquiry is contained in the following report. This report, which has been written without prejudice and without partisanship, is respectfully commended to the attention of the governments, the people and the press of the civilized world. To those who so generously participated in its preparation as members of the International Commission of Inquiry, the Trustees of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace offer an expression of grateful thanks." (Preface) George F. Kennan. "The Other Balkan Wars"

The commission reported that the atrocities committed by the Greek army at Kukush took place on July 4, 1913. The town was a flourishing community of 13,000 people, the centre of an exclusively Slavonic-speaking area which the Greek army occupied and burned to the ground.

European observers confirmed that Greek soldiers evicted occupants from their homes which they then looted and burned down. It was estimated that in Kukush alone the Greek army burnt down forty villages and 4,725 houses. The commission's report provides the names of the burned down villages and respective numbers of houses in each that were destroyed.

The commission was also informed and given the names of seventy-four people, mostly women and eleven children, who were murdered by the Greek soldiers. It was estimated that more than 100,000

Macedonians became refugees and fled the town. No accounts were given regarding their losses of life and property.

On July 6, 1913 approximately four thousand refugees attempting to flee, accidentally ran into three hundred Greek cavalrymen. Unfortunately, following their surrender, the Greeks picked out sixty men and took them off to a nearby forest and had them murdered. Eye witnesses reported that Greek soldiers were seen the next day running rampant killing, raping and robbing people. The commission was unable to establish the exact number of refugees slain by the Greek army on site but according to witnesses the number was no less than 365 people.

One European eye witness informed the commission that after the Greek army entered Gevgelija it executed two hundred civilians. Most atrocities committed by the Greek army were corroborated by the soldiers themselves in letters they sent home to their relatives. A captured mailbag revealed the reality of horrors perpetrated against the Macedonian civilian population. According to one soldier's account "This war has been very painful. We have burnt all the villages abandoned by the Bulgarians [Macedonians affiliated with the Exarchate Church]. They burn the Greek villages [Macedonian villages affiliated with the Patriarchate Church] and we the Bulgarian [Macedonian villages affiliated with the Exarchate Church]. They massacred, we massacred and against all those of that dishonest nation, who fell into our hands, the Mannlicher rifle has done its work. Of the 1,200 prisoners we took at Nigrita, only forty-one remain in the prisons, and everywhere we have been, we have not left a single root of this race."

One hundred and sixty villages and no less than sixteen thousand houses were burned by the Greeks in the Second Balkan War. No attempt was ever made to find out how many civilians were tortured, raped and murdered and how many thousands were left homeless. It is important to note at this point that the Macedonian people did not raise arms against the invading allied armies (Greek, Serbian and

Bulgarian). Instead of opposing them, the Macedonians welcomed the allied armies and in fact helped them evict the Turkish forces from Macedonia.

The atrocities committed against the civilian population in Macedonia including the burning of villages was simply a cold act of genocide perpetrated to eradicate the Macedonian civilian population in order to make room for Greek colonization.

Unfortunately for the Macedonian people, this was only the beginning. No sooner than the invading armies established their spheres of influence and partitioned Macedonia with their imposed artificial and illegal borders, the process of denationalization was accelerated. First came the demands for loyalty to the new occupiers. Macedonians affiliated with the Exarchate Church were given twenty-four hours to “take what they can carry” and leave their lands. “This is Greece now and there is no place for Bulgarians here.” Those who remained were forced to swear loyalty to the Greek State. Anyone refusing to take the loyalty oath was either executed, as an example of what would happen to those disloyal, or evicted from the country. To explain the mass evacuations, Greek officials claimed that the inhabitants of Macedonia left by choice or became Greek by choice. The truth is no one was given any choice at all.

Thousands of Greek publicists began to fill the world with their shouting about the essentially Greek character of the populations of their newly occupied territory. The Greek newspapers began to write about a Macedonia entirely populated by Greeks and the fact that no-one spoke Greek was explained by calling the people ‘Bulgaro-phone Greeks’. The Greek army when entering villages and encountering Macedonians speaking Macedonian, discouraged them from doing so by crying out. “Why are you talking Bulgarian, this is Greece and you must speak Greek now.” All “Slavic” language schools and churches were closed and teachers and priests were expelled. Use of the Macedonian language and Macedonian names were forbidden and Macedonians were referred to as Bulgarians, Serbians or natives.

