

# *Who are the Macedonians?*

**Their struggles to survive as a nation**



**By Risto Stefov**

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## **Introduction**

This is not a story about battles fought and strategies applied but rather a story about the human factor and about the Macedonian people's struggles for equality and human rights. It is a story that will reveal, perhaps for the first time to some English speakers, how the Macedonian people were treated and are still being treated by the European monarchies and by the Great Powers and their proxies

Ever since the European monarchies and European Great Powers decided there was not going to be a Macedonian state in the Balkans, the Greek, Bulgarian and Serbian States and to a lesser extent the Albanian State have systematically used every means possible, including waging propaganda campaigns, to negate the existence of the Macedonian nation. They have done this not because Macedonians do not exist but purely to usurp Macedonian territories and the rich Macedonian heritage awarded to them by the European monarchies and Great Powers.

Until recently there were no organized, strong Macedonian voices outside of the Republic of Macedonia, to speak for the Macedonian people and their rights as citizens of this world, so Macedonia's adversaries, the Greeks, Bulgarians, Serbians and more recently the Albanians, spoke for them.

The time has now come when Macedonians are taking matters into their own hands, especially those living in the Diaspora, and challenging old beliefs and the illegitimacy of those who have been speaking for them.

Only Macedonians are the rightful heirs of the Macedonian heritage and the composers of Macedonia's history. Unfortunately there has been much resistance to this not only from Greece, Bulgaria, Serbia and Albania, the occupiers of Macedonian territories, but also from their western patrons who refuse to allow the Macedonian people to take their rightful place in the world.

The Macedonians are not Greeks, Bulgarians, Serbians or Albanians. Neither can they simultaneously be Greeks, Bulgarians,

Serbian and Albanian as their adversaries claim. The Macedonians are simply Macedonians and nothing else.

The Greeks claim that “Macedonia is Greek” and has been “Greek” for four thousand years. Contrary to ancient and modern evidence, they continue to insist that the ancient Macedonians were Greek. Again contrary to evidence and without proof, the modern Greeks claim that they are the direct descendants of the ancient Greeks and as such are the rightful heirs of the ancient Macedonian heritage. Furthermore, and without a shred of evidence, they claim that “all” the ancient Macedonians were killed off during the so-called “Slav invasions” of the fifth and sixth centuries AD and there is no one left but the Greeks to claim the ancient Macedonian heritage. The Greeks, again without any evidence, claim that the modern Macedonians are “Slavs” who invaded Macedonia during the fifth and sixth centuries AD and have nothing in common with the ancient Macedonians and therefore have no rights to the Macedonian heritage. These however are lies and myths.

This book will challenge these Greek claims, especially the claim that “Macedonia is Greek”, and prove them to be illegitimate. It will also take a step further and prove that the European monarchies and European Great Powers that artificially created Greece and the Greek identity were behind Greece’s attempts to usurp everything that is Macedonian and rob the Macedonian people of their heritage.

It is well-known that a “Greek State” never existed before 1829. The ancient City States where the Greek state is located today were conquered by Philip II, King of Macedonia, in 338 BC. Before that the City States existed as independent entities consisting of monarchies and republics each with their own government and borders; they were never united into a single nation. In other words, there never was a Greek state or a Greek ethnicity before Greece was created for the first time by the European monarchies in 1829.

I would also like to add that Philip II was a Macedonian King and it was he and his Macedonians who conquered the ancient City States. Therefore it is only logical and fair that the City States belong to the Macedonians and not to the artificially created modern Greeks.

The Great Powers created the Modern Greek Kingdom for the first time in 1829 in an attempt to partition the Ottoman Empire and prevent the formation of a single Slavic State in the Balkans. In other words, the Great Powers divided up the Ottoman occupied territories to prevent the Macedonian people from reclaiming Philip II's Macedonia, which extended from the Adriatic Sea in the west to the Black Sea in the east and from the Mediterranean Sea in the south to the Danube River in the north. Macedonia and the Macedonian people are the key to unlocking the "mystery of the dreaded Slavs" and their connection to the ancients and, of course, the Great Powers don't want that revealed.

Outside of that, the Great Powers, Britain and France in particular, wanted modern Greece to be a western satellite, a vassal state, a proxy to protect their interests in the Mediterranean. England wanted Greece under its influence so that it could block Russian access to the Mediterranean Sea without having its own costly military presence in the region.

As for the claims of purity of the Modern Greek nation there is ample evidence, both historical and scientific, that contradicts these Modern Greek claims. For example there is no modern pure Greek race that directly descended from the ancient City States. Today's modern Greeks, like other nations in the Balkans, are made up of mixed people, mainly Macedonians, Turks, Albanians, Roma, Vlachs, etc. A Modern Greek person is only Greek by education or by assimilation and has no roots beyond 1829. The Modern Greek not only has a mythical past but sadly has abandoned and forsaken his or her own real roots and heritage.

There are many examples of how the Greek State achieved nationhood at the expense of other nations and people. For example, when Greece occupied Macedonian territories for the first time in 1912 there were no Greeks living in Macedonia. Yet a few years later the Greek State produced statistics that showed that the vast majority of the Macedonian population in Greek occupied Macedonia was Greek.

The Greek State achieved this by shamelessly assimilating the Macedonian population through force. It eliminated all Macedonian

personal names and toponyms and replaced them with Greek ones. It then banned the Macedonian language and forced the Macedonian people to speak Greek. This created the illusion that everything in Macedonia was Greek. In other words, the Greek state put a Greek veneer over Greek occupied Macedonia and the Macedonian people and told the world that everything in Macedonia was Greek. But this was only a façade. Underneath it all everything, including the people, is still Macedonian.

During the 1920's, in its population exchanges with Turkey, Greece imported one million Christian Turkish colonists and settlers from Asia Minor, about one fifth of its entire population, and settled most of them in Greek occupied Macedonia. These people too were "made" Greeks, even though they were not, and those who refused to give up their Asian traditions were made Greek by force.

A major flaw in the Greek State's genealogical claim to the ancients is that, after sixty years of living on Macedonian soil, the Asian Minor newcomer settlers and colonists were presented to the world as the "real" Macedonians and rightful heirs of the Macedonian lands and heritage. They were also presented to the world as the "real" direct descendants of the ancient Macedonians. This is not only historical distortion but a blatant lie.

The Greek State, with Great Power approval, is not above deception and lies, even to its own people. Since it acquired Macedonian territories in 1912, the Greek state has done everything in its power to convince the Greek people and the entire world that the Greeks and Greeks alone are the rightful heirs of Macedonia's lands and heritage. By doing this the Greek State, with Great Power approval, has been robbing and is still robbing the Macedonian people of their historic heritage and their lands on which they have lived for hundreds of generations.

The Bulgarians too have claims on the Macedonian heritage and are using every means possible to convince the world that Macedonia rightfully belongs to them.

The Bulgarian claim is that “Macedonia is Bulgarian” because the Macedonian people are Bulgarian. They are Bulgarian because they speak a “dialect” of the Bulgarian language.

It is well-known however, and history will attest to this, that the Macedonians were already living in the Balkans and speaking the Macedonian language long before the first Bulgar Khans with their Turk and Tartar hoards arrived. Evidence shows that the numerically inferior Bulgars became assimilated into the larger indigenous Slav speaking population and adopted the Macedonian (Slav) language and culture. More correctly, the Bulgarians speak a dialect of the Macedonian language, not the other way around.

More recently, after the Serbian occupied part of Macedonia acquired its independence, the Albanians who over the years migrated into Macedonian lands are also making claims to the Macedonian heritage.

Without going into too much detail at this point, I want to mention that the aim of this book is to present the reader with a Macedonian perspective of Macedonia’s history and the role the Great Powers and their satellites Greece, Serbia, Bulgaria and Albania have played and are still playing in preventing the Macedonian people from taking their rightful place in this world.

It is time the world heard the Macedonian point of view. Contrary to what Macedonia’s adversaries profess, the truth is on the Macedonian side. There is ample evidence that shows that the ancient Macedonians not only survived the many calamities from ancient times to the present but their descendants do exist in Greece, Bulgaria, the Republic of Macedonia, Albania, Canada, Australia, the United States of America, Europe and the world over. They are now in the process of regrouping and are using the tools of the information age to fight back and retake what is theirs.

One last thing: It is my belief that the European monarchies and the Great Powers had no intention of allowing a Macedonian state to be created or a Macedonian nation to exist in the Balkans after the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire. Since then this intention has been passed on to the United States and is still in effect to this day. I

intend to provide evidence to prove this. One thing I don't know for sure is why the Great Powers are doing this; why do they not want a Macedonian state and a Macedonian nation to exist?

We have a long and hard fight ahead... it has been a struggle just to survive as Macedonians.

“To destroy a people, you must first sever their roots.” (Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn)

## **Who are the Macedonians – A Macedonian perspective**

A wise old man once said: “Listen to me... listen carefully... we are people... we are a tormented and tortured people... but we are people. We are Macedonians and this here is Macedonia, our ancestral home... where we were born and lived for countless generations. We are Macedonians no matter what others want to call us... We have been here for millenniums and we will be here for a long time... as long as we have our roots intact... We have long and deep roots... we are biblical people who have weathered the winds of time with our culture, language, traditions and original name intact... We have different views of the world and want to be masters of our own destiny... That is why we don’t fit in with our current masters. The masters of the universe today don’t want us to be independent, that is why they want to destroy us... to uproot us and send us into oblivion... to turn us into dust and scatter us around the world so that we can wander aimlessly until we are all completely lost. Today’s masters want us to become their dogs and make us do what they want us to do. But we refuse... we want to be Macedonians... We want to be masters of our own destiny. That is why we are at odds with them. They shaped the world the way they wanted... easier to manage and dominate... but we refuse to become a part of it. We don’t want to be Greeks, Serbians, Bulgarians, Albanians or any other of their fabricated identities because we know the truth... that we are Macedonians, an ancient people, a biblical people, with a long history... with long roots... And that is why we have been at odds with them since the beginning... since they came to our country uninvited, occupied us and began to change us... to make us what they want us to be... to tell us who to be, all the while insisting that we the Macedonians don’t exist...!”  
(A wise old man)

“The most effective way to destroy people is to deny and destroy their own understanding of their history.” (George Orwell)

## **In the beginning**

Our Macedonian roots extend back to a time when the world was a simple place and people lived in small settlements. Some historians believe that that was back in the 10<sup>th</sup> century BC when a small tribal kingdom, identifying itself as Macedonia appeared. This tiny tribal kingdom was located in today's Kostur Region and had Argos as its capital. Argos was located near today's town Rupishcha about eight kilometres south of Kostur.

There are other historians, however, who believe that Macedonian roots extend even further back, perhaps to before the Bronze Age. I often wrote in my articles that the Macedonians have existed since the melt of the last ice age. But my Slovenian friend, a retired professor from the University of Ljubljana, corrected me by saying that Macedonia was not covered by ice during the last ice age and that the Macedonian people are even older than what I claimed. If this is true, and there is no reason to believe that it isn't, then we can say that the Europeans began their journey in Macedonia and spread outwards as the glacial ice melted and receded northward.

But what we know with some certainty is that the Macedonians of the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium BC continued to migrate eastward from Kostur Region, filling the void left by the Phrygians who were retreating towards Asia Minor. The most commonly known story about the Phrygians is the story of king Midas who turned everything he touched into gold. King Midas was a Phrygian and his palace was located somewhere in today's Voden Region, in the heart of Macedonia.

As the prehistoric Macedonians expanded in population and moved eastwards into Voden Region they established their second capital in Aegae, located near present day Voden in Midas's old gardens. It took the small Macedonian kingdom about 200 years to build up its population before it was able to fully occupy the lush and fertile, abandoned Phrygian lands. After moving their capital to Aegae the Macedonians were no longer seen as tribal but rather as a monarchic kingdom. And as the Macedonian kingdom expanded and made its way to the lowlands and to the shores of the Aegean Sea, it began to

interact with the other people living in the region and to enjoy the economic and cultural currents of the Aegean world.

Many kings came and went in Macedonia since the old days in Argos and as the Macedonian population expanded and moved outwards it began to come into contact with the tribal kingdoms and city states that surrounded it. And with contact came conflict. Initially the Macedonian kings tried hard to avoid conflict and through diplomacy managed to keep their Macedonian kingdom intact. But with time some of these neighbouring tribes and city states began to infiltrate Macedonia and interfere in its affairs. Some city states, like Athens for example, began to colonize coastal Macedonian lands and helped themselves to Macedonian lumber, an essential ship building commodity. Others, like the Illyrians, invaded Macedonian settlements during harvest time, took all the people's crops and burned their homes. But life had to go on and compromises had to be made. The Athenians were left alone to take Macedonian lumber without paying for it and the Illyrians were given all the crops they wanted in exchange for not burning down Macedonian homes.

## **Macedonia's rise to power**

This is how life was in Macedonia for many years until about 400 BC when a boy named Philip, a prince, was born in 382 BC. As he grew up and experienced life in Illyrian camps and in Thebes as a hostage, Philip not only learned the ways of these people but also realized this was no way for his people, the Macedonians, to live. He thought about it a lot and when his time came to become king of Macedonia he decided to change things. He knew that in order to free his Macedonians from this bondage he would have to act diplomatically and from a position of strength. But in order to gain this strength he needed a strong army so he decided to recruit full time fighters. He offered them good wages and guarantees for the families.

To make a long story short, Philip or Philip II, as historians later named him, created a professional army dedicated to the defense of Macedonia. He also improved his military equipment and fighting techniques incorporating what he had learned while he was a hostage in various foreign military camps.

Initially, while attempting to secure a better position for Macedonia in the world scene, he used diplomacy and when that failed he used his military might. And as his successes became more noticeable it caught the attention of the bigger powers, who became aware that something different was happening in Macedonia.

Philip's aims were very simple; evict from Macedonia those who preyed on the Macedonian population and stop those who interfered in Macedonia's affairs. But in order to do that he would have to conquer and pacify them and then build a buffer zone all around Macedonia.

He began by offering the surrounding tribes and kingdoms a chance to join him and become part of Macedonia. He also offered their leaders a seat at his table in the Macedonian palace which was now located in Pella, Macedonia's new capital city. (For more information on the ancient Macedonian kingdom please read the first five chapters of my book "History of the Macedonian people From Ancient times to the Present", published in 2005.) Many of the

smaller kingdoms and tribes accepted Philip's offer, especially his offer to protect them from being attacked by the larger tribes and kingdoms. Then, one by one, he defeated the rest and put them under his control.

Philip quietly and diplomatically continued to expand and strengthen Macedonia but this did not go unnoticed by the City State great powers, especially Athens, who were now not only seeing Macedonia as a competitor in their economic affairs but also as a military rival.

The City States to the south made their alliances and amassed a great army in preparation to invade Macedonia. On hearing this, Philip decided it was time to meet them head on. On August 2<sup>nd</sup>, 338 BC, in the shallow Cephissus River valley near the village Chaeronea on the road to Thebes, the two opposing armies met face to face. On the north side stood Philip's Macedonians with 30,000 infantry and 2,000 cavalry, the largest Macedonian army ever assembled. Among Philip's commanding generals was his 18 year-old son, Alexander, in charge of the cavalry. On the south side, stood the allied Athenians, Thebans and Achaeans who assembled 35,000 infantry and 2,000 cavalry.

Closely matched, the armies clashed and while the battle ensued the Macedonian right flank fell back and began to retreat. Seeing the Macedonians weakening, the allied general gave orders to push on and drive the Macedonians back to Macedonia. As the Macedonians retreated, the allied flanks broke rank and began the pursuit. Not realizing it was a trick, the allies found themselves surrounded and slaughtered by Alexander's cavalry.

Ancient City State and Roman historians consider the battle of Chaeronea as the end of City State liberty, history and civilization.

After securing peace with the City States, Macedonian control was extended from the Mediterranean Sea in the south to the Danube River in the north and from the Black Sea in the east to the Adriatic Sea in the west. With Philip at the helm Macedonia was transformed from a backwater kingdom into a world power in a matter of several

decades, which now rivaled Persia, Macedonia's neighbour to the east.

Unfortunately Philip's reign ended abruptly when he was assassinated during his daughter's wedding celebrations. During a procession in the theater at Aegae, while standing between his son Alexander and his new son-in-law Alexander, a member of the royal guard named Pausanias stabbed Philip with a dagger and killed him. Pausanias then ran to escape, towards some waiting horses, but tripped and fell down. His pursuers caught up to him and speared him to death.

The "Greatest of the Kings of Europe" who liberated Macedonia from foreign occupation, brought it back from the edge of extinction and made it into a world power now lay dead in his own palace, killed by his own body guard. Philip II king of Macedonia from 360 BC to 336 BC died a senseless death and was succeeded by his son Alexander.

Many historians have laboured looking for reasons to explain why Philip was murdered. Was it a foreign plot, a conspiracy premeditated by his son Alexander? Was it an act of rage by a demented soldier? Or was it his wife Polixena's (Olympias's) revenge? I guess we will never know for sure.

Philip's son Alexander, or Alexander the 3<sup>rd</sup> or Alexander the Great as the Romans later named him, quickly took control of Macedonia and began to pursue greater dreams. Alexander was well-educated and well-trained in diplomacy and military strategy. He was the right person to replace Philip but unfortunately Macedonia was too small for Alexander's ambitions. He was not content to stay still and enjoy the established peace, especially after he put down all the uprisings in his kingdom after his father's death.

In early spring in 334 BC, Alexander set off to try his luck in Asia Minor. He knew his father had left him a powerful army but he had no idea how powerful it was until he challenged the Persian Empire and, after three decisive battles, brought it under his control. After that the Macedonians were unstoppable. But after conquering India they not only became tired of fighting but began to question why

they were fighting. (For more information on Alexander's campaigns please read chapters four to eight of my book "History of the Macedonian people From Ancient times to the Present", published in 2005.)

Alexander's campaigns lasted ten years during which time he did a lot of wonderful things like bridging east with west, opening trade routes that still exist to this day and expanding the world's scientific and general knowledge.

The greatest contribution the Macedonians made to the world, especially Europe, was the opening of Asia and Africa to European trade. The Macedonians made sure trade routes were created wherever they went and afterwards guaranteed their safety. Trade routes were not confined to the sea-lanes alone. Much trade was done over land and stretched from Europe to as far as the Hindu Kush. The area of trade, connected by a large grid of trade routes, was a huge rectangle that stretched from the Hellespont east to the Hindu Kush, south to the bottom of the Persian Gulf, west through Arabia to the Nile Valley and north back to the Hellespont. Trade was heavily concentrated on the Aegean side of Asia Minor and down the Nile valley. The western part of Asia Minor was the hub of economic activities both on shore and at sea.

But at the same time Alexander did lot of damage not only to the worlds he conquered but also to Macedonia itself.

As a young boy I remember listening to old men talking and cursing Alexander for what he had done and the many people he had killed during his campaigns of conquest. They said his best fighters came from the highlands of Kostur and Lerin Regions. Alexander desired them the most for his infantry because they were brave and strong. Unfortunately by taking the best young men away from Macedonia and sacrificing them for the sake of conquest left these regions depleted and depopulated and open to invasions. Many believed that Alexander undid what his father Philip was trying to do, make Macedonia strong and keep it free. These old people also believed that Alexander's conquests and campaigns not only did nothing good to preserve Macedonia but also spilled a lot of senseless blood. "We killed a lot of people for nothing. We spilled rivers of blood for

nothing. On top of that Alexander lost our Macedonia which Philip had tried so hard to protect. Those who we senselessly killed and enslaved have cursed us to suffer their fate. We are now cursed forever because of what Alexander did..." said one old man. Maybe all of this is an old wife's tale but it does have some merit. One cannot help but ask: "What exactly did Macedonia gain from Alexander's adventures?" I don't see any Macedonian ships traversing the waterways Alexander's expeditions opened up. I don't even see Macedonia as a great power sitting at a table with the other great powers? Heck, I don't even see Macedonia as a country on the map today, even though Macedonia was the first state to become a country in Europe. In fact most of the powers today want Macedonia and the Macedonian people erased from the map. Why? The old people would say because of Alexander's curse...

My aim here is not to reduce Alexander's accomplishments but to tell the other side of the story and not just the fantastic story the westerners wrote to make Europe look glorious and to give the modern Greeks legitimacy. Our story also contains the horror of wars and death. Many people died to make Alexander's victories glorious. They died senseless deaths, not to protect Macedonia but to satisfy Alexander's ambitions. Many people died in these far away regions for no good reason. That is why Macedonians are hated to this day. I remember my uncle Vasil telling me a story from when he was in Uzbekistan where he was sent after fighting in the Greek Civil War. Knowing Macedonia's glorious ancient history from the written western texts he had read, and being proud of it, he proudly told the Uzbeks that he was Macedonian. At the time he was working for a coal mining company and was out in the field. If it was not for the Russian workers who came to his rescue he would have been stoned to death. The Uzbeks became very angry and attacked him because he was Macedonian and proud of it. This anger has festered for over two-thousand years. The company had to move my uncle to another camp.