After the Treaty of Bucharest was signed on August 10, 1913 Macedonia's partition was formalized and the Greek Government set up a "Military Administration" to govern its new acquisition which Greece named "New Territories". Then an influx of administrators, educators, police, etc. were sent from Greece to administer it. Among other things, the first order of business was to "Hellenize the New Lands".

In 1917 Greece passed LAW 1051 inaugurating new administrative jurisdictions for governing its newly acquired Macedonian lands. In 1919 by the Treaty of Versailles, Britain and France ratified the principles of the Bucharest Treaty thus endorsing Macedonia's partition. This gave Greece the signal it needed to pursue forced expulsion, continue its policy of denationalizing the Macedonians and begin a mass colonization of the Macedonian territories by transplanting "potential Greeks".

What was surprising, especially to the Balkan delegation, was the raising of the Macedonian question by Italy. On July 10, 1919, Italy along with the USA made a proposal to the "Committee for the Formation of New States" for Macedonian autonomy. France flatly opposed the motion while Britain proposed establishing a five-year Macedonian Commissary under the auspices of the League of Nations. Greece and Serbia, by refusing to acknowledge the existence of a Macedonian question, literally killed the motion.

Another item that came out of Versailles was Article 51, the League of Nations' code to "protect national minorities". Article 51 of the Treaty of Versailles espouses equality of civil rights, education, language and religion for all national minorities. Unfortunately, article 51 was never implemented by the Balkan States or enforced by the League of Nations which Greece and Bulgaria, to this day, violate and ignore.

It is interesting to note that on September 29, 1924 Greece signed an agreement with Bulgaria declaring that the Macedonians in Greece were Bulgarians. Not to disappoint the Serbians, when they found out about

this, the Greeks changed their mind and on August 17, 1926 declared that the Macedonians in Greece were in reality, Serbs.

In 1920 the Greek Ministry Of Internal Affairs publishes a booklet “Advice On The Change Of The Names Of Municipalities And Villages” in Greek occupied Macedonia.

From 1918 to 1925, Greek authorities changed 76 Macedonian names of villages and towns to Greek ones.

“By law promulgated on November 21, 1926, all place names (toponymia) were Hellenized; that is the names of cities, villages, rivers and mountains were discarded and Greek names put in their place. At the same time the Macedonians were forced to change their first and surnames; every Macedonian surname had to end in ‘os’, ‘es’, or ‘poulos’. The news of these acts and the new, official Greek names were published in the Greek government daily ‘Efimeris tis Kiverniseos no. 322 and 324 of November 21 and 23, 1926. The requirements to use these Greek names is officially binding to this day. All evidence of the Macedonian language was compulsorily removed from churches, monuments, archeological finds and cemeteries. Slavonic church or secular literature was seized and burned. The use of the Macedonian language was strictly forbidden also in personal communication between parents and children, among villagers, at weddings and work parties, and in burial rituals.” (Page 109, John Shea, Macedonia and Greece, The Struggle to Define a New Balkan Nation)

The act of forbidding the use of the Macedonian language in Greece is best illustrated by an example of how it was implemented in the Township of Assarios (Giuvezna). Here is a quote from Karakasidou’s book Fields of Wheat, Hills of Blood.

“[We] listened to the president articulate to the council that in accordance with the decision [#122770] of Mr. Minister, General Governor of Macedonia, all municipal and township councils would forbid, through [administrative] decisions, the speaking of other idioms of obsolete languages within the area of their jurisdiction for the reconstitution of a universal language and our national glory. [The

president] suggested that [the] speaking of different idioms, foreign [languages] and our language in an impure or obsolete manner in the area of the township of Assirios would be forbidden. Assirios Township Decision No. 134, 13 December 1936.” (Page 162, Anastasia Karakasidou, *Fields of Wheat, Hills of Blood*)

By 1928, 1,497 Macedonian place-names in Greek occupied Macedonia were Hellenized (LAW 4096) and all Cyrillic inscriptions found in churches, on tombstones and icons were destroyed (or overwritten) prompting English Journalist V. Hild to say, “The Greeks do not only persecute living Slavs (Macedonians)..., but they even persecute dead ones. They do not leave them in peace even in the graves. They erase the Slavonic inscriptions on the headstones, remove the bones and burn them.”

In the years following World War I, the Macedonian people underwent extensive measures of systematic denationalization. The applications of these “denationalization schemes” were so extensive and aggressively pursued that in the long term they eroded the will of the Macedonian people to resist.

In Greece, in 1929 during the rule of Eleftherios Venizelos, a legal act was issued ‘On the protection of public order’. In line with this Act each demand for nationality rights is regarded as high treason. This law is still in force.

On December 18, 1936, Metaxas’ dictatorial government issued a legal Act ‘On the activity against state security’ on the strength of which thousands of Macedonians were arrested, imprisoned, expelled or exiled (EXORIA) on arid, inhospitable Greek islands, where many perished. Their crime? Being ethnic Macedonian by birth.

LAW 6429 was passed to reinforce Law 4096 on the Hellenization of toponyms and DECREE 87 was enacted to accelerate the denationalization of Macedonians. The Greek ministry of Education sent “Specially trained” instructors to accelerate the “conversion to Greek” language.

On September 7, 1938 legal Act No. 2366 was issued banning the use of the Macedonian language. All Macedonian localities were flooded with posters: 'Speak Greek'. Evening schools were opened in which adult Macedonians were taught Greek. Not a single Macedonian school functioned at the time or ever since.

Many Macedonians were fined, beaten and jailed for speaking Macedonian. Adults and school children alike were further humiliated by being forced to drink castor oil when caught speaking Macedonian. LAW 1418 was enacted to reinforce previous laws on renaming peoples' names and toponyms.

While there were some prospects for basic human rights for the Macedonian people in the Greek State in the early 1920's, those prospects died as Greece tightened its grip on Macedonia by implementing more racist assimilation policies. If that was not enough, on December 18, 1936 the Greek Government issued a legal act concerning, "Activities Against State Security". By this act thousands of Macedonians were arrested, imprisoned and expelled from their homeland.

In 1938 Australian author Bert Birtles in his book "Exiles in the Aegean" wrote, "In the name of 'Hellenization' these people (Macedonians) are being persecuted continually and arrested for the most fantastic reasons. Metaxa's way of inculcating the proper nationalist spirit among them has been to change all the native place-names into Greek and to forbid use of the native language. For displaying the slightest resistance to the edict-for this too is a danger to the security of the State-peasants and villagers have been exiled without trial." (Page 112, John Shea, Macedonia and Greece The Struggle to Define a New Balkan Nation)

In 1940 39 more place-names were Hellenized since 1929. In 1945 LAW 697 was enacted introducing more regulations on renaming toponyms.

The Greek Government in Greek occupied Macedonia worked closely with local collaborators and enlisted, from the Macedonian population, only those who could be proven trustworthy. The collaborators worked hard to identify all those who were sympathetic to the Partisans and reported on their activities on a regular basis. Anyone reported aiding the Partisans was severely punished and sometimes executed. In the spring of 1947 all those who were blacklisted were rounded up, arrested and locked up in the Lerin jails. Those accused of aiding the Partisans were taken out and executed. The rest, after spending one hundred days in jail without trial, were sent to various concentration camps in the most desolate Greek Islands where they were kept anywhere from 2 to 5 year.

I want to mention something very important here because I believe the Greek Government, even before the commencement of the Greek civil war, had plans “to deal with the Macedonians in Greece”. In 1947, during the Greek civil war, the legal act L-2 was issued. This meant that all those who left Greece without the consent of the Greek government, including Macedonians fleeing to save their lives, were stripped of their Greek citizenship and banned from returning to that country. The law applied to Greeks and Macedonians, but in its modernized version the act is binding only on Macedonians. It prevents Macedonians, but not former Communist Greeks who fought against the winning side from returning to Greece and reclaiming property. On January 20, 1948, the legal act M was issued. This allowed the Greek government to confiscate the property of those who were stripped of their citizenship. The law was updated in 1985 to exclude Greeks, but still binding on Macedonians.

Clearly acts L-2 and M were designed to work against the interest of the Macedonian people. Even innocent Macedonians who left before the Civil War were not allowed to return. The question now is “What was Greece planning to do with the Macedonians?” The way acts L-2 and M were enforced over the years brings another question to mind. If there were no Macedonians living in Greece, as the Greek state claims, then what ethnicity were these people the Greek Government was refusing to allow back? Why is it that Greek law makes the distinction between

Macedonians and Greeks when it suits Greece but not when it benefits the Macedonians?