After Alexander died his empire fell apart and was divided among his generals. Macedonia was left alone and unprotected. It later became easy prey for the Romans. In fact, Alexander's generals fought against each other for more booty than they did to help Macedonia. Even on the eve of being attacked and conquered by the

Romans, none of the Macedonians from Alexander's divided empire came to its rescue. One by one the Macedonian empires fell and were gobbled up by the Romans because they refused to help one another. Macedonia fought fiercely against Rome but that was not enough. Greed and arrogance made the once mighty Macedonians weak and divided and as a result they lost everything. Because the Macedonians were fierce fighters the Romans were afraid of them. And to avoid being challenged again, the Romans, at various times, partitioned Macedonia into two, three and four parts. Walls were erected to divide the Macedonian people which stood there for over five centuries until Justinian I took them down. (For more information on the decline of the Macedonian Empires please read chapters nine to twelve of my book "History of the Macedonian people From Ancient times to the Present", published in 2005.)

The Romans were brutal in their treatment of the Macedonians and after robbing them of all their wealth they treated them like slaves. Many fled Macedonia during the Roman-Macedonian wars and many were forced to leave later. All young men age fourteen and over were forcefully ordered by the Romans to leave Macedonia or face death. The Romans wanted to make sure Macedonia would never again rise, which has been our story to this day.

The once mighty Macedonians who ruled the world were reduced to being Roman slaves not only in Macedonia but also in the Macedonian empires in Asia and Africa.

From being the masters of these regions, as they arrogantly saw themselves, they were reduced to slaves and forced to mingle among their former servants and line up in the Jewish soup kitchens for their survival.

Before I end this chapter I would like to say a few things about the Macedonian contribution to the world. As we well know, or should know, that new capital of ancient science and culture was not Athens but Alexandria of Egypt, a city founded by Alexander the Great and elevated to the world scene by Ptolemai and his descendents. Ptolemai was a Macedonian king and one of Alexander's generals and close friends.

The Macedonians during this period contributed a wealth of information to natural sciences, navigation, geography, biology, botany, astronomy, history and literature. It has been said that the city of Alexandria in Egypt, in her glory days, possessed the greatest collection of books and knowledge ever assembled in a single library. Built by Ptolemy Soter, the magnificent library of Alexandria was in possession of nearly half a million scrolls. Wherever the Macedonians went they built cities, libraries, cultural centres, museums and many other wonders.

While on the subject of ancient Macedonian cities, I want to mention that Alexandria did not stand alone in magnificence. There were dozens of magnificent cities built after Alexander's conquests but only a few stood out. One of those few was Antioch. Antioch was built on the fertile coastal plain linking southern Anatolia with Palestine, on the left bank of the Orontes River under the towering peak of Mount Silpios. It was a site where Alexander III had previously passed by and drank water from the plentiful, cool springs. But it was Seleucus, in 300 BC, who chose it for its access to the inland caravan routes, its cool breezes off the sea and for its rich surrounding lands that offered wine, grains, vegetables and oil. Like Alexandria, Antioch was an ethnically mixed city; a community of many races including retired soldiers. Antioch gained importance when it became the capital of the Seleucid Empire under Antiochus I's rule. The Ptolemy's annexed Antioch for a brief period but it was during Antiochus IV's rule that the city was re-developed and expanded. From 175 BC onwards its luxury began to rival that of Alexandria.

While these Macedonian built cities were far greater than Athens, even at the height of its glory, one has to wonder why modern Europe has bestowed such great honours on Athens and almost none on Alexandria. After all Alexandria was the most important city of the so-called "Hellenistic period". Poised between Africa and Europe, Alexandria was the meeting place of all races and creeds. Still flourishing to this day, it has endured two and a half millennia of violence and survived. Alexandria is a tribute to the greatness of its builders, the Macedonians. Even the Holy Bible was translated from Hebrew to Koine in Alexandria, courtesy of the Macedonians.

Speaking of Koine, in terms of literature, the Macedonians were more interested in learning from the conquered than in teaching the conquered. Being uninterested in learning the languages of the conquered, the Macedonian elite often commissioned translations of their works. Ptolemy Soter commissioned Egyptian priest Manetho to write the history of Egypt in Koine. Similarly, Seleucus Nicator commissioned priest Berassos to write a digest of Babylonian wisdom, again in Koine. In other words, it was the Macedonians who took Koine, the common language of diplomacy and trade, from the Aegean world and turned it into a cosmopolitan language used by all cultures from the known world. Education and room and board was provided for free to all who wanted to study as well as teach at the Alexandrian library and museum, again courtesy of the Macedonians.

## **Rise of Christianity**

Among the many things the Ancient Macedonians learned during Alexander's campaigns was that gods existed everywhere and every nation they encountered had their own gods. They were not the same gods as those in Olympus but they were similar. They had different names but functioned the same way or very close to the gods with which they were familiar.

After exploring the many deities and their cults, the Macedonians began to believe that the variously named gods might be different aspects of a single divine force. The newly discovered deities were in many ways similar to their own Olympian gods. For example, Astarte and Isis were very similar to Aphrodite and Jupiter, Ahura and Baal were similar to Zeus. The intermingling of various cultures, especially in cosmopolitan centres like Alexandria, Antioch and Solun, opened the door for deep philosophical debates questioning the nature, origin and purpose of the various gods. Fueled by revolutionary ideas, sophisticated theological theories began to emerge leading to the concept of a single divine being, a God who lives in heaven. (For more information on the rise of Christianity please read chapter thirteen of my book "History of the Macedonian people From Ancient times to the Present", published in 2005.)

The Jews, being spread out over large territories and long distances for a long time, had already experienced this and had concluded that these gods were "One God" and this God existed everywhere.

Many Macedonians, who visited the Jewish soup kitchens on a regular basis, after they were subjugated by the Romans, began to also visit the Jewish synagogues where they learned more about this "One God".

But as the synagogues began to fill with foreigners, and for other reasons, the Jewish religious leaders decided to restrict memberships in Jewish religious institutions to Jews only. To be a Jew, however, one has to be born from a Jewish line.

The Jews were admired for their stable family life, the relationships they sustained between children and parents and for the peculiar value they attached to human life. The Jews were also admired for something unusual for the time. During the Herodian period, mainly in the large cities in the diaspora, they developed elaborate welfare services for the indigent, poor, sick, widows, orphans, prisoners and the incurable.

All of these factors led to the development of the earliest Christian communities and were a principle reason for the spread of Christianity in the cities. The combination of God-fearing people and the destitute produced converts to Judaism from all races and classes of people, educated and ignorant alike.

Judaism had the potential to become the religion of the Roman Empire but in order to do that it had to evolve and adapt its teachings and organization to an alien world. It had to give up the idea that its priests were descendants of the tribes of Aaron, temple-attendants of Levi, king and rulers of David, and so on and so forth.

But for the true Jewish priests, heredity and the exact observance of the Jewish laws was very important. Unfortunately in the Jewish Diaspora, religious rules were not always observed and exact heredity was a matter of guesswork, sometimes even fraudulent. This loose application of rules was resented by the conservative Jews and any corrective action taken was usually met with opposition, violence and schisms. The irreconcilable differences between the old conservative Jews and the new breed of liberal semi-Jews grew wider and eventually gave birth to Christianity, a totally new faith.

It was again the Macedonians, among this new breed of liberal Jews, who were the first to preach Jesus' message to the worshippers of Mitra (Mithra), Astart and Zeus as well as others outside the Jewish faith. It was among the Macedonians in Antioch in about 40 AD that the followers of Jesus came to be known as Christians for the first time.

The apostle Paul, a Jewish convert to Christianity, was credited for giving impetus to Gentile Christianity and became an important

factor in the spread of Christianity to Macedonia when he had a vision of a man, a Macedonian, urging him to “come to Macedonia and help us”. Paul interpreted this vision as God’s will to take the “Good News” of Jesus into Macedonia. “And when they had come opposite My’sia, they attempted to go into Bithyn’ia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them; so, passing by My’sia, they went down to Tro’as. And a vision appeared to Paul in the night: a man of Macedo’nia was standing beseeching him and saying, ‘Come over to Macedo’nia and help us.’ And when he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go on into Macedo’nia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.” (Page 1044, The Holy Bible, Revised Standard Version, Holman, Philadelphia, 1952)

There are some who believe that the man in Paul’s vision was the Apostle Luke. Luke was a Macedonian, a physician by trade, who Paul met for the first time in Troas. Luke may have had some connection to Philippi to have Paul sent there. It is unknown whether Luke was a Christian or not before he met Paul but he was certainly one afterwards. Luke was a great writer and composer of one of the gospels.

It was around 50 AD when Paul set foot on European soil for the first time. That was in the Macedonian towns Philippi, Solun and Berroea where he preached the word of Jesus (Acta apos., XVI, id. XVII). Around 52 and 53 AD he sent epistles to the people of Solun (Epist. Thess); then in 57 AD he came back to Macedonia to follow up on his progress. In 63 AD he again sent epistles to Macedonia but this time to the people of Philippi (Epist. Philipp).

Even before Paul went to Macedonia, legend has it that Macedonia was visited by Jesus’ mother Mary. “The Blessed Virgin excluded all other women from Holy Mountain, when she claimed it as ‘Her Garden’ after she was driven ashore by storms near the site of the present monastery of ‘Iviron’ USPENIE.” (Page 41, Vasil Bogov, Macedonian Revelation, Historical Documents Rock and Shatter Modern Political Ideology, Western Australia, 1998) Holy Mountain, or Sveta Gora as it is known in Macedonia, is the holiest place in Europe and one of the greatest monastic centres of Christendom and it is located in Macedonia.

Initially, in his teachings, Paul had insurmountable problems trying to explain the nature of Jesus' doctrines through the Jewish faith and its laws to a Macedonian audience. However, by using well understood concepts of faith, which in themselves were somewhat of a departure from the original scriptures, the message was quickly understood. Paul was creative and by sticking to the most basic principles of Jesus' teachings and avoiding most of the six hundred and thirteen Jewish commands, he was able to convey his message. Surely no man could fulfill all six hundred and thirteen commands of the Jewish law? Was everyone then a sinner? In Paul's mind, this was not what Jesus was about. Jesus was about freedom and the liberation of law. Paul associated freedom with truth and in pursuit of truth he established the right to think. He accepted the bonds and obligations of love but not to the authority of scholarship and tradition.

If not by blood then by spirit Paul was truly a Macedonian because he preached something familiar to the Macedonians. Paul spoke directly to the Macedonian people and they understood him without the use of interpreters. This means that he knew the Macedonian language well enough to captivate his audience. Paul's first mission to Macedonia took him to Philippi where he met a woman named Lydia, a fabric dealer. Lydia was a widow who sold cloth and textiles and was a rare example of a free woman who lived and worked in Macedonia. For some time, Lydia was exposed to Jewish religious practices which she had observed at a colony of Jews who had settled near her home in Thyatira. Lydia, along with her household, is believed to be the first Christian in Macedonia to be baptized by Paul.

After Philippi, Paul's missionary journey took him to the beautiful Macedonian city Solun where, in 50 BC, he established what later came to be known as the "Golden Gate" church, the first Christian church in Europe. According to the Bible, Paul, along with his friend Silas, spent about three weeks in Solun in a synagogue debating the "Good News" of Jesus with the Solun Jews. But much to his disappointment he could not sway them to see things his way. He persuaded some to join but the majority would not join and became hostile towards him. The real surprise, however, was that

many non-Jewish Macedonians accepted the “Good News” of Jesus and embraced Christianity as their new faith.

I must mention at this point that the process of Christianization and the establishment of the Christian church was not that simple. The central and eastern Mediterranean, for the first and second centuries AD, swarmed with a multitude of religious ideas struggling to be spread out. Jesus’ message was being rapidly propagated over large geographical areas and his followers were divided right from the start over elements of faith and practice. The new faith may have had spirit but it lacked organization. Many Christian churches sprang up and practiced a kind of diverse Christian faith. Each church more or less had its own “Jesus Story” based on oral traditions and the personal biases of its founders. It would be a very long time indeed before the Christian faith would be amalgamated into a single religion and achieve unity. In the meantime, besides the competing Jews, the Christians had found a new enemy, the Romans.

Initially the Romans tolerated the Christians but as the Christians began to defy their gods and their rule in general, they began to clamp down on them and persecute them. And as my friend Pete Kondoff used to say, “many of those Christians who were fed to the lions were Macedonians.”

Christianity was a new force that would dominate the world, born out of necessity due to the cruelty of Roman rule, which drove the subjugated to a life of despair. Women refused to bear children because they knew their future was hopeless. Life was painful and the world was full of evil. By the turn of the first millennium the familiar old gods were nothing more than instruments of cruelty designed to serve the rich and powerful and cast the poor into oblivion. No people suffered more cruelty at the hands of the Romans than the Macedonians. Was it jealousy of Macedonia’s unsurpassed glory, or was it Rome’s fear of the Macedonian people’s rebellious nature?

Christianity and the Christians, especially in Macedonia, were persecuted to no end by the Roman authorities until about the 4<sup>th</sup> century AD.

In the year 313 AD, from the great imperial city of Milan, Emperor Constantine I, together with his co-Emperor Licinius, dispatched a series of letters informing all provincial governors to stop persecuting the Christians, thus revoking all previous anti-Christian decrees. All properties, including Christian places of worship, seized from them in the past were to be restored. This so-called “Edict of Milan”, by which the Roman Empire reversed its policy of hostility towards Christians, was one of the most decisive events in human history. What brought on this sudden reversal?

Rational thinkers believe that Constantine had the foresight to realize that Christianity was a growing power and could be harnessed to work for the good of the empire and not against it. Christianity was a result of changing times and harnessing its power was of far greater benefit than following the current policy of attempting to destroy it. (For more information on the triumph of Christianity please read chapters fourteen and fifteen of my book “History of the Macedonian people From Ancient times to the Present”, published in 2005.)

I need to mention one more thing here which Constantine did for Christianity which I think is important but not well known. For communication reasons Constantine chose a new capital for his empire and located it at Byzantium, today’s Istanbul.

One of Constantine’s priorities after seizing power was to find a suitable location for his capital where communication would not be a problem. Although Solun was contemplated for its cosmopolitan Macedonian culture, economy and defenses, Constantine opted for the city Byzantium. Byzantium withstood Philip II’s siege and survived. So, from a strategic point, Byzantium offered some advantages over Solun. Byzantium was located on the waters of the Bosphorus, linking the Mediterranean with the Black Sea. It was the centre of the Roman world, linking east with west. From a military perspective, ships could easily be dispatched east or west up the rivers and outflank every barbarian advance. Even Mesopotamia, Egypt and the Aegean and Adriatic coastlines were within a reasonable striking distance from Byzantium. From a commercial perspective, Byzantium was a lot closer to the eastern trade routes

than Rome or Solun. In other words, Constantine chose Byzantium by careful planning and design, which in the long term gave his empire the advantage it needed to survive for nearly a millennium and a half, until 1453 AD.

In 324 AD, Constantine began the construction of his new capital, the “City of Constantine”. This would be a Christian city fit for Kings that would not only rival, but would surpass the glory of Rome. To this day the Macedonian people call this city “Tsari Grad”, the “City of Kings”.

Power was where the Emperor was, and the Emperor was now in his own city in the hub of activity just at the edge of Macedonia. Although this was not purely a Macedonian city, it had the elements of Macedonian culture and tradition. It was a very un-Roman city in language and culture and not only imitated the Macedonian cities of Alexandria and Antioch (cities built by the Macedonians) but with time surpassed their cultural and academic achievements.

Constantinople or Tsari Grad, as it was known to the Macedonians, was going to be the power base of a new empire, a revival of Alexander the Greats’ old empire with a Christian twist. “This ‘Eastern’ or Byzantine empire is generally spoken of as if it were a continuation of the Roman tradition. It is really far more like a resumption of Alexander’s...” (Page 414, H.G. Wells, *The Outline of History*, Garden City Books, New York, 1961.)

While Constantine was building his new city, his mother Helena undertook a pilgrimage to the Holy Land and was instrumental in the building of the Churches of the Nativity at Bethlehem and Eleona on Jerusalem's Mount of Olives.

On November 8<sup>th</sup>, 324 AD Constantine formally laid out the boundaries of his new city, roughly quadrupling the territory of old Byzantium. While his architects were designing his new city, Constantine and his army, numbering about 120,000 troops, were established in Solun. Even before moving to Solun in 324 AD, Constantine had the old Solun harbour renovated and expanded to fit his fleet of 200 triakondores galleons and about 2,000 merchant ships.

By 328 AD the walls of Tsari Grad were completed and the new city was formally ready for dedication in May 330 AD. Soon after the city was opened, Constantine ordered the construction of two major churches, Sveta Sophia (Holy Wisdom) and Sveta Eirena (Holy Peace) and began laying the foundation of a third church, the Church of the Holy Apostles.

Unlike Rome, which was filled with pagan monuments and institutions, Tsari Grad was essentially a purely Christian city with Christian churches and institutions.

So, in essence one would think that Tsari Grad is an important, if not the most important, landmark of Christianity, where Christianity was essentially born, given its glory and ever lasting life? But, unfortunately, today Tsari Grad, or Istanbul as the Muslims call it, is a Muslim city. The European powers, especially England and France, who at the time when they were dividing the Balkans into small fragments and creating politically polarized little states from Philip's Macedonia could not find it in their hearts to allow Tsari Grad to exist as a Christian city. They could have given Tsari Grad to any of the little Orthodox Christian states they carved out of Macedonia and allowed it to remain the capital of Christianity, like it deserved to be. But, no! They had to shackle it under Muslim authority in hopes that it would be forgotten once and for all so that Rome, the mostly pagan city, would take its place as the shining light of Christianity. They made sure that Orthodoxy was pushed down and Catholicism was raised to take its place. But, so far, it has not worked for them.

While the Macedonians and later the Romans had no interest in local affairs, other than harvesting taxes, Christianity showed great interest in everyone irrespective of social status. In Jesus' eyes all people were created equal, in the image of God. The common people could identify with the Christian God and this had appeal for them. In contrast, deities of the Roman faith imitated "the all-powerful" Roman emperor sitting on his throne, far removed from the common man.

By making contact directly with the native people of the empire, the Christians began to institutionalize the local languages by giving

them life through the written scriptures and through educating the masses to read and write. Unfortunately at the turn of the new millennium, in Europe at least, there were only three scripts available upon which to base the written word and these were Aramaic, Koine and Latin. Most local languages had far richer sounds than the existing written scripts could accommodate and in time had to be refined. For the Macedonians, this would take a few centuries but eventually a single refined universal script would emerge and bring Macedonia back to her former intellectual glory.

With time Christianity introduced the gospel to every race in every corner of the Roman Empire and with it came the written word, formalization and later the institutionalization of the modern written languages. The Macedonian language, to which history refers as the language spoken by Alexander's soldiers, was no exception.

## **Period of Decline**

There are some who believe that the period between 27 BC and 180 AD was a period of wasted opportunity. It was a period of spending rather than of creating, an age of architecture and trade in which the rich grew richer and the poor poorer. It was an age when man's soul and spirit decayed. There were thousands of well-built cities supplied by great aqueducts, connected to each other by splendid highways and each equipped with temples, theaters, amphitheaters and markets. The citizens of these great cities were well refined in attitude and mannerism, indicative of a civilized society. All this unfortunately was achieved on the backs of slaves who came from the vastness of the Roman Empire, including Macedonia. The slaves provided the manpower to build the cities, aqueducts, roads, temples and theaters. The slaves provided the labour to cultivate the soil and feed the masses. They also provided the bodies that fuelled the blood sport that entertained the Roman citizenry. It is unknown how many slaves suffered cruel deaths to civilize the glorious Roman Empire, the pride of the west, but I am certain the numbers were horrendous.

It is often asked, "Who were the Roman gladiators, who were the Christians fed to the lions, and who were the slaves that gave their lives to build the Roman Empire and entertain the Roman citizen?" Although history provides us with no answers, all we need to do is look at the aftermath of every Roman victory and count the numbers enslaved.

Macedonia was the last nation in Europe to fall into Roman hands but the first en masse to fall into Roman slavery. While the middle class Macedonian, among others, supplied the Roman Empire with enlightenment, the Macedonian slave, among others, supplied it with the necessary labour to build its so-called civilization. Even though Macedonia, more so than any other nation in the history of the Roman Empire, had contributed to its development, modern Roman history mentions nothing of the Macedonians. The Macedonian people have received no credit for their contribution and the willing and unwilling sacrifices they made for the success of the Romans.

Even though it is well-known that the Roman Empire was built on the foundation of Alexander the Great's Macedonian Empire, its modern inheritors refuse to give Macedonia and the Macedonian people the credit the Macedonians deserve. Today's modern westerner speaks of the Roman Empire's accomplishments with great pride, forgetting that without Macedonia's contributions their precious empire would be an empty shell.

Every historian knows that the only contribution that the lumbering Roman Empire should be credited with is the construction of roads, cities and aqueducts. In terms of government it had none. At its best it had a bureaucratic administration that kept the peace but failed to secure it. The typical Roman was so overly preoccupied with pursuing "the loot" that he forgot to implement any free thinking and apply knowledge. He had an abundance of books but very few were written by Romans. He respected wealth and despised science. He allowed the rich to rule and imagined that the wise men could be bought and bargained for in the slave markets. He made no effort to teach, train or bring the common people into any conscious participation of his life. He had made a tool of religion, literature, science and education and entrusted it to the care of slaves who were bred and traded like animals. His empire, "It was therefore, a colossally ignorant and unimaginative empire. It foresaw nothing. It had no strategic foresight, because it was blankly ignorant of geography and ethnology." (Page 397, H.G. Wells, *The Outline of History*, Garden City Books, New York, 1961) This is only a tiny sample of what an eminent western scholar and author thinks of the contributions of the Roman Empire.

Ironically we refer to the Romans as civilized and to the Macedonians as barbarian, knowing full well that Macedonia employed no slaves and Rome built its entire empire on the backs of slaves.

Without getting into the grossness of the Roman excesses and coliseum blood lusts, I believe I made my point that "the Roman Empire was neither civilized nor did it contribute as much as its western proponents would have us believe".

“Macedonian king Perseus was defeated at the Battle of Pydna in 167 BC. After that Macedonia was divided into four parts and put under Roman domination. Macedonia was deprived of external independence but was allowed to retain internal self-governance. The four parts (meres, partes, regiones, T. Liv., XLV, 30, 2) were forbidden from mutual marriages, from trade and from mining the gold and silver mines. All prominent Macedonians older than 15 years old had to leave Macedonia ‘voluntarily’, under the threat of death, in order to prevent renewal of the country and rebellions from taking place against foreign dominance.”

It has also 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 descendents 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 descendents and remnants of Alexander the Great's 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.

“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.

By the end of the seventh century AD, Islam, seated in Damascus, was becoming a great power extending from the borders of India and Tibet to Spain and from southern Egypt and Arabia to Armenia. Islam, a powerful new religious force originating in Arabia, was taking over the near-east in rapid conquests following the Prophet Muhammad’s death in 632 AD.

By this time both the Persian and Byzantine empires had been weakened by their mutual wars and were experiencing devastating defeats at the hands of the Muslims. While the Persian Empire quickly succumbed to the Muslim assault, the Byzantines were only saved because of Tsari Grad’s strong triple wall fortifications. The defensive wall construction of Tsari Grad was commissioned around 410 AD and was completed by 500 AD. The inner wall was about twelve metres high and about five and a half metres wide, defended

by ninety-six polygonal towers rising more than ten metres above the wall. The second wall was about ten metres high defended by another ninety-six towers. On the outside was a moat about twenty metres wide and about six metres deep. Beyond the moat was a third low wall designed to act as a retaining wall for the moat. Also, one had to cross ten gates before entering the city. The outer walls were approximately five and a half kilometres long and extended about a kilometre and a half beyond the original Constantinian wall. The large area between the walls was never built up and was used for farming and to supply the city with secure sources of water. The existence of open farmland inside the city walls was a vital factor in the city's ability to resist sieges. Used to grow crops and graze animals, the land provided the city with a limited but secure source of food.

Europe and Christianity were saved because the Byzantines were able to withstand many waves of Muslim onslaught. Had Tsari Grad not been built to withstand the greatest of sieges, Islam would have overrun all of Europe, as it did Asia. Christianity and the world as we know it today would not have existed in the same way.

At the same time, being left in a weakened state the Byzantine Empire experienced an onslaught of attacks from invading hoards including, as mentioned earlier, Goths, Huns, Bulgars, Avars, etc.

A large Bulgar invasion force entered Byzantine territory and occupied several regions of northern Macedonia. Bulgar encroachment continued up until Boris's reign. By then the Bulgars had occupied a large part of the Strumitsa region and parts of central Macedonia to the Vardar valley. Finally in 864 AD the Byzantines intervened, but instead of pushing the Bulgars out they settled for peace. The peace treaty did not free Macedonia but it did put an end to Bulgar expansionism for a while. According to the terms of the treaty Boris was also obliged to accept Christianity as his state religion.

It is natural to assume that the invading hoards such as the Huns, Avars and Bulgars spoke non Slavic languages. But then we have today's Bulgarians speaking a Slavic language, which of course is a consequence of the original Bulgars being assimilated by the

indigenous Slavic speaking population who lived south of the Danube River. “The Bulgarians had adopted Slavic language and culture. It is paradoxical that the Bulgarians, a Turkic people who adopted Slavic language and customs, took a significant role in standardizing Slavic writing.” (Page 197, John Shea, Macedonia and Greece The Struggle to Define a New Balkan Nation, Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland, 1997) The reason the Bulgars adopted the Slavic language was due to the overwhelming numerical superiority of the Slavs, most of them being Macedonians. The true Bulgars and their Turko-Tartar rulers were only a small minority and their language and culture, for the most part, disappeared in a few generations after their arrival in the Balkan region.

## **Revival of the Macedonian language and culture**

It is important at this point to mention that Christianity would not have been effectively spread to all the people throughout the world had it not been for the idea that “God’s word” must be told in the language the people understood. In other words “God’s word” had to be told in the language all the people spoke and not just the educated class. Also “God’s word” had to be told the “same way” to all the people in all the languages. But in order to do that, “God’s word” had to be standardized and written down because it was nearly impossible to remember everything and in the exact same way. Therefore scripts were very important to have. One can see why there was a great need to develop written scripts for every language spoken by Christians and potential Christians. In other words it was almost impossible to pass on “God’s word” to the people and keep it the same in all languages without it being written down. So, once again, one can see why many scripts were needed to educate the priests who disseminated “God’s word”.

It was during the reign of the Byzantine emperor Michael III (842-867) that Solun had definitely established itself as the religious and philosophical centre of the Byzantine Empire. This was the time when Kiril (Cyril) and Metodi (Methodius) set off on a series of missions to spread the doctrines of Christianity to various places in Eastern Europe and Asia where the people spoke dialects of the Slavic, or should I say Macedonian language.

I just want to mention here that, by the eighth century AD, the Macedonian eparchy was controlled by a Macedonian Archbishopric with its centre located in Solun and bishoprics existed in eighteen towns including Lerin, Kostur, Voden and Serres.

The brothers Kiril and Metodi were Macedonians, natives of Solun, who were acclaimed as the apostles of the southern Slavs and the fathers of Slav literary culture. Kiril, the younger of the two, was given the name Constantine when he was baptized. It was much later that he received the name Kiril.

It is worth mentioning at this point that, according to historic accounts, Solun had never before been invaded by the Slavs, yet

somehow the people of Solun spoke “pure Slavic”. If, according to modern European history, the ancient Macedonians spoke “Greek”, meaning the ancient Koine language, then where and how did the people of Solun, who were never in contact with the Slavs, learn to speak “fluent Slav”?

Kiril was very fortunate to have studied in Tsari Grad at a young age and received his education from Leo the Grammarian and Photius, a prominent educator at the imperial university. Kiril was an extraordinary student and earned himself the nickname "the Philosopher". After he finished his education he was ordained deacon and later became professor of philosophy at the imperial school in Tsari Grad, where he took over the chair from Photius. Soon afterwards, he retired to the quiet solitude of a monastery. From there, in 861 AD, he was summoned by the emperor, Michael III, and sent on a mission to Christianize the Khazars of southern Russia who lived between the Dnieper and Volga Rivers.

The older brother Metodi was a well-liked, intelligent man who started his career in his father’s footsteps. At first he served in the military in Solun. Later, at age twenty, he became governor of one of the Slav colonies in the Opsikion province in Asia. Then he became a monk and, like his brother, took part in a mission to Christianize the Khazars.

Kiril and Metodi were two of seven siblings. Their father Lev was a prominent Macedonian who served as assistant to the Solun military commander of the Byzantine army.

The careers of the Solun brothers took a turn for the better in 862 AD when Rostislav, the prince of Moravia, sent his ambassador to Tsari Grad seeking missionaries capable of teaching his people to read and write in their own language. Rostislav, fearful of his powerful German neighbours, sought the opportunity to strengthen his alliance with the Byzantines to counter-balance the German missionary influence in his kingdom. Rostislav preferred the ecclesiastical politics of Photius, now patriarch of Tsari Grad, over those of his western counterpart.

When word came that Emperor Michael was looking for capable missionaries, Photius decided that Kiril and Metodi were the most suitable candidates for the job. The Solun brothers, being Slav speakers themselves, knew the Solunian dialect of the Slav language well and accepted the task.

The old-Macedonian dialect was quite well understood by all the Slav tribes. Unfortunately, teaching the illiterate to read and write was easier said than done. Even though the Slavs had a written form of language described as “lines and incisions”, it was not an easy language to learn.

Kiril was familiar with the Glagolic script but that was also too complex for illiterate people to grasp quickly. According to Tsarnorizets Hrabar, an advocate of Macedonian literacy, Kiril and Metodi first tried to use the Koine and then Latin alphabets, but proper pronunciation could not be achieved. Slav speech was far too complex to record with just Koine or Latin letters. Kiril was an intelligent man and solved the problem by constructing a new alphabet based on old Macedonian traditions. In other words Kiril used an existing Macedonian alphabet and modified it to make it easier to read and write. He made it phonetic so that each letter represented one and only one sound. Once a person learned this alphabet they could immediately read and write. They could spell words the way they sounded. This is something the English (Latin) alphabet could use today to make it easier to learn instead of spending years learning grammar and how to spell.

The pattern and some letters Kiril based on the Koine alphabet but he enriched it by adding new letters. He borrowed some from the Glagolic script and some he fashioned from ancient Macedonian symbols that had traditional Macedonian meaning. “Peter Hill argues that Old Church Slavonic was more than merely a written dialect. It is naïve, he says, to imagine that this construction of a written language was possible without established tradition. Therefore it can safely be assumed that there was at least some tradition on which Cyril and Methodius could build. Presumably their familiarity with this tradition derived from the fact that they were Slavic themselves.” (Page 198, John Shea, Macedonia and

Greece The Struggle to Define a New Balkan Nation, Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Co., 1997)

When it was completed Kiril's alphabet consisted of 38 letters, each accurately and exactly representing a unique sound in Slav speech. The phonetic nature of Kiril's language made spelling words very simple. And like I said, one only needed to learn the alphabet to have the ability to read and write. The same is true to this day.

I just want to mention here that there are some references claiming that Kiril was the inventor of the Glagolic script, but they are incorrect. Kiril was familiar with the Glagolic script and had composed Glagolic texts but we now know from recent discoveries of ancient inscriptions that the Glagolic alphabet and other Macedonian alphabets existed before Kiril's time.

In 862 AD Kiril and Metodi, along with a number of followers, arrived in Moravia in Rostislav's court. They immediately set out to work and to their surprise Kiril's vernacular was not only well-understood but also became popular with the Moravians.

The Byzantine missionaries continued their work for a while, with much success, but were soon handicapped by the lack of Christian bishops to ordain their priests.

I mentioned a number of issues here that, no doubt, contradict modern European history, especially the origin of the Slavs and the Slavic language they spoke, upon which I should elaborate.

A friend from the Ljubljana University in Slovenia sent me the following:

“Dear Risto,

... You seem to avoid talking about the connection between the Slavs and the Macedonians. Why is that?

It wasn't too long ago when Slovenian warriors, fighting in the “Solun Front” during WW I, came into contact with local

Macedonians and your Macedonians were very proud to say that they were not Greeks but Slavs.

Weren't the Slavs ubiquitous in (Greek occupied) Macedonia? These people who claimed to be Slavs were Macedonians from Greece, not from the Republic of Macedonia.

Also, I get the impression that you missed an important point in Curta's book, namely his economic analysis of the situation in the Byzantine Empire.

According to Curta, after the worldwide climatic crisis in 535 AD, caused by the eruption of the Krakatoa volcano, and towards 540 AD, more and more peasants were commandeered from the Balkans which was followed by a drastic depopulation of the area. This depopulation was followed by the incursions of "Slavs", who apparently were familiar with the situation in the region, affecting mainly the towns. These Slavs were coming into Macedonia from the north to plunder it and then were retreating back across the Danube, and not settling in Macedonia. Most of the time they were able to avoid the Byzantine military. But the citizens of Tsari Grad (Constantinople) and Solun soon realized that these Slavs were very similar to the "Slavs", i.e. to the Macedonians who lived around these cities. No Slavs settled in the region until about 700 AD, which is the upper time limit in Curta's book.

Following Curta's presentation, mentioned above, it is my understanding that the intruding "Slavs" were in fact the Macedonians who had escaped and had fled north of the Danube over time. So you can say that there was an influx of Slavic Macedonians out of Macedonia and not foreign Slavs settling in Macedonia.

Good luck with your research.

Regards, your friend from Slovenia"

I would like to thank my dear Slovenian friend for that information and for all the helpful information he has given me over the years.

As for the Macedonian language, no doubt it is an ancient language which has taken root in prehistoric times and has evolved and exists to this day. To me it doesn't matter where it began and how it got there but from what I have learned it is a language that is closely tied to nature and has all the elements to make it a very old language. That in itself and the fact that there are so many dialects attests to its old, old age.

The Macedonian language is truly a people's language and the mother tongue of every Macedonian born in Macedonia. And unlike other ancient languages, such as Latin and Koine which were languages of institutions and which eventually died, the Macedonian language has survived and thrived, particularly through Christianity when the word of God was in the process of being spread to the common people in the language they understood.

Traditionally the Macedonian language had been an oral language passed on from generation to generation along with the traditions necessary for living. This is why, I believe, there is very little of it recorded. Then, when the time came and the word of God needed to be delivered directly to the common people, the Macedonians were the first to step to the forefront and create a written form. Since then the Old Macedonian language, known to the west as "Old Church Slavonic", became the language of enlightenment. This was more than just a "mere" language, it was an international language created to serve everyone who understood it. This language has been used in every aspect of life in dozens of countries and for more than one millennium. That much we know for certain. Yet some westerners, including the Greeks and Bulgarians, say "it does not exist".

My response to that is "look around", the Macedonian language not only exists but is one of the oldest people's languages in existence today. It has survived everything that was thrown at it and is still thriving in the Eastern European continent and beyond.

Let us also not forget that the Ancient Macedonians after Philip II's time were a mixture of people that included Illyrians, Thracians, Paeonians, Phrygians and others and these people were NEVER Greeks. They eventually, over time, also became Macedonians. We also know for a fact that some of the toponyms in Macedonia from

that time had Slavic names and have been repeated from the Mediterranean Sea to Siberia.

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.

One summer day I met Professor Dr. Angelina Markus from Skopje, Macedonia. She was visiting friends here in Toronto. There were rumours that Dr. Markus, during her retirement party on the day of her retirement as a professor, apologized to her students for “lying” to them all these years... for teaching them false history...

When we got talking I asked Dr. Markus, who insisted I call her Angelina, if that was true... if she actually apologized...? She laughed and said yes. So I asked her what lies she told her students. She told me a lot of things... Listening to her, at the time I thought this woman was crazy... But, as it turned out, I was the one who was ignorant... She was just ahead of my time.

The one thing that is of interest to us here, that is also memorable to me, was the questions she asked me: “Tell me,” she said, “why is it that people in Eastern Europe, from the Mediterranean Sea to

Siberia, have common names, common toponyms and a common language...?”

Also tell me,” she said, “why were all these Slavic speaking people as far north as Siberia asking for priests and teachers from Macedonia during the 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries AD, when Christianity was making its way up north?”

I had no answers for her...

“You know that the first University in Europe was built in Ohrid, in Macedonia, which educated thousands of priests who were then dispatched all throughout Eastern Europe to bring Christianity and the word of God to the Slavic speakers?” she then said.

Instead of answering the questions she said this to me: “Ask yourself this! ‘Why did the English settlers in the American and Australian continents ask England to send them teachers’...?”

She then said: “When you figure this out you will have your answer...” and laughed loudly.

“Was it because England was their origin and they spoke English?” I asked.

She then touched her nose and smiled.

I should mention at this point that Angelina Markus was married to a Russian diplomat who had opened many doors for her in her research and she knew things of which we can only dream. The diplomatic world, as I later found out, is a totally different world than our ordinary world. While our ordinary world, for example, insisted that “Macedonians do not exist” the diplomatic world had no problem calling the people living in ethnic Macedonia, Macedonians. This was especially prevalent during the various conflicts like WW I, WW II, the Greek Civil War and so on.

Of course almost all English colonists in America and Australia, a long time ago before communities were established, were uneducated and once they began to establish themselves they needed

educated teachers for their schools and priests for their churches. And where else would they be able to find educated English speaking people except in England, of course? It made perfect sense.

Therefore we can use this analogy, as Angelina explained to me, to prove that not only was there a link between the Macedonians and the Slav speakers in Europe and Asia but their language had origins in Macedonia from a long time ago, even before the Bulgars arrived in the Balkans, who today claim the Macedonian language is a dialect of the Bulgarian language.

What makes this story a tragic comedy is that both the Greeks and the Bulgarians have laid claim to Kiril and Metodi. The Greeks say they were Greek... The Bulgarians say they were Bulgarian.

Many Macedonians (worth their salt as my Slovenian friend once said) today, especially from the academic world, know that there is a connection between the “Slavs” and the Macedonians but lack the courage to speak out.

The most famous of the Byzantine disciples were Kliment (Clement), Naum, Angelarius Sava and Gorazd. Even though Gorazd was groomed to take over from Metodi, the first to rise to the occasion was Kliment, also known as Kliment of Ohrid.

Kliment was one of the brightest of Kiril and Metodi’s students and played a pivotal role in their careers. After his banishment from Moravia and Pannonia, however, Kliment returned to Ohrid to his place of birth (although some claim he was born in Solun).

Kliment spent the next seven years, from 886 to 893 AD, in Ohrid doing God’s work and teaching the Macedonian language. During his stay in Ohrid he was instrumental in founding the Ohrid Literary School and developing the first university in the Balkans and perhaps in all of Europe. It has been said that three thousand five hundred clergy and teachers were educated in the University of Ohrid. But that was not all, Kliment was also responsible for writing poetry and translating other works from Koine to Macedonian.

In 839 AD Kliment was joined by one of his life-long friends, Naum. Kliment and Naum were responsible for refining Kiril's alphabet as well as re-writing many of Kiril's works from Glagolic to Cyrillic. Kiril, it seems, had written many works in the Glagolic script in anticipation of using them in his teaching but after finding that the Glagolic script was too difficult for lay people to grasp, he opted for the simpler Macedonian which he himself created.

Naum, like Kliment, was also an important contributor to the development of the Macedonian language and culture. It is believed that Naum was born in Macedonia in 835 AD and had been Kliment's inseparable companion since his earliest youth. Naum was a student of Kiril and Metodi and was active among the people in Moravia and Pannonia. Naum, also known as Naum of Ohrid, was inseparable from his teachers and fellow pupils and suffered the same humiliation and injustice they did. Their most difficult and fateful moments came after Metodi's death when, under the influence of German churchmen, the Franks attacked the Macedonian missionaries and tortured them. In the words of Kliment of Ohrid's biographer: "Soldiers, stern men because they were Germans and by nature fierce, their fierceness being increased by their orders, took the priests, led them out of the town, pulled off their clothes and began to drag them along naked. Thus by one act they did them two wrongs: dishonored them and tortured them in the icy fog, which had descended on the Danube banks. Besides this, they put their swords against their heads, ready to cut them, and their spears against their breasts, ready to make them bleed, so they would not die a sudden death..."

This tells me that the Catholics of those days were not at all fond of the Orthodox Christians just like they are not fond of them today. This lack of fondness has long roots that probably extend to Roman times.

## **The Bogomil movement**

The establishment of feudal social structures in Macedonia opened the way for mass exploitation not only of the feudal principalities but also of the free peasants who still lived in rural communities. The situation worsened around the middle of the tenth century when the profitable Bulgar wars of conquest came to an end. Having no other substantial sources of income to support the Bulgar military, administrative, court and church systems, the Bulgars turned to feudal exploitation.

After everyone took their cut, the Macedonian peasant was left with nothing. Pushed beyond the brink of starvation, the Macedonian peasants revolted in what later became known as the Bogomil movement. Even though it was religious in nature, the Bogomil movement was predominantly a class struggle between the poor Macedonian peasant and his rich foreign rulers. The Bogomil movement was initiated in Macedonia by a Macedonian priest named Bogomil.