By the end of 1947 battles were raging everywhere in Greece and the war was slowly moving north into Macedonia. Clearly this was a “Greek War”, yet again the Macedonian population was being sucked into it. The heavily armed Greek air force and mechanized artillery gained control of most cities and main roads. The Partisans were literally trapped and continued their strictly defensive campaigns mainly from the mountains Vicho and Gramos.

As the situation became critical, both sides stepped up their recruitment campaigns and again were drawing from the same population. The Partisans could no longer count on volunteers alone and began to enlist fighters by force and drafted anyone they could get their hands on, male or female. In addition to support roles, women were now armed and given combat duties. They fought alongside the men against the well-trained, well-disciplined and heavily armed Greek Army. Such was the fate of the Macedonian women, most of who were taken by force to fight someone else’s war.

As the war intensified the Greek air force regularly bombed Macedonian villages putting the civilian population, including children, in danger. In the spring of 1948, to save the children, a temporary evacuation program was introduced and implemented on a voluntary basis. It is estimated that about 28,000 children from the ages of 2 to 14 were rounded up and taken across the border into Yugoslavia. From there they were sent to various Eastern Block countries.

Again, I want to point out that the evacuation program was sponsored and organized by the Greek Partisan Leadership which was fully versed in “Greek Law” (act L-2). Yet they carried out the children’s evacuation program and lied to the trusting mothers that the evacuation was only a temporary measure. Almost all the Macedonian children who were evacuated in 1948 are still not allowed entry into Greece.

Fearing reprisal from the advancing Greek army, in August 1949 waves of refugees left their homes and went to Albania to save themselves. When the war was over Greece did not want them back. As a result, they were sent to Eastern Block countries that were willing to take them.

Years later some tried to return but Greece (act L-2) would not allow it. Even innocent Macedonians, who did not participate in the conflict, including the evacuated refugee children, were refused entry (again act L-2). Years passed and still they were refused entry again and again. They were not even allowed to visit ailing relatives. Finally, in 1985 a repatriation policy was introduced and amnesty was given but only to those of “Greek origin”. This again excluded the Macedonians.

After the Greek Civil War ended LAW 3958 was enacted to allow the confiscation of property of those who left Greece and did not return within five years. Villages in Greek occupied Macedonia were forced to swear “LANGUAGE OATHS” to speak only Greek and renounce their mother tongue (MACEDONIAN).

In 1962 DECREE 4234 was enacted to reinforce past laws regarding confiscated properties of political exiles and deny them rights to return.

In 1968 The EUROPEAN COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS accused Greece of human rights abuses and in 1969 the COUNCIL OF EUROPE declared Greece “undemocratic, illiberal, authoritarian, and oppressive”. Greece was forced to resign from the Council of Europe under threats of expulsion. The Military Junta in Greece continued its policy of colonizing the confiscated Macedonian lands and continued to donate Macedonian lands to persons with “proven patriotism” for Greece.

Those Macedonians who were stripped of their Greek citizenship because they declared themselves Macedonian want to have their citizenship reinstated.

Macedonians exiled from Greece would like to be recognized as Macedonians and their Greek citizenship along with their homes and properties returned.

Macedonians living inside Greece and Bulgaria want to be recognized as Macedonians with full rights and privileges.

Macedonians expect Greece, Bulgaria and Serbia to admit to and take responsibility for atrocities their Governments committed against civilians in Macedonia during the two Balkan wars.

Macedonians expect Greece to admit to and take responsibility for evicting large numbers of civilians, including the refugee children, from Greek Occupied Macedonia during the Greek Civil War.

I believe there is a future for Macedonians in Greece and Bulgaria. I also believe that Macedonia will some day be re-united.

The Macedonian people have proven themselves to be tolerant and able to peacefully co-exist with other people. Greece and Bulgaria on the other hand have chosen intolerance, oppression and violence as a way of life.

If Macedonians have shown anything is how-to live-in harmony with other people. Even at the worst of times, Macedonians never gave up believing that all people can live as equals. Was it not Gotse Delchev, a Macedonian revolutionary hero from the 1903 Macedonian Ilinden uprising against the Turks, who said, "I conceive the world only as a field of cultural competition among nations?" And what about the Republic of Macedonia, is there another country in the Balkans where minorities enjoy such rights?