Under feudal ownership the peasants were fully dependent upon their feudal lords. Some historians argue that Kliment of Ohrid's visit to the Bulgar capital and his resignation as bishop a few months before his death was in response to the violence and devastation the Bulgars inflicted on the territory of the Bishopric of Velika.

The swift spread of the Bogomil movement prompted Petar, the Bulgar king, to take measures for its suppression but he did not succeed. Bogomilism was strongest in the territory defined by the triangle of the Vardar River, Ohrid and Mt. Shar. His intervention, however, did cause the Bogomils much suffering. But even the cruelest of methods did not stop the insurrection, which in time spread and became a general people's movement. Petar's death and the Russian campaigns drastically reduced Bulgar control over Macedonia allowing the Bogomil movement to flourish, at least for a while.

## **Revival of the Macedonian State**

While the Byzantine Empire was declining a new force of power was emerging in Macedonia. In 976 AD, the year emperor John (Tsimisces) died, the four brothers, David, Moses, Aaron and Samoil raised a rebellion. With the collapse of Bulgar rule due to a Russian invasion, and in the absence of Byzantine forces, the rebellion was successful and the brothers decided to rule their newly established state jointly. Unfortunately, the joint rule did not last too long. Vlach shepherds killed David, somewhere between Castra and Prespa, and Moses died during a siege in Serres.

In the absence of David and Moses a struggle for the throne ensued between Aaron and Samoil. Samoil, being a much more talented leader and statesman, was victorious. To prevent further problems Samoil had Aaron and his family executed, with the exception of Aaron's son Ivan.

After consolidating his power Samoil started a westerly campaign penetrating Thrace, Macedonia and Thessaly right down to the Peloponnesus. Just recovering from its last sacking, Solun was about to be sacked again but Samoil decided to continue south and in so doing he took a large number of towns, including Larissa. Samoil resettled the inhabitants of Larissa in the interior of his state and incorporated the Larissan soldiers into his own army.

From Larissa he removed the remains of St. Achilles and brought them to Prespa, to the island of Ail. Protected by the waters of Lake Mala Prespa, Samoil made Ail his capital and built a magnificent palace on it.

It was by no accident that Samoil received his strongest support from the territory defined by the triangle of the Vardar River, Ohrid and Mt. Shar. Samoil's success was fueled by the Bogomil movement and its distaste for foreign rule. In Macedonia the Bogomil movement was particularly influential in the creation of favourable conditions for a liberation uprising and the formation of an independent state. Samoil took full advantage of the situation and established a Macedonian state.

Although Samoil may not have been a Bogomil himself, he accepted Bogomilism and its right to exist in his new kingdom. In turn, the Bogomils ceased to verbally attack Samoil, his upper classes, royal officials and high ranking clergy. If anyone was not pleased with Samoil's successes it was the Byzantines. Samoil, in combination with the Bogomil movement, was perceived as a powerful force and the Byzantines wanted it checked.

For the last ten years or so the Byzantine Emperor Basil II, who was also of Macedonian descent, was attempting to put down insurrections in Asia, ignoring what was happening in his own backyard. But when the threat became too great to ignore, he gathered an army together and crossed over the frontier regions of the Rhodopes and the River Maritsa. There in August 986 AD, at the hands of Samoil, Basil suffered a crushing defeat. Basil lost nearly his entire cavalry, a large section of his infantry and narrowly escaped death himself. A peace treaty was concluded giving Samoil free control of his new territory.

Basil's defeat caused even more internal strife among the Byzantines, especially in Asia. The Byzantine quarrels took attention away from Samoil and opened opportunities to extend his rule to new territories.

In the summer of 989 AD Samoil resumed his campaign and took Berroea (Ber). After that he invaded Dalmatia and declared war on young king Vladimir. When Samoil reached Diocleia, Vladimir fled to the mountains but was persuaded by one of his tribal chieftains to surrender. Samoil took him prisoner and banished him to Prespa. In much need of resources, Samoil plundered the whole of Dalmatia and took whatever he could find. He then burned the cities of Kotor and Dubrovnik and razed many villages as far away as Zadar. Samoil had no navy and was not able to take any of the coastal towns.

Back in Prespa meanwhile, Samoil's daughter Kossara fell in love with the young captive king Vladimir and wanted to marry him. Not to disappoint her, Samoil gave in and gave her his blessings. Now that he was his son-in-law he gave Vladimir his former kingdom back. As a wedding gift he also gave the newlyweds Dyrrachium

and all its territories. He even returned Trebinye to Vladimir's uncle, Dragomir. Samoil's good deeds not only earned him the respect of his son-in-law but Vladimir also became his ally and loyal vassal.

When the Byzantine civil war ended Basil decided it was time to terminate his three year treaty with Samoil, which lasted from 987 to 990 AD. War broke out in 990 AD and lasted until 994 AD during which time Basil captured and destroyed a number of Samoil's strongholds. In retaliation, in late 994 AD, Samoil prepared a siege against Solun during which Gregory Taronites, the city's Governor, was killed. Gregory died while attempting to rescue his son, Ashot, who had been ambushed during a reconnaissance mission. When Basil found out, he was furious and sent Uranus, his Supreme Commander from the west, to investigate. Uranus discovered that not only had Samoil besieged Solun, but he had been plundering the surrounding countryside. He had also been campaigning in Thessaly, Boeotia, Attica and the Peloponnesus. Upset by the situation, Basil ordered Uranus to attack Samoil and put an end to his free reign.

Uranus immediately went in pursuit of Samoil but found the River Spercheius swollen from a flash flood. Unable to cross he camped on the river's bank. As it happened, Samoil's army had also made camp nearby but on the opposite side of the river. Upon his discovery that Samoil was close by, Uranus went in search of and found a safe place to cross. During the night he made the crossing and attacked his sleeping adversary. Being unprepared, Samoil's army was devastated and both Samoil and his son were badly wounded and barely managed to escape.

Victorious, Basil demanded that Samoil surrender. Instead of surrendering Samoil fled to his capital. To convince Basil not to pursue him, Samoil agreed to sign a peace treaty and offered his surrender in writing. But instead of surrendering Samoil had himself proclaimed King. What Samoil really wanted was the crown of an emperor but the Pope of Rome, Gregory V, had no intention of creating another Emperor. Samoil could have taken the Bulgar crown, but unfortunately that crown was also in Tsari Grad and out of reach. So, all that Samoil could legally hope for was a mere king's crown. Even though Samoil's crown was not recognized by

Tsari Grad, his coronation gave him international recognition. For the Pope of Rome, this was another chance to erode and weaken Byzantine rule.

When Basil found out that Samoil was crowned king he became furious and once again dispatched Uranus to destroy him. Unable to engage Samoil in battle, Uranus went on a looting spree burning everything in his path. After three months of mayhem and destruction Uranus failed his mission and returned to Tsari Grad empty handed.

Safe, at least for now, Samoil took the opportunity to marry another daughter, Miroslava, to Ashot, Gregory's son from Solun whom he had previously captured. As a wedding gift he gave the newlyweds Governorship of Dyrrachium with king Vladimir's full approval. The ungrateful Ashot, however, fled to Tsari Grad and for his loyalty was awarded the title of Magistrate, by the Byzantines. In the meantime his wife, Miroslava, became a lady-in-waiting at the Tsari Grad court. Soon after Ashot fled, the city leaders of Dyrrachium broke off relations with Vladimir and surrendered their city to the Byzantines.

In retaliation and hoping to stir trouble for Basil in Tsari Grad, Samoil began a propaganda campaign promoting Vatatz, a family member from the Basil Glavas family as his ally. The Basil Glavas family and a number of other nobles had taken refuge with Samoil to avoid persecution from Basil.

Instead of creating trouble, Samoil's actions further infuriated Basil prompting him to initiate a new military offensive. Taking a route via Philippopolis, Basil destroyed most cities in the region of Serdica. In the year 1000 he dispatched a large army and attacked all fortified cities, capturing Great and Little Preslav and Pliska, near the River Maritsa. In 1001 Basil himself joined the offensive and marched his army by Solun in the direction of Berroea, where he captured Dobromir. Basil then captured Kolidron, near Berroea, and put Servia under siege. In spite of Servia's brave resistance, the city fell into Basil's hands anyway. Nikolitsa, Servia's Governor, was taken captive to Tsari Grad but instead of being thrown in jail, Basil conferred upon him the honour of a patrician. Nikolitsa, however,

was not satisfied and fled to Samoil and together they attacked Servia. Basil retaliated and again captured Nikolitsa but this time he conferred upon him the honour of serving in chains in exile in his jail in Tsari Grad.

After subduing Servia, Basil took his campaign to Thessaly. He took back and made repairs to the damaged fortresses which Samoil's troops had held. He then refortified the fortresses with fresh Byzantine garrisons. After that he turned his attention to Voden and took the city by force from the aggressive Governor Drazhan. Drazhan was captured and sent to Solun as Basil's prisoner. Upon his arrival in Solun, Basil dispatched Uranus to Antioch to deal with the Arabs. Uranus was replaced with the patrician David Arijant as Solun's new military commander.

In 1002 Basil made his way to Vidin and after an eight-month siege he broke through the defenses and captured the town. On the same day Samoil forced marched his troops through Thrace, looting and trashing Edrene (Adrianople). If Samoil's intent was to get Basil's attention by trashing Edrene, he succeeded. Basil now moved his campaign to Skopje, where he caught up with Samoil. Unexpectedly Samoil fled without a fight and Skopje's governor surrendered the city to Basil. From Skopje, Basil took his campaign to the fortress of Pernik where he encountered heavy resistance from the great warrior Krakras. Basil failed to take the town and incurred great losses in the process and was forced to return to Tsari Grad.

As if Samoil did not have enough problems with the Byzantines he now made the Hungarians angry. His son, who was married to a Hungarian princess, decided to leave her thus bringing disgrace to his family and an end to the cordial relations between Samoil and King Stephen I. After the embarrassing incident, King Stephen abandoned his alliance with Samoil and joined Basil who had offered him an alliance of his own.

In the recent past, Byzantine attacks and plundering of Samoil's territory were more frequent and of greater intensity. Samoil felt it was time do something and soon. His chance came in 1014 when Basil's forces were about to enter a gorge in the Rhodope Mountains. Samoil surrounded the gorge with a strong force in what

was going to be a surprise attack. Unfortunately Basil must have anticipated Samoil's move and ordered one of David Arijant's generals to force march his troops around Samoil's forces. When a fierce battle broke out between Basil and Samoil, Samoil's army was attacked from the rear and trapped. Unable to withdraw, many of Samoil's soldiers were slain and even more were captured. Samoil himself was saved by his son who aided his escape to the fortress of Prilep.

After his victory Basil rounded up all his prisoners and had his soldiers gouge their eyes out. According to accounts there were fifteen thousand Macedonian soldiers captured that day. To lead the blind soldiers back to Samoil, Basil ordered that one out of every hundred men be left with one eye intact. This was indeed a gruesome act, a real tragedy not only for Samoil but for Macedonia as well. Shaken by the sight of this tragedy Samoil died of shock two days later. Samoil's son Gabriel Radomir succeeded him.

When Samoil died in 1014, his kingdom was vast and included the whole of Macedonia (except for Solun), Thessaly, Epirus, the coastal sclavenes of Oioacleia, Travunya and Zachlunia, the Neretva region (excluding the islands) as far as Cetina, Serbia, Bosnia and a considerable part of Bulgaria. For the most part, the majority of the population living in Samoil's empire was Macedonian. To a lesser extent there lived Bulgars, Serbs, Croats, Romani, Albanians and Vlachs. Additionally there lived migrants such as Vardariot Ottomans and Armenians who were recently settled there by former Byzantine emperors and some by Samoil. While many Armenians existed in Thrace, Samoil had also settled some in Pelagonia, Prespa and Ohrid. The Romani were known to exist mostly in coastal regions.

Samoil's kingdom was a newly created state with a completely different nucleus of people and with completely different domestic and foreign policies than any of his neighbours. The center of Samoil's state was in the far south of the Balkans, inside today's Republic of Macedonia. Samoil had a number of capitals, which he used from time to time. During his reign Samoil moved his capital to several places including Prespa, Ohrid, Prilep, Bitola, Pronishte and Setin, all of which were inside Macedonia.

(For more information on the revival of the Macedonian state, language and culture and on the Bogomil movement please read chapters sixteen to eighteen of my book “History of the Macedonian people From Ancient times to the Present”, published in 2005).

## **Ottoman occupation of Macedonia**

The Ottomans crossed into Europe for the first time around the year 1345 as mercenaries hired by the Byzantines to defend the Byzantine Empire. Over the years as the Ottomans grew in number, they settled in Galipoly, west of the Dardanelles (Endrene), and later used the area as a staging ground for conquest.

In 1392 the Ottomans attacked and conquered geographical Macedonia including Solun but not Sveta Gora (Holy Mountain) and in 1453 besieged and took Tsari Grad looting all the wealth that had been accumulated for over a millennium.

The Byzantine collapse and the Ottoman triumph followed swiftly. Mehmed II laid siege to the walls of Tsari Grad in April 1453. His ships were obstructed by a chain that the Byzantines had thrown across the mouth of the Golden Horn but the Ottomans dragged their ships overland to the harbour from the seaward side, bypassing the defenses. The Sultan's heavy artillery continually bombarded the land walls until, on May 29, some of his soldiers forced their way in.

As a final note, in the glory of the Byzantine Empire, I want to add that had it not been for the advent of the cannon the Byzantine Empire might still exist to this day. It was not the might of the Ottoman but the might of his new cannon that brought the walls of Tsari Grad tumbling down.

In a steady process of state building, the Ottoman Empire expanded in both easterly and westerly directions conquering the Byzantines and remnants of the Macedonian, Bulgarian and Serbian kingdoms to the west and the Turkish nomadic principalities in Anatolia as well as the Mamluk sultanate in Egypt to the east. By the 17<sup>th</sup> century the Ottoman Empire had grown and held vast lands in west Asia, north Africa and southeast Europe.

During the 16<sup>th</sup> century the Ottomans shared the world stage with Elizabethan England, Habsburg Spain, the Holy Roman Empire, Valois France and the Dutch Republic. Of greater significance to the Ottomans were the city states of Venice and Genoa which exerted enormous political and economic power with their fleets and

commercial networks that linked India, the Middle East, the Mediterranean and west European worlds.

Initially the Ottomans may have been ethnically Turkish, perhaps originating from a single race but by the time they had conquered the Balkans, the Ottoman Empire had become multi-ethnic and multi-religious.

It is worth while mentioning at this point that the Ottoman population grew in several ways. First by voluntary conversion. Many Christians converted to Islam so that they can preserve their wealth and power. All Muslims were treated as equals and had the same rights regardless of their ethnic origin. Second by forced conversion. Ottoman men had the right to have as many wives as they wanted or that as they can afford so they tended to kidnap Christian women and force them to convert to Islam. No Muslim was allowed to wed outside of his religion. Third through blood tax. Due to lack of manpower to rule an expanding empire, the Ottomans adopted the “devshirme” or child contribution program in the 1300’s. This so called “Blood Tax” was harvested by rounding up healthy young Christian boys and converting them to Islam. After being educated, the bright ones were given administrative roles and the rest, the “Janissary”, were given military responsibilities.

The Ottoman Empire built its power base on a heterogeneous mix of people who were added to its population with every conquest. What may have been Turkish at the start was soon lost and the term “Turk” came to mean “Muslim” as more and more people from the conquered worlds were Islamized. To be a Turk, one had to be a Muslim first. “The devshirme system offered extreme social mobility for males, allowing peasant boys to rise to the highest military and administrative positions in the empire outside of the dynasty itself.” (Page 30, Donald Quataert, *The Ottoman Empire, 1700-1922*, Binghamton University, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000)

When the Ottomans crossed over to the Balkans and conquered Macedonia the basic state institutions and military organization of the empire were still in a state of development. Built on a basis of

feudal social relations the empire was despotic with many elements of theocratic rule.

After sacking Tsari Grad the Ottomans adapted much of the Byzantine administration and feudal practices and began to settle the Balkans. The conquered people of the new Ottoman territories became subjects of the empire, to be ruled according to Muslim law.

At the head of the Ottoman Empire sat the Sultan who was God's representative on earth. The Sultan owned everything and everyone in the empire. Below the Sultan sat the ruling class and below them sat the Rajak (protected flock). Everyone worked for the Sultan and he in turn provided his subjects with all of life's necessities.

The Sultan was the supreme head of the empire and his power was unrestricted. Initially his capital was in Bursa then it was moved to Endrene (Adrianople) and after Tsari Grad fell, in 1453, it became the permanent Ottoman capital. Even though their empire was spread throughout Asia and Africa, the European provinces were considered to be the Ottoman Empire's heart and soul.

The legal system was created around the Seriat which had its basis in Islam. The Koran and Hadith were the books from which the ideals and fundamental principles for the construction of the legal system were drawn. No law could be passed which in principle contradicted the Seriat. Only the supreme religious leader, the Sejh-ul-Islam, had the right to interpret and assess the legal norms and only from the point of view of Islamic law.

The Koran dictated Muslim conduct and behaviour, including punishment for crimes. In the Ottoman mind only religion and the word of God had sole authority over peoples' lives. Religion was the official government of the Ottoman State. Islam was the only recognized form of rule that suited Muslims but could not be directly applied to non-Muslims. So the next best thing was to allow another religion to rule the non-Muslims. The obvious choice of course was the Byzantine Christian religion, which was the foundation of the Byzantine Empire. There was a catch however. The official Muslim documents that would allow the "transfer of rule" were based on an ancient Islamic model, which denounced all

Christianity as a corrupt invention of the “Evil one”. The conservative Turks regarded the Christians as no more than unclean and perverted animals. Also, the ancient documents called for sacrifices to be made. A Christian religious leader, for being granted leadership by the Muslims, was expected to sacrifice his own flock on demand to prove his loyalty to the Sultan. It was under these conditions that the Patriarch accepted his installment as sole ruler of the Christian Orthodox faith and of the non-Muslim Millet.

The Sultans tolerated Christianity as the government of the non-Muslim Millet and sold the Patriarchate to an adventurer who could buy (bribe) his nomination. Once nominated, the Patriarch in turn sold consecration rights to Bishops, who in turn regarded their gain as a “legitimate investment” of capital and proceeded to “farm their diocese”. Under Ottoman rule the Patriarchate in Tsari Grad became a corrupt business, having little to do with faith and more to do with making money. As more and more bishoprics fell into the hands of the new Patriarch, faith at the top began to fade away. This was also the beginning of the end for the Macedonian Churches in the Ottoman Empire.

In addition to being a religious ruler, the Patriarch and his appointed Bishops became civil administrators of the Christian and non-Muslim people. Their authority included mediating with the Ottomans, administering Christian law (marriages, inheritance, divorce, etc.), running schools and hospitals and dealing with the large and small issues of life. There were no prescribed provisions on how to deal with criminal matters or the limit of authority on the part of the Bishops. In other words, there was no uniform manner by which Christian criminals could be punished or limits to how far a Bishop could exercise his authority. This opened the way for interpretation, neglect, abuse and activities of corruption such as nepotism, favouritism and bribery.

Muslims were trusted more by the authorities than Christians so many Christian civil servants converted to Islam and amalgamated their belongings with those of the Ottoman feudal lords. This was the surest and most often the only way to permanently safeguard their positions.

Besides feudal exploitation the Macedonian population, especially throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> century, was also subjected to religious and national discrimination, which in time became so profound that the term “Rajak” became virtually synonymous with the term “slavery”.

Macedonia’s rural economy remained largely agricultural for centuries but its techniques remained stagnant and underdeveloped. The peasants produced a number of varieties of wheat, fruits, vegetables and wine. Tobacco, cotton, rice, sesame, opium poppies, maize, saffron, anise seeds, chick-peas and a number of green vegetables were also cultivated and became more popular during the Ottoman period.

Islam was the dominant religion in the Ottoman Empire but Christianity and Judaism were also allowed to exist. In Macedonia, the powerful Ohrid Archbishopric was active right up to the year 1767 when it was abolished by the Ottoman Sultan Mustafa III.

Ever since its inception, the Ohrid Archbishopric extended its sphere of influence and dominated the neighbouring churches. In spite of Byzantine attempts to curb its power, the Ohrid Archbishopric survived and began its revitalization. By the start of the 15<sup>th</sup> century it subordinated the Sofia and Vidin eparchies and by the middle of the same century it was in control of the Vlach and Moldavian eparchies. Shortly afterwards it took control of parts of the Pech Patriarchate including Pech itself. Even the Orthodox districts of Italy (Apulia, Calabria and Sicily), Venice and Dalmatia were subordinated to the Ohrid Archbishopric for a while.

The Archbishopric of Ohrid, since its inception, has been an autonomous church headed by an Archbishop who was elected by a Synod. The Synod consisted of archpriests from various eparchies and was summoned on various occasions to deal with the more important matters while the Church Convocation dealt with general matters. The majority of Archbishops who served the Ohrid Church were foreigners and most of them were greedy for money, succumbing to bribery. Some, however, worked hard to raise the standards of the Archbishopric and others including Prohor, Athanasius and Barlaam even worked secretly against the Ottoman yoke.

Even though the Ohrid Church had lost a great number of its possessions to the Ottomans it still remained a feudal institution and, apart from the returns it received from its church lands, it also received considerable income from various taxes, from performing services and settling disputes. The Ohrid lower clergy were all Macedonian and were scarcely distinguishable economically from the general population. Even though foreigners occupied the leading positions in the church, the church itself supported a unique Macedonian culture and an independent Macedonia.

By the middle of the 17<sup>th</sup> century life in the chifliks (estates) became so harsh that peasants left their villages for larger towns, adding to the influx of Muslims and Jews. Many, who could no longer bear the burden and had nowhere to go, turned to marauding and robbing. Bands of peasants left their hearths and fled to either join outlaw organizations (ajdutska družina) or live in larger towns where some succeeded in becoming factors of significance in the urban economy.

During the 17<sup>th</sup> century western Europeans came to Macedonia and procured certain privileges from the Ottomans that allowed them to open consular agencies. In 1685 French merchants from Marseilles opened an agency in Solun and in 1700 they opened another one in Kavala, through which they purchased cotton and wheat. Later Britain, Venice and the Netherlands also established consular agencies in Macedonia. At that time Solun was the gateway to the Ottoman Empire and the largest port for European goods destined for the Balkans.

With the ascendancy of the Atlantic trade routes, Dubrovnik (Ragusa) and the Italian towns began to decline, particularly during the 17<sup>th</sup> century when western traders were being replaced by local ones, especially in central Europe.

Catholic influence and propaganda, although somewhat disorganized, was present in Macedonia as early as the 16<sup>th</sup> century. In 1622 when the Papal Throne came under Jesuit control, a new organization called the Congregation for the Spreading of the Faith was established with aims at controlling all Catholic missionary

activities throughout the world. It was not too long afterwards that the Catholic missions infiltrated Macedonia, including the Archbishopric of Ohrid. By the first half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century four of the Archbishops of Ohrid (Porphyry, Athanasius, Abraham and Meletius) were secretly working for the Catholics. Links were established by eparchies where Church Congregations were discretely approached to switch to Catholicism. The missionaries from Rome were cautious, tactful and did not impose the Latin language upon the population. By doing so and by showing respect for the dogma of the Eastern Church, Catholic propaganda in Ohrid became very effective in gaining ground. In fact it became so effective that in 1630 the Unites attempted to take over the archiepiscopal church of the Assumption of the Virgin but the Archbishop, by handsomely bribing the Ottoman authorities, was able to halt the takeover. That unfortunately did not stop the Catholics from trying and by the middle of the 17<sup>th</sup> century they created a Catholic Archbishopric inside Ohrid. But as soon as it was created, conditions turned unfavourable for them and it had to be dissolved and subordinated to the Diocese of Skopje.

In 1661 Archbishop Athanasius took a trip to Rome with a proposal to unify Rome and the Archbishopric of Ohrid. An agreement was reached and a missionary by the name of Onuphrius Constantine was elected as Bishop to serve at the Koine speaking College in Rome. The union, however, did not work out and Catholic propaganda in Macedonia began to lose its effect. A new hope was growing among the Balkan people that Russia, an Orthodox country, would some day liberate them from their Ottoman bondage.

Since Christians by law were not allowed to carry arms, they had no effective defense against maltreatment, especially from the corrupt legal system. The only recourse available to them was to become outlaws. Although unpopular, outlawry was one of the oldest forms of armed struggle expressed by the Macedonian people, which reached epidemic proportions over the course of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The outlaws, or haiduks, lived secret lives known only to other outlaws or trusted friends. When it came to defending their homes and properties, they came together in bands or druzhini of twenty to thirty people. Occasionally, for defensive purposes a number of

smaller bands combined together to form a large band usually numbering no more than three hundred people.

The band leaders or vojvodi were elected members of their bands and were usually chosen for their military skills and leadership abilities. The ranks of the outlaws came mostly from the feudally tied peasants but it was not uncommon to find priests and monks among them. Women too were known to have joined outlaw bands. The oldest record of a woman outlaw dates back to 1636. Her name was Kira and she was from the village Chapari. Kira was a member of Petar Dundar's band from the village Berantsi, near Bitola. There were also recorded cases of women who led outlaw bands.

The main preoccupation of the outlaws was to defend the oppressed and in times of trouble come to their aid. In retaliation the outlaws were known to attack feudal estates and even burn down their harvests. They also ambushed and robbed merchant caravans and tax collectors. Bands were known to have attacked some of the larger towns. On several occasions outlaws banded together and overran Bitola, Lerin, Ohrid and Resen. Twice they looted the bezesteen in Bitola, once in 1646 and again in 1661.

To curb outlaw activities, the Ottoman authorities frequently undertook extreme measures by organizing posses to hunt them down, burning down villages that were known to be sympathetic to outlaws and imprisoning and sometimes executing relatives of outlaws. When all these measures failed to stop them, the Ottomans introduced the services of the derbendkis, to provide safe passage through the countryside to important functionaries such as merchants, tax collectors and travelers.

Outlaws who were captured were tortured, sent to prison for life, or executed. The lucky ones were executed outright. Their dead bodies were then impaled on stakes or on iron hooks for everyone to see. Those less fortunate were skinned alive, had their heads split open and were left to die a slow and painful death. Those sent to prison were usually chained to galleys and spent the rest of their lives as oarsmen.

Despite the extreme measures exercised against them, the outlaws were never stamped out and were always a part of every conflict. The outlaws were the nucleus of the armed forces and the experienced leaders and commanders of the revolts and uprisings. They were the first to raise the spirit of resistance and the first to stand up for the people. That is why the outlaws are so widely revered in Macedonian folklore.

After the unfortunate loss of the Ohrid Church to the Patriarchate, monasteries were virtually the only cultural centers left in Macedonia. Having a large number of Macedonian manuscripts in their possession, the monasteries took over the tradition of copying and reproducing liturgical, philosophical, educational and other ecclesiastical documents. Included among the most important of these monasteries were the Lesnovo Monastery near Kratovo, Matejche and St. Prohor Pchinski near Kumanovo, Slepche near Demir Hisar, Treskavets near Prilep, Prechista near Kichevo, John Bigorski near Debar and Polog in the Tikvesh district. The desire to continue in the Macedonian tradition was provided by Sveta Gora (Holy mountain or Mt. Athos) where the Macedonian culture and language continued to be cherished and heard in the monasteries of Chilandar, Zograph and Panteleimon.

Among the various documents kept by the clergy in Sveta Gora were monastic records of the names and donations of all visitors to the monasteries. Important documents of Slavonic literacy such as Clement's Charter, the Slepche Letters, the Macedonian Damascene of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the Tikvesh Collection of the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries and the Treskavets Codicil of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries were also preserved in Sveta Gora.

Monasteries provided shelter for teaching cleric students to read and write in the Macedonian language. During the 17<sup>th</sup> and more so during the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Macedonian monks began to open schools in the towns near their churches where they taught basic literacy to willing students. Such schools were operated in Veles, Skopje and Prilep.

New churches, built mostly by villages in Macedonia during Ottoman rule, were far smaller and more modest than those built in

the pre-Ottoman period. Architecturally their form was simple, to make them indistinguishable from the houses in the village. A fresco painting hanging on the interior wall and several icons mounted on wooden iconostases were the only things that distinguished churches from houses.

Icon paintings were still painted in the old style but the quality of the work gradually declined. Original works became a rarity and artistic creativity boiled down to nothing more than imitations and copying the great works from previous epochs. The number of painters, journeymen and apprentices also declined and so did their field work.

During the 18<sup>th</sup> century several painting studios existed, the most significant being located in the Ohrid and Prespa district, the Treskavets and Zrze monasteries in the Prilep district, Slepche, Lesnovo and the Skopje Tsrna Gora.

Some of the works produced during this and earlier periods were of considerable artistic value and of importance to the churches. Examples of these include the paintings in the Church of the Holy Virgin located in a cave at Peshtani. The snake cross in the Church of St. Demetrius in Ohrid was painted at the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. The monk Makarios, from the village of Zrze, painted the icon of the Virgin of Pelagonia in 1422, and the portrait of Kupan, painted in 1607, was in the Church of the Holy Virgin at Slivnitsa Monastery in the village of Slivnitsa in the Prespa district.

The influence of oriental elements in Macedonian woodcarving also increased during the same period. The double braid, carved in shallow and flat carvings, was a pure and exclusive motif right up until the 17<sup>th</sup> and early 18<sup>th</sup> centuries when more intricate carvings began to appear. Good examples of shallow carving are the doors of the old monastery, Church of St. John the Baptist at Slepche. Other exceptionally good pieces of woodcarving are the doors of the Treskavets Monastery, probably carved at the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century.

Shallow woodcarvings can also be found on icon frames from the same period. The most interesting is that of the baptism of Christ found in the Church of the Holy Virgin at the Slivnitsa Monastery.

Deep incisions began to appear at the close of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, showing superior beauty in contrast to the shallow carvings. Good examples of deep carvings are the iconostases of St. Naum Church near Lake Ohrid (1711) and St. Demetrius Church in Bitola (1775).

On the subject of music, the necessary conditions for the development of professional music in Macedonia were not quite there during the Ottoman era. Folk music, however, flourished and was very popular with the Macedonian people, not only for its entertaining qualities but also for its manifestations of soul, spirit, joy, suffering and pain. Most composers, unfortunately, chose to remain anonymous and cannot be credited for their work. Apart from church music, which continued to be sung in the Byzantine chant style, folk music dominated Macedonian melodies virtually up until the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Towards the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and in the early part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Macedonia, like other parts of European Turkey, was a hotbed of unrest. Trouble was stirred up by the military deserters and by local feudal lords who, in the absence of the Ottoman military, had declared themselves independent and were fighting with one another for greater dominion. Ismail Beg of Serres, Ali Pasha of Ioannina, the Debar Pashas, Recep Pasha of the Skopje Pashalik and Celadin Beg in the Ohrid and Prespa district were but a few who had gained notoriety in this way.

The political and economic insecurity created by this anarchy and by the central government's inability to cope, forced another large migration of Macedonians from the villages into the towns. The sudden growth in the urban population caused an increase in the production of crafts and agricultural products, which became trading commodities for the central European and Russian markets. The fairs in Serres, Prilep, Doiran, Struga, Enidzhe Vardar, Petrich and Nevrokop became commercial trading posts for both domestic and foreign trade. The newly created market network enabled Macedonian businessmen to develop trading ties with the outside

world. Businessmen from Veles, Bitola, Serres, Bansko and Ohrid set up their own agencies in Vienna, Leipzig, Trieste and Belgrade. Along with trade also came prosperity and exposure to the outside world. Macedonian merchants became the bearers of progressive ideas, education, culture and Macedonian national sentiment.

(For more information on the Ottoman occupation read chapters nineteen and twenty of my book “History of the Macedonian people From Ancient times to the Present”, published in 2005).

## **Dawn of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century and the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire**

For the oppressed peoples of the Balkans, the dawn of the nineteenth century marked the beginning of national struggles for liberation from the centuries-long domination of the Ottoman Empire. The first was the Serbian uprising of 1804 followed by the Phanariot uprising of 1821. Macedonians, in an effort to liberate their Christian brothers from the oppressive Muslim Ottomans, took part in both uprisings.

It is important at this point to digress for a moment and explain who the Phanariots were:

According to Muslim law, ordinary Muslims were not allowed to handle money, speak foreign languages, or venture beyond Islamic held lands. Therefore, a select class of Christians from all ethnicities and cultures known as Phanariots handled official trade, communication and contact with the outside world.

The Phanariots were a group of wealthy Christians who got their name from the “Phanar” or lighthouse district of Tsari Grad where they lived. After the Sultan installed the Patriarch in Tsari Grad, the Phanar became a thriving community of wealthy and educated Christians. As mentioned earlier, the Sultan placed the Phanariot Patriarch in charge of the Christian Millet because he found him more agreeable than his other (poor) Christian counterparts. The Patriarchy functioned like a state within a state with its own administration and services. Having the Sultan’s favour, the Patriarch took the opportunity to expand his dominion over the entire Eastern Christian Church by replacing whatever legitimate bishoprics he could with his own corrupt people. For example, the Old Serbian bishoprics were abolished as punishment for helping the Habsburgs. At about the same time the Macedonian bishopric, including the powerful Ohrid bishopric, was also abolished. After becoming *gospodars* (masters), the Phanariots replaced all the Romanian bishoprics. As *gospodars* in Romania, the Phanariots abolished the Church Slavonic (Macedonian) liturgy and replaced Macedonian speaking clergy with Romanians. The Romanians didn’t care much for the Phanariots and pursued Romanian ways.

Eventually as more and more bishoprics were shut down the Phanariots redefined the old culture, Christian faith and Christian education to suit themselves and their corrupt ways.

The Ottomans trusted the Phanariots well enough to give them a role in the central Ottoman administration. This included the office of the “Dragoman”, the head of the Sultan’s interpreters’ service.

Phanariots participated in diplomatic negotiations with outsiders and some even became ambassadors for the Ottoman Empire. Phanariots were put in charge of collecting taxes from the Christian Millet for the Ottomans and whatever they could pilfer from the peasants they kept for themselves. Many scholars believe that Romania’s peasants have never suffered more than they did during the Phanariot period. Phanariots also secured food and other services for the Ottoman court.

The Phanariots, through the Dragoman, were largely responsible for providing “all kinds” of information to the outside world about the Ottoman Empire, including their own desires to rule it some day. Some Phanariots were educated abroad in London and Paris and were responsible for bringing information into the Ottoman Empire. Towards the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the Phanariot dream was to replace the Ottoman Empire with a Christian Empire like the Russian model. In theory, they wanted to re-create a multi-cultural Byzantine Empire but with a Patriarch in charge. The Phanariots believed that with Russian or German help it was possible to achieve their goals.

The power and money hungry Phanariots were not content with only running the Ottoman administration but sought to possess all the eparchies of the Byzantine Churches. Pressured by the Phanariots, the Patriarchate of Tsari Grad increasingly began to interfere in the affairs of the various Archbishoprics including the Church of Ohrid. Using his influence with the Sultan, in May 1763, the Patriarch attempted to appoint a man of his choice, the monk Ananias, as head of Ohrid. Ananias, however, was rejected and the Archbishopric elected Arsenius, the Macedonian Metropolitan from Pelagonia. This unfortunately proved disastrous for the Archbishopric. The Patriarch retaliated and by means of bribery and intrigue, with the aid of the Ottoman authorities and his allies among the higher clergy

in the Ohrid Church, he gradually did away with the Archbishopric. On January 16, 1767 Arsenius was forced to resign his office voluntarily, recognize the Patriarchate of Tsari Grad and personally request the abolition of the Ohrid Archbishopric. The Sultan issued a decree making the abolition legal and annexing its eparchies to the Patriarchate of Tsari Grad. The Ohrid Eparchy itself was abolished and the town came under the jurisdiction of the Metropolitan of Durazzo. Aiming to eradicate every single trace of the once autocephalous Ohrid church, the Patriarchate even changed Ohrid's name to Lychnidos. The local bishops were replaced with Koine speakers throughout Macedonia and new ecclesiastical taxes were introduced.

Now back to our story.

When news of the Serbian uprising reached Macedonia the Macedonian people were stirred to action. Unfortunately the Ottoman authorities were ready and concentrated large numbers of troops in Macedonia, quelling the rebellion even before it had a chance to start.

Macedonians also participated in the Phanariot uprising of 1821. Immediately after the outbreak of the Morea revolt Macedonians formed their own bands, particularly in the Voden district and joined up with the Morean rebels.

Strongly influenced by the ideals of the Phanariot freedom fighters who were calling on the entire Balkan population to take up arms against the Ottoman yoke, many Macedonians, particularly those in the Voden and Negush districts, did take up arms. In early March 1822, under the leadership of Atanas Karatase and Angel Gacho, a revolt broke out in the town of Negush. In no time the rebels put down the Ottomans and declared Negush liberated. The revolt quickly spread towards Voden engulfing a large number of villages. Unfortunately, effort and determination alone were not enough to stop the numerically superior Ottoman army. Isolated and besieged from all sides the rebels were suppressed and dispersed. After a fierce battle the Ottomans recaptured Negush and persecutions and pillaging followed. To avoid further problems, the population of Negush was either enslaved or resettled in other parts of Macedonia.

Russian expansionism in the Balkans alarmed the western Powers and initiated the “Eastern Question”; “What will happen to the Balkans when the Ottoman Empire disappears?” The Eastern Question of the 1800’s later became the Macedonian Question of the 1900’s.

At about the same time as Russia was making its way into the Balkans, the west was experiencing changes of its own. The industrial revolution was in full swing, coming out of England and progressing towards the rest of the world. France was the economic superpower but was quickly losing ground to England. The French Revolution (1789) gave birth not only to new ideas and nationalism, but also to Napoleon Bonaparte. As Napoleon waged war in Europe and the Middle East, French shipping in the Mediterranean subsided only to be replaced by the Phanariot and British traders. French trade inside Ottoman territory also declined and never fully recovered. By land, due to the long border, Austria dominated trade with the Ottoman Empire exercising its own brand of influence on the Balkans, especially on the Serbian people.

As the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century brought economic change to Europe, the Balkans became the last frontier for capitalist expansion. By the 1800’s Europe’s political, economic and military institutions were rapidly changing. Western governments and exporters were aggressively pursuing Balkan markets on behalf of their western manufacturers. This aggressive pursuit smothered Balkan industries before they had a chance to develop and compete. As a result, Balkan economies began to decline causing civil unrest and nationalist uprisings. While western countries were left undisturbed to develop economically and socially, external forces prevented Balkan societies from achieving similar progress. Mostly regulated by guilds, Balkan trades could not compete with western mechanization and went out of business. Without jobs, most city folk became a burden on the already economically strained rural peasants. The economic situation in the Balkans deteriorated to intolerable levels and like in the previous two centuries, people began to rebel.

Two overwhelming “forces” came into being in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, which transformed the Balkans. The first was the 1848 “western economic revolution” which thrust the Balkans into social and economic upheaval. The second was “increased intervention” from non-Balkan political forces. As the century advanced these developments merged, working not for the interests of the Balkan people but for the benefit of Europe's Great Powers.

Before continuing with internal Balkan developments I want to digress a little and explore the “external forces” and their “political desires” in Balkan affairs.

Besides the Ottomans, there were six Great Powers during the nineteenth century. They were Russia, Great Britain, France, Austria-Hungary, Italy and Germany. From time to time the Great Powers expressed interest in the Balkan population but, in crisis situations, each followed their own interests. When the Great Powers made compromises, they did so to avoid war with each other and often failed to address the real issues that caused the crisis in the first place. This is similar to what the Great Powers are doing in the Balkans today.

Russia tended to be the most aggressive and was usually the cause of each new Ottoman defeat. The 1774 Kuchuk Kainarji Treaty allowed Russia access to the north shore of the Black Sea, gave it “power to act” on behalf of the Orthodox millet and to conduct commerce within the Ottoman Empire. Russia’s goals in the Balkans were (1) to gain exclusive navigation rights from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean Sea for both merchant and military ships and (2) to annex Tsari Grad and Endrene (the Dardanelles) for herself, both of which were unacceptable to the Western Powers.

After the end of the Crimean war in 1856, by the Treaty of Paris, the Western Powers made sure Russia’s desires for expansion were curbed. First, all Russian warships were barred from the Black Sea and second, the Black Sea was opened to merchant ships from all the states. After that, all the Great Powers, not just Russia, became the guarantors of the Balkan states.

From 1815 to 1878 Great Britain was Russia's strongest rival for Balkan influence. British interests led it to intervene against the Ottomans in the Morean revolution of the 1820s but went to war against Russia in 1853 (Crimean war) on the Ottoman Empire's behalf.

The British goals in the Balkans were to maintain access to the eastern Mediterranean and to secure shipping lanes to India. Most of the trade routes passed through Turkish controlled waters. The Ottoman Empire was too weak to be a threat, so Britain was inclined to oppose France, Russia and Germany when they became a threat to the Ottomans.

To bolster its claim to the Eastern waterways, in 1878 Britain took control of the island of Cyprus and in 1883 occupied Egypt and the Suez Canal. After that Britain kept a close watch on Morea and Russian access to the Straits, interfering less in Ottoman affairs.