Greek and Bulgarian denial of the existence of Macedonians, in view of the existence of a Macedonian State and a large and active Macedonian Diaspora, not only defies logic but goes against the European grain. Is it not Europe who wants to give minorities their rights?

Do Greece and Bulgaria, in view of the European agenda, really believe they will have lasting peace by oppressing and denying Macedonians and other minorities their rights?

Greeks and Bulgarians must understand that their survival does not depend on oppressing minorities and using violence to keep the peace. They must also understand that it is this inequality and oppression of minorities that causes tension, hatred and conflict. We don't all have to be Greeks or Bulgarians to live peacefully together. We can just as easily live together in harmony as Macedonians, Greeks, Bulgarians, Albanians, etc. if we so chose.

European businessmen want to do business in Europe without problems. They have recognized the value of "free societies" and that is precisely why they want minorities to be given their rights. By denying their minorities their rights Greek and Bulgarian Governments are in fact working against the European agenda and European values which in the long term will harm their states and their people.

It is well documented that Greece and Bulgaria have committed atrocities in Macedonia and those states sooner or later will face the consequences and will pay for their crimes. Denying the existence of Macedonians does not excuse them for what they did. As far as I can tell, committing atrocities against people is still a punishable crime under international law. Isn't that what the Haig is all about?

No one has the right to decide the Macedonian peoples' destiny but the Macedonians themselves. Granted nothing can be done these days without Great Power intervention, but if the Great Powers are serious and support the laws they have enacted, especially those that govern human rights, then Macedonians should have no problem shaping their own destiny, writing their own history and calling themselves what they truly are, Macedonians.

Macedonians have a big job ahead of them. In addition to learning about themselves, their history, their heritage and their right to exist in this world, they must also learn to tell every Greek, every Bulgarian and

every other person in this world the truth about themselves and about Macedonia.

The 1913 Treaty of Bucharest which divided Macedonia between Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria and all previously associated agreements and treaties were based on the premise that “Macedonians do not exist” and thus the 1913 Treaty of Bucharest was written and signed under the assumption that only Greeks, Serbians and Bulgarians live in Macedonia. Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria after annexing parts of Macedonia supposedly exchanged populations and cleansed their parts of Macedonia. After the exchanges each State declared that its population was pure. In other words, only Greeks live in Greece, only Bulgarians live in Bulgaria and only Serbians live in Serbia. A decade or so after Macedonian’s partition and annexation, each state in turn produced and published statistics confirming its population purity. After that, each state maintained that they had no minorities living in their respective states.

Today, more than a century later, we know that this is not true. Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria knew very well when they annexed Macedonian territories that the majority of the people living on Macedonian soil were not Greeks, Serbians, or Bulgarians, but Macedonians. They used religious affiliation in place of ethnicity to convince the Great Powers to allow them to freely annex Macedonian territories without obligation to the ethnic Macedonian people.

Even though the Greek, Serbian and Bulgarian people had no national awareness prior to the 19th century and before their liberation, they were recognized and allowed to form their own states. Yet the Macedonians who gained their national sentiments a little later and who fought for the creation of a Macedonian state were neither recognized nor allowed to form a state.

If Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria were correct in their claims and indeed cleansed their respective Macedonian territories, today there would be only Greeks living in the Greek part of Macedonia, Serbians living in

the Serbian part and Bulgarians living in the Bulgarian part. If Macedonians indeed did not exist, as Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria claimed more than a century ago, then today there would be absolutely no Macedonians in existence at all. Yet a census taken after the Republic of Macedonia declared its independence from Yugoslavia (Serbia's successor), showed a hefty majority of ethnic Macedonians living where Macedonians supposedly did not exist.

So, if Serbia was correct in its assumption that only Serbians lived in Serbian annexed Macedonia one hundred years ago, then where did these ethnic Macedonians come from? (Ah, yes, Tito created them. Thank you, Greeks, for your insight!)

There is only one correct answer to this question. Ethnic Macedonians have always existed; Serbia falsified its statistics to hide that fact!

One only needs to apply the same principle to Greece and Bulgaria to see the real picture.

Macedonia belongs to the Macedonian people and the Macedonian people want to live free as Macedonians. Macedonia was illegally occupied and partitioned between Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria under false pretenses and without the Macedonian peoples' consent.