Britain also had important commercial interests inside the Ottoman Empire, and later in the successor states. Investors in railroads and state bonds took as much profit as they could, as soon as they could, which in the long term contributed to the Ottoman Empire's instability.

France, like Britain, had both political and economic interests in the Balkans. During the Napoleonic wars, France was a direct threat to Ottoman rule (Napoleon invaded Egypt in 1798) but after its 1815 defeat it lost its military and political clout. France had commercial rights in the Ottoman Empire dating back to the Capitulation Treaties of the 1600s and relied heavily on trade with the Ottomans.

In the 1820s France joined British and Russian intervention on behalf of the Moreans. France did this mostly to protect its commercial interests but also to counter-balance Russian-British domination in the region.

More so than the British, French investors played a key role in Balkan policy. During the Eastern Crisis and the war of 1875-78, the Ottoman State went bankrupt and French bondholders were the biggest potential losers in case of default. So when the Ottoman

Public Debt Administration was created to monitor Ottoman State finances, French directors were right in the middle of managing them. Like the British investors, French investors forced the Ottomans to maximize their returns and ignored the needs of the Ottoman people.

Austria had been the main threat to Ottoman rule at one time, but after 1699 Russia replaced it. Austria retained a major interest in the Ottoman Empire mainly because it was neighbouring Hungary. In other words, Vienna had no desire to replace a weak Ottoman neighbour with a strong Russia or Russian allies like Serbia or today's Bulgaria.

Austria's goals were aimed at creating a western Balkan economic resource and a potential market. Control of the Adriatic coast was key to Austria's foreign trade through the Adriatic Sea. Austria made sure it exerted enough influence to keep the hostile Great Powers away and to prevent the growing new Balkan nations from annexing it. Austria had no desire to annex the western Balkans for itself. The ruling German Austrians, or the Hungarians had no ethnic or religious ties to the Slavs in the region.

After 1866 Germany (not Austria) became the leader in central Europe. Austria now had only southeastern Europe where it could exert influence. Austria was too weak to absorb the Balkans by itself so it preferred to sustain a weak Ottoman Empire instead of "Russian controlled" states. This explains why Vienna took an anti-Russian position during the Crimean War and why it became allied with Germany later. Germany was an ally of both Russia and Austria, but Austria turned on Russia so Germany had to abandon the Russian-German alliance to please Austria.

Serbia and Romania created problems for Vienna, which it unsuccessfully tried to manage through political alliances and economic treaties. Romania feared Russian occupation and Bucharest generally accepted alliances with Austria. Serbia, however, had fewer enemies and less incentive to bend to Austrian wishes. The two states (Austria and Serbia) found themselves on a collision course which resulted in the war of 1914 (World War I).

Italy became a state in 1859 after fighting a successful war against Austria. In 1866 the Kingdom of Piedmont united the Italian peninsula and took its position as a new Great Power. Italy lacked economic and military might in comparison to the other Powers but made up for it in influence at the expense of the weaker Ottoman Empire.

Italy viewed the western Balkans, especially Albania, as its “natural zone of influence” and its leaders watched for opportunities to take the area away from the Ottomans. Italy’s Balkan goals were not only a threat to the Ottomans but also to Serbia and Greece who both had aims at seizing the Adriatic. Italy was too weak to seize Balkan territory so it followed a policy of “lay and wait” until 1911 and 1912 when it took the Dodecanese Islands and Tripoli (Libya) from the Ottomans.

Germany, like Italy, became a Great Power at a later time after the German State unification of 1862 to 1870. Due to its strong military and economic might, Germany had more influence in Europe than Italy, but no direct interest in Balkan affairs. For the new German Empire the Balkans were only economic outlets.

After defeating Austria in 1866, Germany made Austria-Hungary an ally and to retain loyalty, Germany had to support Austria in Balkan matters. After 1878 Germany could no longer reconcile Russian and Austrian differences over the Balkans and by 1890 Germany and Austria strengthened their alliance and pushed Tsarist Russia into a conflicting partnership with republican France. After that, German policies in the Balkans supported economic and military investments in the Ottoman Empire. This made Germany a rival not only of Russia but also of Britain. The Great Power alignments of 1890-1914 established a pattern that dominated the two world wars.

Germany had no stake in the development of any of the successor states which left it free to support the Sultan (and later the Young Turk regime). German officers trained Ottoman troops and German Marks built Ottoman railways.

The Ottoman Empire of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was the weakest of the Great Powers, especially after the Crimean war. At the 1856 Treaty

of Paris, Britain and France granted the Ottoman Empire “legal status” in the Balkans that was far beyond its ability to control. The Western Powers desperately wanted the Ottoman Empire stable and intact.

The Ottomans, on the other hand, mistrusted the other Powers, partly because they were infidels and partly because of bad past experiences. Russia was clearly the Ottoman Empire’s greatest enemy, bent on dismantling its empire. To keep Russia at bay, the Ottomans cooperated with the other Powers but were always wary of falling under the influence of any single Power. From the 1820’s to the 1870s, Britain was the Ottoman Empire’s guardian. After 1878 Germany replaced Britain as economic and military sponsor. Ottoman relations with the new Balkan states were poor at best. Any gains for them usually meant losses for the Ottoman Empire.

The western Great Powers believed that if corruption, crime and poverty could be eliminated, Balkan unrest would end and the Ottoman Empire could remain intact. After all, they didn’t want anything to happen to their goose that laid golden eggs. So instead of kicking the “sick man” out of Europe, they pushed for reforms. However, it was one thing to draw up reforms and another to make them work. By examining Ottoman efforts in Macedonia it was obvious that the Ottomans lacked the resources and the will to carry out reforms. Also, Europeans failed to grasp that suggestions and wishes alone could not replace five hundred years of Ottoman rule. The Ottomans believed their way of life was justified.

In 1865 a group of educated Ottomans formed the secret Young Ottoman Society. Their aim was to revitalize old Islamic concepts and unite all the ethnic groups under Islamic law. Threatened with arrest, the Young Ottoman leaders went into exile in Paris.

In 1889 a group of four medical students formed another secret Young Turk Society. They rejected the “old Islamic aims” and embraced a new idea, “Turkish nationalism”. Turkish nationalism became the foundation for a secular Turkey in 1908 after the Young Turks came to power and again in 1920 after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire in Turkey proper.

The next important event in Balkan history was the Crimean War of 1853 to 1856, which pitted Russia against Turkey, England and France. The crisis ignited over the issue of who was in control of Christian Holy Places in Turkish-ruled Jerusalem. Orthodox and Catholic monks quarreled over insignificant issues, like who should possess the keys to locked shrines. By old treaties Russia and France were the international guarantors of Orthodox and Catholic rights respectively, but in 1852 Napoleon III tried to undo that. He needed to distract French Catholic public opinion away from his authoritarian government so he instigated the problem.

Because the issues of dispute involved the highest levels of the Ottoman government, to the nations involved it became a symbolic struggle for influence. The Russians badly misjudged the other Powers and failed to see that Britain could not accept a Russian victory. Tensions rose as all sides prepared for conflict. A Russian army occupied two Romanian Principalities failing to see that this threatened Austria's Balkan interests. Russia expected help and gratitude from Vienna for its help against Hungary in 1849 but Austria refused to give it. With support from the western Powers, the Ottomans refused to negotiate and in 1853 declared war on Russia.

The Crimean War pulled in the Great Powers even though none of them wanted to go to war. In 1854 Austria forced the Russians to evacuate the Principalities and Austria took Russia's place as a neutral power. In 1856 the allied western Powers took Sevastopol, the chief Russian port on the Black Sea, by force. After that Russia agreed to their terms at the Treaty of Paris.

As a result of the Treaty of Paris, the Danube River was opened to shipping for all nations. Russia lost southern Bessarabia to Moldavia. It also lost its unilateral status as protector of Romanian rights. The two Romanian principalities remained under nominal Ottoman rule. However, a European commission was appointed and, together with elected assembly representatives from each province, was responsible for determining "the basis for administration" of the two Principalities. Also, all the European powers now shared responsibility as guarantors of the treaty.

On the surface it appears that the Ottomans won and Russia lost the Crimean war. In reality however, both Russia and the Ottomans lost immensely. The Crimean War financially bankrupted the Ottomans. As for Russia, it lost its shipping monopoly on the Black Sea and allowed capitalism to enter into eastern Europe. Russia not only lost influence in Romania and Moldavia but it was also humiliated in front of the entire world. This set the stage for future conflicts including the most recent “cold wars”.

As mentioned earlier, the Ottoman financial collapse opened the door for western governments to manipulate internal Ottoman policies as well as divert needed revenues to pay foreign debts. On top of that the Ottoman Empire was forced into becoming a consumer of western European commodities. While western Europe prospered from these ventures, Ottoman trades and guilds paid the ultimate price of bankruptcy. Lack of work in the cities bore more pressure on the village peasants, who were now being taxed to starvation to feed unemployed city dwellers, as well as maintaining the status quo for the rich. The Ottoman Empire became totally dependent on European capital for survival, which put the state past the financial halfway point of no return and marked the beginning of the end of Ottoman rule in Europe.

By 1875 the Ottomans entered a crisis situation owing 200 million pounds sterling to foreign investors with an annual interest payment of 12 million pounds a year. The interest payments alone amounted to approximately half the state’s annual revenues. In 1874, due to some agricultural failures, military expenses and worldwide economic depression, the Ottoman government could not even pay the interest due on the loans. On the brink of bankruptcy, to preserve Ottoman stability and to make sure the Ottomans paid up western European debts, the Great Powers in 1875 took over the management of Ottoman revenues. This was done through an international agency, called the Ottoman Public Debt Administration (OPDA). To continue to receive credit, the Sultan had to grant the OPDA control over state income. Therefore, control of the state budget and internal policies fell into foreign hands. The agents in control were representatives of the rich capitalists and were only interested in profit, and very little else. This was definitely not to the advantage of the local people.

(For more information on the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire please read chapters twenty-one and twenty-two of my book “History of the Macedonian people From Ancient times to the Present”, published in 2005).

## **Life in Macedonia during the 19<sup>th</sup> century**

As well as paying heavy taxes to the Ottomans, the village peasants of the Balkans were now burdened with additional taxes to pay off western European loans. For some the burden was too great and it manifested itself in a number of independent uprisings.

Discontentment with Ottoman rule, economic plight and pure neglect of human life precipitated the “Eastern Crisis” and in Macedonia it resulted in the Razlog insurrection of 1876.

The growing discontentment of the peasantry in the Balkans disturbed the Great Powers who now had a vested interest in protecting the Ottoman Empire from falling apart. A conference was convened in Tsari Grad in 1876 to discuss strategies on how to deal with the insurrections and the “Eastern Question” in general. Representatives of Russia, Austria-Hungary, Britain, Germany, France and Italy attended the conference and decided to place Macedonia and Bulgaria under the control of the Great Powers. The Ottomans rejected their demands and soon found themselves at odds with Russia.

By early 1877, war broke out in Serbia and Montenegro followed by a massive Russian invasion of Bulgaria. The Ottoman armies were decimated and the Ottoman Empire was forced to negotiate peace with Russia which, on March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1878, resulted in the San Stefano Treaty, done without Western Power consent. Russia, as usual, was concerned more with self-interests and less with the interest of the people it was trying to protect, so it sought the opportunity to realize a long held ambition in the Balkans to gain access to the Mediterranean Sea.

Among other things, this Russian-Ottoman Treaty forced the Ottomans to provide autonomy to an extended Bulgaria that included Macedonia, western Thrace, part of Albania and a district of Serbia.

The conclusion of this treaty sent shock waves not only through the Western Powers, who had a lot to lose (financial investments in the Ottoman Empire), but also to states like Greece and Serbia who had territorial ambitions of their own towards Ottoman territories.

Disturbed by the Russian tactics, the Western Powers re-convened the Eastern Question in Berlin in July 1878. At this point the San Stefano agreement was revised so that, among other things, the territory of present day Bulgaria was divided into two administrative districts: Bulgaria proper and eastern Rumelia. Eastern Rumelia, Macedonia, Thrace, Kosovo and Albania were given back to the Ottomans.

On the verge of bankruptcy, Russia could not resist the Western Powers and gave in to their demands.

With the exception of clause 23 that required the Ottomans to provide a small degree of economic autonomy to Macedonia, Macedonia was once again committed to Ottoman oppression. The conditions of clause 23, unfortunately, were never enforced by the Great Powers or complied with by the Ottoman state.

In the spring of 1878 the Macedonian people reached the crossroads of their destiny. They were one step away from overthrowing six hundred years of Ottoman tyranny when the Western Powers stepped in and prevented it. Why? Was Macedonia less deserving than Greece, Serbia, or Bulgaria? Were the Macedonians less Christian than the Greeks, Serbians, or Bulgarians? Was the Macedonian people's struggle for freedom from Ottoman tyranny not convincing enough? No!

The real reason for throwing Macedonia back to the wolves had little to do with religion, nationalism, or human rights and a lot to do with economics, profit and access to the Mediterranean Sea. Russia desperately wanted to access the Mediterranean Sea but the Western Powers desperately wanted to prevent it. Here is what Trevelyan has to say about that. "Throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century Russia was striving to advance towards Constantinople (Tsari Grad) over the ruins of the Turkish Empire. She was drawn forward by imperialist ambition, in the oppressed Christians of her own communion, many of whom were Slav by language and race, and by the instinct to seek a warm water port—a window whence the imprisoned giantess could look out upon the world. The world however, had no great wish to see her there."

“Canning (a British politician, 1812-1862) had planned to head off Russia’s advance, not by direct opposition, but by associating her with England and France in a policy of emancipation, aimed at erecting national States out of the component parts of the Turkish Empire. Such States could be relied upon to withstand Russian encroachment on their independence, if once they were set free from the Turk. The creation of the Kingdom of Greece was the immediate outcome of Canning’s policy” (Page 372, Trevelyan, British History in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century)

It is important at this point to digress for a moment and introduce some new ideas that may have never before been openly discussed. It is well-known that the Great Power states were all kingdoms and each was ruled by a monarchy. It should also be understood that the monarchs who ruled the Great Powers and the little states they created out of the crumbling Ottoman Empire, such as Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria, were all related. One could not be a king unless he or she was born from a royal family. All of Europe during the 19<sup>th</sup> century was ruled by the same royal “family”. In actual fact it was this royal family which decided what Europe would look like in terms of states and people. This does not mean that members of this monarchic family did not compete with each other and did not disagree on issues. They each competed to get a larger piece of the “Balkan pie” but when it came to matters of “greater importance” they decided what was possible and what was not possible. The Macedonian people found this out the hard way. Just as they began to make their bid for independence from the Ottoman Empire, members of the Macedonian revolutionary organization appealed to the monarchs for help and were turned down. One member of the Macedonian revolutionary organization personally made an appeal to the Russian king and he too was turned down.

The reason for this, it would appear, was that the monarchies in Europe around 1878 had already decided to partition Macedonia and give it to the monarchs ruling Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria but were unsure what to do with the Macedonian people. Unfortunately the Macedonian people did not know about this and continued to prepare for an uprising to liberate themselves. Naturally the European monarchy wanted to create states which were loyal to it

and served its interests. The Macedonian people were not prepared for that. The monarchs were well aware that the Macedonian people “would never be their dogs”, as the wise man once said, and would always want to be independent and masters of their own destiny. So, allowing a Macedonian state to be created was counter-productive for the European monarchies and the Great Powers. Also, Macedonia had the potential to unify the Slav speaking world and create a super state, like Philip and Alexander had, which would be a threat to them.

This is not a joke. Sometime in early 2000 I was contacted by a person who said he worked for the United States State Department think tank and he wanted to ask me some questions. Specifically, he wanted to know why I was writing all these articles about Macedonia and the Macedonians and if this was part of a plan for us Macedonians to start something in the future... But when I asked him, “what possible plans could a little country like the Republic of Macedonia have?” he said, “being little has nothing to do with being capable...” He then asked me “how big was Alexander’s Macedonia when he took on the world?” At one point in our conversation he said, “There are a lot of people out there who can easily be convinced to believe that the Macedonians have a special relationship with them... on account of Alexander...” He also said that the “United States has a one hundred year plan and in this plan there are policies that call for ‘nipping in the bud’ all possible future threats to the United States.” He pointed to several of those threats. One of those “threats” at the time was Milosevic and Serbia.

So, one is left to wonder is that what is happening in Macedonia today? And is that part of the United States policy to “nip the Macedonian threat in the bud?” What possible threat could Macedonia be to the United States?

What is happening to Macedonia and the Macedonian people today may seem insane, but it is part of a master plan to eradicate everything that is Macedonian. And this plan does not stop with Greece, Serbia, Bulgaria and Albania. It extends back to the core of the Great Powers who allowed Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria to exterminate Macedonians for more than a century. This plan unfortunately has existed since Roman times and is being exercised

through proxies to this day. The creation of the People's Republic of Macedonia in 1944 was simply an act of the will of the Macedonian people, in other words an accident not sanctioned by the Great Powers. The creation of the Republic of Macedonia in 1991 was done by the will of the Macedonian people, also an accident and was created without Great Power approval. This is why the Republic of Macedonia has great difficulty gaining international recognition. Greece and Bulgaria are not the only problem. Greece and Bulgaria are simply pawns in the games the Great Powers play. Remember, nothing happens without Great Power approval. Why the Great Powers do not want a Macedonian state is indeed a mystery about which we can only speculate! Are they afraid that Macedonia will bring a change in world order like Alexander did two and a half millenniums ago? I don't know.

I often wondered why the Macedonian people in 1903 made a bid to create a republic (the Krushevo Republic) in the midst of a powerful monarchic world. As is well-known republics are "anti-monarchic" by nature and the Macedonian people attempting to create a republic, in the middle of a powerful monarchic world, was not only counter-productive but suicidal. But they did it anyway. Why? Ironically the United States is a republic but it too refuses to help the Macedonian people free themselves from this eternal bondage.

Right from the start it should have been obvious to the 19<sup>th</sup> century Macedonians that the Great Powers would not allow them to create an independent Macedonian state. They were refused help too many times not to notice. So the question is why did they attempt to do it anyway and why did they start the 1903 Ilinden Uprising?

It should have been obvious to the Macedonian leaders right from the start in 1991 that nothing would happen without Great Power approval and that they would get nowhere unless they had sponsorship from the Great Powers which would have meant, like the wise old man said, become someone's dog!

And now let us resume our story.

Russia had no economic stake in the Ottoman Empire so it wanted the Ottomans out of the Balkans. The Western Powers invested heavily in the Ottoman economy and infrastructure and were

anxious to keep the Ottoman Empire alive and well in the Balkans. The success of the Crimean War (Ottoman victory) convinced the British to slow down their policy of creating new Balkan States in favour of exploiting the lucrative Ottoman markets and collecting returns on loans made to the Ottomans.

By the stroke of a pen Bulgaria was freed (became autonomous) while Macedonia was sentenced to suffer further indignity and humiliation. Back in the hands of the Greek clergy and the Ottoman authorities, Macedonia now entered a new era of suffering and cruelty, destined to pay for the sins of all the other nations that rose up against the Ottomans.

Between the spring and summer of 1878 Macedonia's fate was decided, not by Russia or the Western Powers but by England alone. England, who created Greece and introduced the curse of Hellenism into the Balkans, was now prepared to fight Russia, by military means if necessary, to keep it out of the Mediterranean Sea. To avoid war a compromise was reached. "The essentials of this compromise were agreed upon between England and Russia before the meeting of the European Congress, which took place at Berlin under the chairmanship of Bismarck, and formally substituted the Treaty of Berlin for the terms of San Stefano" (Page 377, Trevelyan, British History in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century)

"To our (English) eyes the real objection to the San Stefano lies not in its alleged increase in Russian power, but in the sacrifice of the fair claims of Greeks and Serbians, who would not have remained long quiet under the arrangements which ignored their racial rights and gave all the points to Bulgaria. Lord Salisbury felt this strongly, especially on behalf of Greece."

"Beaconsfield's success, as he himself saw it, consisted in restoring the European power of Turkey. It was done by handing back Macedonia to the Port (Ottomans), without guarantees for better government. This was the essence of the Treaty of Berlin as distinct from the Treaty of San Stefano. 'There is again a Turkey in Europe' Bismarck said. He congratulated the British Prime Minister – 'You have made a present to the Sultan of the richest province in the world; 4,000 square miles of the richest soil.' Unfortunately for

themselves, the inhabitants went with the soil. Since Beaconsfield decided, perhaps rightly, that Macedonia should not be Bulgarian, some arrangements ought to have been made for its proper administration under a Christian governor. Apart of all questions of massacres, the deadening character of the Turkish rule is well known. Lord Salisbury seems to have wished for a Christian governor, but nothing was done in that direction. A golden opportunity was thus let slip.” (Page 378, Trevelyan, British History in the 19th Century)

Remember, the statements made above were made in 1878 which meant that Macedonia, or parts of it, were promised to be given to Greece and therefore there was not going to be a Macedonian state if England had its way. And it did! Also, it was by no accident that England made no guarantees to safeguard the Macedonian people, as Bismarck rightly pointed out England left the Ottomans unchecked to take their revenge on the Macedonians. Was this done to “exterminate” more Macedonians? I would say yes because “exterminating” Macedonians subsequently became routine practice for the English, as we will show later.

After gaining status as protector of the Suez Canal and the waterways to India, Britain was awarded Cyprus. Content with its gains, Britain became lax and agreed that Russia and Austria-Hungary should oversee Ottoman affairs in Macedonia. “The British people, when left to themselves, neither knew or cared who massacred whom between the Danube and the Aegean. Byron’s Greece had appealed to their imagination and historical sense, but the Balkans were a battlefield of kites and crows” (Page 373, Treveleyan, British History in the 19th Century)

The Macedonian people were not at all happy about what went on in the Berlin Congress and showed their discontentment by demonstrating first in Kresna then in Razlog, but as usual their pleas were ignored. The Ottoman army was dispatched and the demonstrations were violently put down.

After 1878, for Macedonians to be Hellenized meant that they had to give up their Macedonian names, their Macedonian language, their culture, their history, their folklore and their Macedonia heritage.

Here is what Karakasidou has to say. "...The ideological content of notions of the Hellenic nation, which far from being ecumenical has shown itself to be intolerant of cultural or ethnic pluralism, has led many inhabitants of Greek Macedonia to deny or hide those aspects of their own personal or family pasts..." (Page 125, *Fields of Wheat, Hills of Blood*)

"The period immediately following the Berlin Congress demonstrated therefore, that Balkan chauvinist intent was not merely to occupy, govern and exploit Macedonia, but to eradicate the Macedonian culture, and superimpose its own culture upon a people alien to it. By guile, gun, religion and quasi-legal manipulation, the Balkan States attempted to divest the native Macedonians of their language, religion, folklore, literature, traditions and consciousness. The ultimate goal therefore, was to anaesthetize the Macedonian people, and then remold them into Bulgarians, Greeks and Serbians." (Page 45, A. Michael Radin, *IMRO and the Macedonian Question*) And all this was done with English consent.

Did it not once occur to these westerners that in the heart of Macedonia, perhaps there was a unique Macedonian culture living there? Did it not once occur to them that perhaps the Macedonians with their multicultural and multiethnic character did not want to be molded to fit the western profile of what a nation should be? Yes it did occur to them and that was the point. The English and most western powers in general did not want a Macedonia and the Macedonian people to exist so they let their dogs Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria, as the wise man would say, do the work for them.

By throwing Macedonia back to the Ottomans the Great Powers made sure the Macedonian people would be punished for their stubborn ways, for refusing to be molded into a monolithic uni-cultural and pseudo-homogeneous nation-state, like Greece. Why did they do this? Only those who participated in the 1878 Berlin Congress and who forever committed Macedonia to suffer more cruelty and injustice can truly answer this question. One thing is for certain; as the West is now growing old and gaining wisdom and experience it has learned how to hide its cruelty behind impotent international organizations and words like "freedom", "human rights" and "democracy" while still punishing those who refuse to

serve its interests. But, has the west really become wiser? Is the west really more tolerant of minorities or has it used the “minority rights” issue as a weapon to punish those who refuse to be its servants? Why hasn’t the west punished Greece for what it has done and is doing to the Macedonian people? Human rights, it seems, is only an issue outside of the west but not inside!

Here is a story published by <http://www.minareport.com> that illustrates my point:

### **Croatian MEP: EU and Democracy is an Oxymoron**

By Mark Abramoff - October 6, 2018

One of the most popular Croatian politicians and MEP in Brussels Ivan Pernar blasted the EU as anything, but democratic during a speech at an EU session in Brussels.

Although we highly recommend watching his speech, here are his main takeaways:

In Macedonia 36.8% (the number now is actually 35.1% due to nullification of 2 polling places) of which 33% voted “For”, yet 67% said “No” by boycotting the Referendum. The EU says referendum is successful.

In Catalonia 93% voted “Yes” in a much higher turnout than in Macedonia recorded at 43%, but the EU said the referendum is unsuccessful. Why is it successful in Macedonia with 36%, but unsuccessful in Catalonia with 43%?

The political elite in the EU is only interested in implementing the wishes of the global elite. The people cannot decide nor are they allowed to have a say about how they live their lives.

Putting the EU and democracy in the same sentence is an oxymoron, the two cannot be more diametrically opposed.

Before Catalonia and Macedonia it was Crimea. Once again the EU would not recognize a Referendum that had over 90% turnout simply because they did not like the result, just like they did not like

the results in Macedonia and Catalonia. In Catalonia Spanish police beat voters who waited in line to vote, police stole ballot boxes to reduce the turnout percentage, which they did. And what did the EU say, absolutely nothing. It never condemned all the crazy violence against the Catalan people.

Catalonia, Macedonia, Crimea all have one thing in common. The people have spoken, but the EU vassals serving globalists were told not to ‘recognize’ the results.

What more can I say...?

I know that words can do no justice to the suffering the Macedonian people endured since 1878. I will do my best to describe what life was like to be ruled by the Ottomans, governed by the Greeks, pillaged by the Albanians and robbed and beaten by the villains of society. It has been said that education was a curse in Macedonia. No educated Macedonian lived to a ripe old age. If a man was educated, he died at the hands of his enemies, not because he was educated but because he was feared. The Ottomans feared him because he might rise up against them. The Greeks feared him because he might oppose them. The Bulgarians feared him because he might expose them. (If you wish to learn more about the horrors committed by the Ottomans in Macedonia, read Brailsford’s book, *Macedonia, Its races and their Future.*)

The 1878 Treaty of Berlin awakened the Muslim Rulers (Ottomans and Albanians) in the Balkans to the reality that their Empire had come close to disintegrating. But instead of searching for a rational solution, the Ottomans did what they had always done best and what the Great Powers expected them to do, turn to violence. They took counter-measures to suppress the “troublemakers”, by extinguishing their rebellious spirit. In practice this manifested itself in a variety of punishments that included the following:

Taxes were raised to pay off western loans. The Ottomans and Muslim Albanians were a predatory (parasitic) race and produced nothing themselves. Instead they lived off the earning power of the Macedonians and other Christians.

To prevent further uprisings and rebellions, the Ottomans stepped up espionage activities and searches for weapons. In reality, however, the weapons searches were nothing more than an excuse to take revenge and further pillage the Macedonian peasants. Those who could afford to pay bribes paid off the Ottomans to avoid misfortune. Those who couldn't were tortured and usually beaten to death. If by any chance weapons were found, the entire village was burned to the ground, even if the weapons belonged to a thug.

The Ottomans were not above shaming or kidnapping Macedonian women either. In fact it was common practice for Muslim soldiers to grab Christian women while conducting raids on villages. (For a Macedonian woman death was preferable over a lifetime of shame.) The Macedonians of the Ottoman era were extremely moral people and conducts of this nature were not taken lightly. Unfortunately, there was nothing that could be done to avenge the women, so women carried the burden of shame alone, for the rest of their lives. No Christian was allowed to bear arms and defend his family. There was no one to complain to because in most cases the perpetrators and the villains were the law. No Muslim could be punished for doing harm to a Christian, no matter what the crime.

In addition to contending with the Ottoman authorities, Macedonians faced kidnappings and assaults from the Albanians. Any man, woman, or child that ventured too far from the village exposed themselves to the risks of being kidnapped (an old Albanian pastime) by Albanian marauders or by Ottoman outlaws who demanded a hefty ransom for a safe return. It was certain death if no ransom was paid.

There were also the roving Ottoman patrols that traveled the highways and if someone happened to cross paths with them, they would be robbed, beaten and humiliated in a number of different ways, depending on the mood of the soldiers.

The greatest threat to Macedonian life came from the Bashi-buzouks or armed civilian Muslims. Most of the Bashi-buzouks were Albanians who made a career of pillaging, burning Macedonian villages and torturing the inhabitants. After 1878, Bashi-buzouk raids escalated to a point where they became intolerable. The

Christians had no legal recourse to fight back. Being Muslims, the Bashi-buzouks were immune from legal prosecution. The only way Macedonians could fight back was to flee to the mountains and join the outlaws.

Let's not forget the annual routine homage and tributes paid to the Albanian clans for not burning the villages and crops, the local policemen for not humiliating and beating family members and the local hoods for not assaulting and bullying the women and children.

It would be an injustice if I didn't mention the way Ottomans treated women. No Macedonian woman was safe from them. If a woman caught an Ottoman's eye there was no escape, she would be plucked kicking and screaming from her home and family, converted to Islam by force and thrown into a harem to become an object of lust. No woman was safe, not even a bride on her wedding day.

A Macedonian could not rise above his tyrannical existence on his own because every time he did he was either killed for his education, robbed of his wealth, kicked out of his home for his lands, murdered for defending his family, or humiliated for his existence.

This is not what Macedonians wanted for themselves, but those powerful enough refused to help them. The Greek clergy who were responsible for the well-being of the Macedonian people were the first to condemn them. Their first priorities were to Hellenize them so that they could steal their heritage. The Greeks, with their "superior attitude", despised the Macedonians because of their race (the Slavs were the enemy) and because of their agrarian abilities (which the Greeks loathed).

The Great Powers, in their zeal to dominate the Balkans, found themselves at odds with each other and by 1878 were either content with "doing nothing" or stifled by frustration and "turned their backs" on the mess they had created. The Ottoman state, for the West was the goose that kept on laying golden eggs.

No excuses or apologies from the English and the French can make up for unleashing the Ottomans and Hellenism on Macedonia after

1878. No Macedonian, or any human being for that matter, should ever forgive the Western Powers for putting profit ahead of human life and intentionally turning their backs on the Macedonian people.

Labeling people “Slav” and “Barbarian” because they were not educated does not make them inhuman and certainly does not excuse “civilized” western societies for tormenting them. Here is what Petrovska has to say. “It is erroneous to dismiss peasant culture as backwards, simply because they are not literate cultures. Indeed the opposite is the case. Children were educated by way of story telling and folklore, which contained morals and lessons about life, relationships and their places in the world.” (Page 167, Children of the Bird Goddess) (If you want to learn more about life in Macedonia read Kita Sapurma and Pandora Petrovska’s book entitled “Children of the Bird Goddess”, an oral history that spans over 100 years and explores the lives of four generations of Macedonian women.)

One has only to examine Macedonian traditions, customs, dress, folklore and attitude towards life to find an “old race” full of vigour, enduring hardships, living as it always lived close to nature, always craving everlasting peace. Macedonian songs are timeless records of sorrow and of hope that “someday this too will pass”. Macedonians have survived to this day because they have a caring quality and a capacity to give and forgive, never wanting anything in return. Anyone who has visited a Macedonian home or has lived among Macedonians can attest to that.

Macedonia (outside of Alexander’s campaigns) had done no ill against any nation to deserve such punishment from the Ottomans and the Greeks. Macedonians did not desire to be labeled “barbarian Slavs” or choose to be illiterate. It was “pure prejudice” on the part of Western Societies that degraded the Macedonian people to barbarian status and created the conditions for the Ottomans and the Greeks to abuse them. The West’s artificial creation of Greece and Hellenism and the Greek quest for purity and national homogeneity is what upset the “natural balance” in the Balkans. Macedonia, since Alexander’s time, has been a “worldly” nation and has maintained its multi-ethnic, multi-cultural pluralistic character. If you take the Ottomans out of Macedonia in the 19<sup>th</sup> century you will find a

society of many nations working and living together in peace, each doing what comes naturally. Anyone who has lived in Macedonia can attest to that. It has always been “outsiders” who shifted the balance and disturbed the peace in the Balkans. While western Europe slept through her “dark ages”, the people of the Balkans lived in relative harmony for over 1,100 years. Each race played an important role in maintaining the social and political balance and the economic self-sufficiency of the region.

During the 19<sup>th</sup> century almost all Macedonians lived in village communities. There were no Greeks living in the Macedonian mainland and only a small minority lived in the coastal towns, islands and larger cities. The majority of the villages were Macedonian with the odd Vlach village nestled here and there in the mountains. Macedonians spoke the Macedonian language and lived an agrarian life working the lands. Among the Macedonians lived some Vlachs who spoke both Vlach and Macedonian. Their main occupation was retail trade, running the local grocery stores and retail businesses. In addition to the Vlachs, there were roving Romas (Gypsies) who traveled from village to village trading their wares. They traded pack animals like horses, mules and donkeys, repaired old and sold new flour sifters, loom reeds and other fine crafts. They bartered with the village women and traded beads, string and sewing needles for beans and walnuts. To those who could afford it, they sold silk kerchiefs, handmade baskets and purses. With those who couldn't afford them, they traded their wares for vegetables, eggs and a few bales of hay. Among themselves the Gypsies spoke their Gypsy dialect but with their customers they spoke Macedonian.

Another race that frequented the Macedonian landscape were the panhandlers from Epirus and Thessaly who performed magic on old copper pots and pans and made spoons and forks shine like mirrors. In addition to their own language, they too spoke Macedonian and were open to bartering for their wares and services.

Carpenters, stone masons, barrel makers and woodcutters came from far and wide. They came from as far as Albania or as close as the poorest Macedonian village. For a fair wage, some rakia (alcohol spiced with anise during distillation) and three meals a day, they built fences, porches, staircases and entire houses. For the

Macedonians the soil provided most of life's necessities. For the rest they bought, traded, or bartered.

The only desire Macedonians had in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was to rid themselves of the tyranny of the oppressive Ottomans. This was most evident in the communiqué's, appeals and manifestos of the legendary Macedonian Revolutionary Committee.

While Macedonia was being choked by the Ottoman noose of oppression, tormented by Hellenism and frustrated by Bulgarian deception, the Greek army, in 1881, annexed Thessaly and in 1885 the Bulgarian army (with Russia's support) annexed eastern Rumelia. While the Ottoman Empire was crumbling at the edges, it was tightening its grip ever harder on Macedonia. Looting, burning homes and murders were on the rise. More and more Macedonians were made homeless and forced to become outlaws. The brave ones took up arms and fought back only to see that their actions caused more death and misery. The Ottomans and their Albanian allies didn't care who they killed. If one Ottoman or Albanian died in battle, the army took revenge on the next village they encountered. Thousands of innocent women and children were murdered in revenge killings, not to mention the assaults on countless young girls. Homes were burned down and the inhabitants were shot as target practice as they ran out to save themselves from the fire. Those too old or sick to move died a horrible, fiery death. Many of the survivors from the burned out villages joined the outlaws in the mountains and as their ranks swelled they began to organize and fight back.

Western Europeans and Russians, on the other hand, were flooding the Ottoman Balkans on vacation, to do business or lend a helping hand as missionaries or relief workers. They enjoyed all the freedoms and privileges as honorary citizens of the Ottoman Empire, under the protection of their country's flag and paid nothing for the honour bestowed upon them, not even taxes. Ottoman officers, even generals, had to salute western soldiers. Imagine a proud Ottoman general having to salute a common English soldier, just because he was English! Some Ottoman officers were so humiliated they refused to wear their uniforms out in the streets.

It has been said that soon after the Ottomans conquered Albania, the Albanian people began to convert to Islam. As Muslims, the Albanians to a large extent enjoyed the same privileges and advantages as their conquerors. The advantages of becoming a Muslim as opposed to staying Christian were obvious. Those who wanted to retain title to their lands did not hesitate to convert. In fact many realized that by converting they could amass wealth and increase their own importance at the expense of their Christian neighbours.

By the 19<sup>th</sup> century about two-thirds of the Albanians embraced Islam and served in almost every capacity in the Ottoman administration including the Sultan's palace guard. Also by the 19<sup>th</sup> century a great deal of the Ottoman services became corrupt and self-serving. Being Muslims, the Albanians were protected from prosecution of crimes committed against the Christians. This encouraged them to perform predatory acts like kidnappings for ransom, illegal taxation, extortion and forceful possession of property.

There are two documented methods, that I have come across, which describe how Albanians of the 19<sup>th</sup> century came to live in Macedonia, among the Macedonians.

1. To keep the Macedonians in check, the Ottomans created and strategically positioned Albanian villages inside Macedonia among the Macedonian villages.
2. By expelling or killing a few families in a Macedonian village, Albanian bandits could claim squatter's rights and move into their homes. By the next generation, the children of the squatters would become the "lords" of the village which made them legitimate landowners. Being in charge of the village, they then appointed their own family members and trusted friends into positions of authority like tax farmers and policemen. In this manner they could rule unchallenged.

Forceful occupation of villages was most prevalent during campaigns in the absence of the Ottoman army. When the Ottomans

were sent to fight against Russia in the east or against Napoleon in Egypt, the Albanians sought their chance and moved in unabated.

Here is an excerpt from Brailsford's book about the habits of some Albanians. "He will rob openly and with violence but he will not steal...He will murder you without remorse if he conceives that you have insulted him..." (Page 224, Macedonia, Its Races and their future)

To be fair, I want to mention that Albanians have their good qualities as well. Brailsford speaks very highly of them when it comes to loyalty and honesty. As mentioned earlier, under the right conditions Albanians can peacefully co-exist with other ethnicities and be a contributing factor to the wealth of a nation. The Macedonians have co-existed side by side with the Albanians since the Albanians settled on Macedonian lands.

In addition to being handed back to the Ottomans, the 1878 Treaty of Berlin subjected Macedonia to three new tyrants, the Greeks the Serbians and the Bulgarians. In time, Macedonia would be subjected to all kinds of evil but the most cunning would turn out to be Bulgarian chauvinism. The Macedonian people knew very well where they stood with the Greeks. Greek policies were straightforward, Hellenize everyone by any means possible, force and brutality included. The Bulgarian approach was very different. The Bulgarians were interested in brainwashing the Macedonian masses into believing that they were Bulgarians. Anyone who showed any opposition didn't live to tell about it. And so became the legacy of so many educated Macedonian young men and women.

## **Forging new identities in the Balkans to replace the Macedonians**

Greece, as I mentioned earlier, was a “Western creation” created for the purpose of achieving several objectives. One; keep Russia out of the Mediterranean Sea, two; break up the so-called Ottoman occupied “Slav (Macedonian) lands” and three; act as a proxy for its patron England and the other Great Powers that created it. Greece was to be a small and homogeneous nation, different from the other nations but easily manageable, and loyal to the Great Powers that created it. Greece was part of the solution to the “Eastern Question”, what to do with the lands and people after the Ottoman Empire falls.

Created by the Great Powers, the new Balkan States would be loyal to their creators and act on their behalf; English politicians were counting on Greece to fulfill its obligations and, for years, it did... and still does. But, in order to divide and break up this great multi-ethnic, multi-cultural world in the Balkans, opened up by Philip II, a Macedonian, 2,600 years ago, the Western Powers of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries introduced “nationalism”.

The Western Great Powers were interested in replacing the Ottoman Empire but with many small, easily manageable “divergent” states that would compete against one another but would be unable to survive without patron protection. This symbiotic relationship between patron and state in turn would keep the small states loyal to their patrons, do their bidding and be grateful for their protection. Nationalism, however, was never a way with which Balkan people identified before the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.

For over 2,300 years, since Philip II, King of Macedonia, created the ancient Macedonian state spanning from the Mediterranean Sea in the south to the Danube River in the north and from the Black Sea in the east to the Adriatic Sea in the west, the Balkan region had been without borders and without a sense of national identity. For over 1,800 years the people in this region lived with their Christian identity as the only unifying force which brought them together and allowed them to live in peace. Lack of borders and freedom of movement allowed the diverse people to travel anywhere within the

Ottoman Empire and settle and mix with other people. So, how does one create “national consciousness” where one does not exist?

Ignoring the fact that the Ottoman Empire of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural pluralistic society, the Western Powers initiated a nation building process anyway. To them, it didn't matter what kind of “nations” they were building, provided that the new nations were a “non-Slav” (non-Macedonian) singular society that agreed to do their bidding and, in England's case, keep Russia from reaching the Mediterranean waters. While the Western Powers were trying to break up the Balkans into small and divergent states, Russia was promoting “Panslavism” to unite all the Slav speakers under Russian leadership.

The national awakening of Serbia was an accident that couldn't be helped, but Greece was created by design. Greece was the opposite of Serbia and a solution for keeping the balance of power in the Balkans. While Serbia, supported by Russia, was destined to become a Slav State, Greece supported by the west would be destined to become the “opposite”.

The name “Greece” was chosen to denote a “Latin” lineage, to represent the Latin “Romaos” (Roman) character of the people. The name “Hellas”, with German help, was later chosen by Hellenized Phanariots to denote a lineage from the old City States of antiquity. Both of these names were foreign to the 19<sup>th</sup> century Balkans, but ideal to reflect the character of the newly artificially created Greek nation-state.

The pre-19<sup>th</sup> century Phanariots had no notion of nationalism or knowledge of the ancient City States. Their aim was to drive the Ottomans out of the Empire and keep the Empire intact so that they could rule it themselves. But this was not what the Western Powers wanted. The process of Hellenization began by educating some Phanariots about the existence of the old City States and their exploits. Phanariots who studied abroad, in London in particular, were seduced by the eloquently written, romantic stories about a people who lived at the bottom of the Balkans a long time ago. Phanariots were especially thrilled when they were received by westerners as the descendents of those ancient people. Not all

Phanariots were Hellenized or convinced to take the Hellenic road, some still wanted to re-create the Byzantine Empire (“Megali Idea”) but the West gave them no such choice.

It was one thing to “create a nation” and another to “give it life and a past”. The idea of modeling the new Greece after the old City States was well-received but lacked continuity. No one could explain how today’s so-called Greeks progressed from the old City States to the present, pre-19<sup>th</sup> century. History has no record of it. There was no Greek culture or language that would tie the modern Greek to the old City State citizen.

But, with some creative imagination and a lot of convincing, the problem was solved. The Macedonians had continuity and they could “somehow” be used to propel the “ancient people who lived in the city states” into modern times. And for that an ancient history had to be “invented” and “engineered” to fit the modern Greek model. Yes, read your (fake) classical history and learn how the mighty Macedonian Empire was somehow “Hellenized”, not by a powerful race or super intelligent beings, but by “the vanquished and subjugated” people of the old City-States. Alexander the Great, the most hated man of the old City-States, the man who destroyed Thebes and brutally crushed the spirits of the old City-State citizens was now the “Great King of the Modern Greeks” whom they revere and hold in such high honour.

We Macedonians have a song about that that goes something like this:

Alexander a Macedonian King

Sung by Suzana Spasoska

It was the year 338 before Christ,  
the year of the battle at Chaeronea,  
Philip, a Macedonia King,  
led his army, a Macedonian army,  
against Athens.

The Greeks are mistaken,

they are lamenting at a foreign grave,  
a foreign king they are revering,  
mother Macedonia will show the world,  
Alexander was a Macedonian King.

Years and centuries have passed,  
and the Macedonians exist for eternity,  
the truth will triumph, the world will say,  
go away Greeks, stop lying!

The Greeks are mistaken,  
they are lamenting at a foreign grave,  
a foreign king they are revering,  
mother Macedonia will show the world,  
Alexander was a Macedonian King.

Years and centuries have passed,  
and the Macedonians exist for eternity,  
the truth will triumph, the world will say,  
go away Greeks, stop lying!

Alexander was a Macedonian King.  
Alexander was a Macedonian King.

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Unfortunately altering classical history to say that the ancient Macedonians were Hellenized does not explain how and why there are “Slavs” (Macedonians) all over the Balkans today. Thousands of years of Slav influence and culture could not be easily erased, but thanks to the ingenuity of the western mind that problem too was solved.

The ancient Macedonians extinguished all the City-State cultures when they annexed them more than two-thousand years ago, history is clear on that. Therefore the only continuity the City-States could have that connects them to the Roman era was through the ancient Macedonians. But the ancient Macedonians were not Greeks. But that too was no problem for the western mind which concocted the idea that the Ancient Macedonians were “Hellenized”, in other

words the ancient Macedonians “somehow” became Greeks down the line.

When the westerners began to write the new “Greek” history, they quickly discovered that there were no ancient Macedonians who were Greeks in existence in the Balkans... only “Slavs”. So, what happened to the ancient Macedonians?

Those who wrote “modern history” during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries began to claim, without scientific proof, that the ancient Macedonians had died off (mysteriously to the last one) and had been replaced by the “newcomer Slavs” who arrived in the Balkans during the 6<sup>th</sup> century AD. In other words the “theory of mass Slav migrations” was concocted.

It was there and then that the Great Powers decided to not only give Macedonian territories to Greece but ordered “history to be revised” so as to KILL everything that was Macedonian and make it look like it was Greek. Greece could not exist without the ancient Macedonians and Greece could not exist with the modern Macedonians! If Greece was to live then it had to inherit everything that was Macedonian.

Even after that, however, there was still the “Slav problem”. The Slavs were always in the way of Greek Nationhood and for these reasons the “Real Macedonians” became and still are Greece’s worst enemy. The Greek zeal to become “the descendants of the ancient city states” was transformed into jealousy and hatred for Macedonia and for the Macedonian people. From the outset, the Greek people were deliberately brainwashed by Greece’s western patrons, particularly the English, to treat the Macedonian people as “the enemy”. The Slav (Macedonian) was viewed as the “boogieman” lurking in the woods always staring at them with its piercing red eyes waiting for a chance to pounce on them and steal their Macedonia from them.

Again, thanks to the ingenuity and brilliance of the western mind, the Slav problem for Greece was solved with the creation of “Bulgaria”.

“What is not Greek must be Bulgarian, what is not Bulgarian must be Greek, there can be no such thing as Macedonian”, are the words echoed to this day. This is what Macedonians faced and must face, lived and must live, every day of their lives both at home on their own ancestral lands and abroad from the 19<sup>th</sup> century to this day.

The 19<sup>th</sup> century creation of Bulgaria was the “answer” to covering up all remaining evidence of the existence of everything that was Macedonian outside of the “Hellenic model”. Never scientifically proven, as mentioned earlier, the so-called “Slav invasions” were concocted to cover up thousands of years of Macedonian culture and influence in the Balkans (and beyond).

To divide the Bulgarians from the Slav fold and to show that they were a distinct society, different from other Slavs (such as the Serbs), the non-Balkan name “Bulgaria” was chosen to represent them. Bulgaria, like Greece however, was a Balkan State created for the first time in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The name “Bulgaria” was derived from the river “Volga”, allegedly where the first Bulgarians came from. We are told that the Bulgarians were the descendents of a Tartar/Turkish tribe that invaded the Balkan region during the 6<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup> century AD and settled among the Slavs. There they mixed with the Slavs and created a new semi-Slav race.

So according to the western mind, the Bulgarians are not exactly pure Slavs or a pure Tartar/Turk but a mix of both, enough to make them different from other Slavs and enough to divide them from the Slav fold. Being part Slav, Bulgarians could lay claim to the “Slav speaking residents of Macedonia” on account that they too are Slav. Because they were part Tartar/Turk from the “Volga”, a region outside of the Balkans, the Bulgarians too were newcomers to the Balkans. Thus being newcomers to the Balkans, the Bulgarians could not lay claim to the heritage of ancient Macedonia. Bulgarians, however, could lay claim to the Slav heritage which included the modern Slav (Macedonian) culture and language.

So, once again: “What is not Greek must be Bulgarian, what is not Bulgarian must be Greek, because there is no such thing as Macedonian!”

But looking at the problem realistically, the people that existed in the Balkan Region before the invention of nationalism cannot be called “nations”, something that was not yet invented.

Before these modern nations were created, by the nation building process, and before borders were placed around them, all the people in the Balkans lived together within the confines of one large borderless region.

As history tells us, the people in this large Balkan region began to openly and freely live together after Philip II (338 BC) opened the frontiers and united them under his large kingdom.

This frontier remained open from the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC to the 19<sup>th</sup> century AD. In other words, all through the Macedonian Empire, the Roman Empire, the Eastern Roman (Byzantine) Empire and the Ottoman Empire. That is until the European Great Powers of the 19<sup>th</sup> century decided to break up the Ottoman Empire and replace it with smaller nation states each with their own uniquely fabricated nationality and border.

As mentioned earlier, the concept of “nationalism” and “nations” at the time was not known, was alien to the people of the Balkans inside the borders of the Ottoman Empire.

Nationalism was introduced to these people by the Western European Powers, brought to them from the outside.

In addition to having lived together without borders for over 2,300 years, the Christian people of the Balkans, as mentioned earlier, shared Christianity, a common religion for over 1,800 years, which served as a unifying force and kept them together.

Also as mentioned earlier, the Ottoman Empire of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was a multi-ethnic, multicultural and multi-religious pluralistic society, but outside of language and some folk traditions there was not much in the Balkans to distinguish one people from another.

Unfortunately the real aim of the European Great Powers was not to free the Christian people in the Balkans but to get rid of the ailing

Ottoman Empire and replace it with smaller and more manageable “nation states”. In retrospect, freeing the Christians was only a side effect of that aim.

As mentioned earlier, the Western European Great Powers chose the name “Greece” and “Greeks” for the new state because it was a Latin name denoting a “Latin” lineage which was to represent the Latin “Romaos” (Roman) character of the people.

[According to Strabo, the Phoenicians of Halkidiki were the first colonists of Eubeia who, in “Kampania” on the west coast of Italy, founded the cities “Kim”, in 757 BC, and “Region”, about 730-720 BC. This was the oldest colony in that region. There, the Phoenicians made contact with the neighbouring Latin “Etrurci” and passed on to them their culture, their Phoenician alphabet and their myths. A few years later, around 600 BC, they founded the city Naples, and in Sicily they founded the cities “Mesena”, “Katana” (730 BC) and “Naks”. The Latins called the new colonists “Graios” in accordance with their origin, the land of the “Greia” (Graias), today’s “Orop”, a boundary located between Boeotia and Attica, at the mouth of the river Asop.] (Page 83, Antonije Shkokljević, “Prehistory - Central Balkans Cradle of Aegean culture”)

The name “Hellas” and “Hellenes” was later discovered by German historians. This was a more suitable, realistic and unique name for the new state and on top of that it had local origins. Or perhaps the Germans did not like Greece to be a “Latin” state.

[King Deukalion (Deykalion) was considered to be father of all Hellenes. He was married to Pira, daughter of Epimetei and Pandorar and lived in Thessalian Ftia together with the indigenous Pelasgians and later among the Achaean Mirmidonians in their existing cities. According to Homer (Homer, Iliad and Odyssey, II, 681, Novi Sad, 1985. (Prev. Gjurigj MN)), “... Some were from Arg and lived in Pelasgian cities. Some were from Alopa, Al in Trehina, and from Ftia and Hellada. They had beautiful women. They were called Mirmidonians, Hellenes and some still called themselves Achaeans. They had fifty ships and their leader was Ahilei.”

From what we know from Homer, it would appear that the cities Arg, Alop, Al, Hellada and Trahin existed in Thessalian Ftia before Deukalean's arrival. Each place name had special meaning. The word "Ftia" comes from the verb "fino" meaning land of the dead, disappearance, destruction. The word "Hellada" comes from the word "helos" meaning swamp, mud. The word "Trahin" comes from the word "trahus" meaning brittle, rocky. The word "Al" comes from "alos" and "als" meaning salt. The word "Alopa" means salty, salty island. The word "Arg" means white. The river which created the plain where these cities were located was called "Sperhei" meaning fiercely attacking. A mountain to the south bears the name "Eta" meaning misery, suffering. It was on this mountain that Hercules lit himself on fire to escape his pain. This is also the location of the Thermopolis Gorge and where the city Lamia, capital of Ftia, is located. (The word "Lamia" is a Macedonian word meaning dragon).

If the toponyms are names associated with real objects and events, then the stories in mythology must also have realistic meaning. And as such the ethno genesis of the Hellenes can be derived from the myths about who Pindar (Pindar, Olympia, IX, 41), Apolodori (Apolodori, Bibliotheca (I-II) I, 7, 2) and others have informed us.] (Pages 185, 186, Antonije Shkokljev, "Prehistory - Central Balkans Cradle of Aegean culture")

In other words the 19<sup>th</sup> century German scholars found a more selective ancient name and history for the modern Greeks, now called "Hellenes".

Unfortunately, both names, "Greece" and "Hellas", were foreign to the 19<sup>th</sup> century Balkan people who lived in that region.

But, if you ask a Modern Greek person in English today to identify his or her "nationality" they will say they are "Greek". If you ask them what is that in "Greek"? They will say "Ellinas" or "Ellinida". There is no word for "Greek" in the Greek vocabulary. If there is it is rarely used and unknown to most Greeks.

According to most modern Greeks today, “Greek” and “Ellines” are synonymous. In other words a “Hellene is a native of either ancient or modern Greece; a Greek”.

The pre-19<sup>th</sup> century Balkan people had no notion of “nationalism” or knowledge of any “ancient City States”.

Encouraged by the European Great Powers, the Balkan people’s main aim was to drive the Ottomans out of the Balkans and replace their Muslim Empire with a Christian Empire which they themselves could then rule.

But this was not what the Western European Great Powers wanted. As I said earlier, the European Great Powers wanted to break up the “large Ottoman state” and replace it with smaller divergent “nation states” and make sure they never again combined.

The part of the Balkan Peninsula where Greece began as a modern state was then called “Morea” and occupied the region today called the Peloponnesus.

So, in order to distinguish Greece from Serbia and from other future Balkan states, a better model had to be found for Greece, one that had a unique and long past. And that model was found in the “Hellenes”, the pre-historic people I mentioned earlier.

Unfortunately there was no living trace of the “Hellenes” in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, which made it difficult to explain how they got to the 19<sup>th</sup> century from pre-history. There was no history to explain that.

But, again with some creative imagination, German ingenuity and a lot of convincing, the problem was again solved by “re-engineered” history so that it could fit the modern “Hellenes” with the pre-historic or ancient “Hellenes”.

A bridge of “Hellene” continuity connecting the “Ancient Hellenes” from pre-history to the “Modern Hellenes” of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was apparently again found in the Macedonians. The Macedonians, according to modern western historians, had such continuity from ancient times to the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Not only was historic information readily available that proved that there was such continuity but the 19<sup>th</sup> century people in the Balkans, who identified themselves as “Macedonians”, knew about it... so we are told.

So, after the Great Powers introduced the little state to the world under the name “Greece”, a name which has stuck with the outside world to this day, its “architects”, for reasons mentioned above, decided to call the little country “Hellas” and its people “Hellenes”.

And so a “classical history” was written and introduced to the world which explained the beginning and continuity of the modern “Hellenes” as well as their contribution to our modern world; a classical history which unfortunately only served and still serves the interests of the Western European Great Powers.

In the new classical history Alexander the Great, the most hated man in the ancient so-called “Hellenic” world, the man who, as mentioned earlier, wiped out Thebes and brutally crushed the spirits of the old City-State citizens, is now the “Great King of the Hellenes” whom the modern “Hellenes” revere and hold in high honour.

But, the only way this continuity between the “Ancient Hellenes” or “Ancient Greeks”, as the outside world calls them, and the so-called “Modern Hellenes” or “Greeks” could exist is if the Macedonians themselves were “Hellenes”. In more simple terms, in order for the Modern Greeks to be the descendants of the “Ancient Greeks” the Macedonians would have to be Greek.

But how could the Macedonians be Greek? They were and still are Macedonians?!

According to the re-engineered 19<sup>th</sup> century classical history model, the Macedonians were “Hellenized”. They were “Hellenized”, a process that began sometime just before Philip II’s time. And so, being “Hellenized” makes them Greek.

So, how exactly does this “Hellenization” process work?

The explanation we are given is that Macedonians began to speak the “Attic” language in the Macedonian king’s court, they began to adopt the so-called “Greek culture” and they began to act like Greeks... and therefore they became Greeks.

[According to the Columbia Encyclopedia, Hellenism is “the culture, ideals, and pattern of life of ancient Greece in classical times. It usually means primarily the culture of ATHENS and the related cities in the Age of Pedicles [495-429 BC]. The term is also applied to the ideals of later writers and thinkers who draw their inspiration from ancient Greece. Frequently it is contrasted with Hebraism – Hellenism then meaning pagan joy, freedom, and love of life as contrasted with the austere morality and monotheism of the Old Testament. The Hellenic period came to an end with the conquest of Alexander the Great in the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC. It was succeeded by the Hellenistic civilization.”] (Page 930, Columbia Encyclopedia, Third Edition 1963, New York and London)

As I mentioned earlier, historically, the self-perception of the Greeks and the definition of Greek-ness have varied, but with the emergence and consolidation of the nation-state, from the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, Greek-ness was redefined along the lines of what some people call romantic nationalism.

Romantic nationalism is the form of nationalism in which the state derives its political legitimacy as an organic consequence of the unity of those it governs. This includes, depending on the particular manner of practice, the language, race, culture, religion and customs of the “nation” in its primal sense of those who were “born” within its culture. This form of nationalism arose in reaction to dynastic or imperial hegemony, which assessed the legitimacy of the state from the “top down”, emanating from a monarch or other authority, which justified its existence. Such downward-radiating power might ultimately be derived from God.

Greece accepts all those who agree with this principle and rejects those who disagree.

In other words, the Ancient Macedonians became “Greeks” because some spoke Greek, believed in the same Gods, and behaved like Athenians... But such behaviour can also be found in people today. Look at me for example, I speak English, I believe in the same God as the English, I live among the English and culturally I sometimes behave like the English, does that make me English? No. I am still Macedonian.

Ancient history was very clear about who the Macedonians were and the fact that they were not “Greek”. The ancient people from the City States knew the Macedonians were not Greek and said so themselves many times. The ancient authors were also in agreement with that.

Many times history has mentioned that the Macedonians spoke another language, an “unidentified” language, unique to the Macedonian people, spoken by the common Macedonian people.

I am not going to get into details on this here again but if you want to learn more about the differences between the Ancient Macedonians and the Ancient Greeks then read Josef S. G. Gandeto’s book, “Ancient Macedonians, Differences Between the Ancient Macedonians and the Ancient Greeks”.

“There is not a single word or fact written by the ancient authors that shows that the Macedonians are Greek. There is not a single word or fact written where the Macedonians thought of themselves as Greeks. There is not a single book written by the ancient authors, including the ancient Greek authors, which has mixed the lineage and has not shown diverse differences between Macedonians and Greeks.” (Joseph Gandeto)

Also, modern scholars and scientists believe that the Slavic language has its roots in prehistory. A number of ancient inscriptions deemed undecipherable have recently been successfully deciphered by linguists Vasil Iliov, Anthony Ambrozic, Sergei V. Rjabchikov and others, by using the Slavic languages which indicates that these languages have been around a lot longer than previously thought. Even Alexander the Great may have spoken Slavic. It is well-known that Alexander spoke at least two languages. We know one was

Koine and the other was a language indigenous to Macedonia labeled “unknown” by western and Greek historians.

But, since no Macedonian or foreign archeologist has even been allowed to dig in Greek occupied Macedonia or examine any archeological findings unsupervised, we can't verify what other language Alexander the Great spoke.

But in order for the Macedonians to be Greek, as required by the “re-engendered” ancient historical model, the revisionists had to erase and cover up everything that was Macedonian. If the Macedonians were “Hellenized” then they were Greek and no longer Macedonian.

There could be no Modern Greece without the Ancient Macedonians! And there can be no Macedonia and Macedonians if there is to be a Greece and Greeks! It was as simple as that! And thus, as mentioned earlier, the slogans “The Ancient Macedonians were Greek”, “Macedonia is Greek” and “Macedonians do not exist”, were coined.

Earlier I explained that before these modern Balkan “nation states” were created, out of the remnants of the crumbling Ottoman Empire, the people living in the Balkans had a common past, a common history. But after these “nation States” were created new histories were written for them; a foundation to build on. A myth was created for each state which claimed the state was “homogeneous” consisting of only a single people leaving no room for diversity or minorities, even though many existed.

Greece, for example, declared itself “pure Greek”, ignoring the fact that the “Greek” identity did not exist before the 19<sup>th</sup> century and that its population at the time consisted of people who identified themselves as Albanians, Macedonians, Vlachs, Turks, Roma and a few other minorities.

The Greeks, Bulgarians and Albanians, for example, have all made claims that Alexander the Great was Greek, Bulgarian and Albanian, identities which did not exist in Alexander's time... which is fine. But at the same time each claims that Alexander was uniquely

“Greek”, “Bulgarian”, or “Albanian”, which is not fine. Alexander the Great was a king of all the people who lived in the Balkans during his time, which would make him king of the distant ancestors of the present day Greeks, Bulgarians and Albanians. He was king of all of our ancestors but at the same time he identified with the Macedonian people, which makes him Macedonian. He may have been everyone’s king but he was a Macedonian.

Also, today we have Greeks claiming that the “Slavs” (Macedonians) are “stealing” their Greek history... that the “Slavs” are stealing Alexander the Great from them... We have Bulgarians complaining of the same thing. We have Bulgarians claiming that Kiril and Metodi, the Macedonian Solun brothers, were Bulgarians and that the “Yugoslavs” (Macedonians from the Republic of Macedonia) are expropriating them.

These Greeks and Bulgarians unfortunately are forgetting that those historical figures existed before their nation states were created and Alexander and Kiril and Metodi belonged to the ancestors of all the people in the Balkans. They are not exclusively Greek or Bulgarian.

Kiril and Metodi made contributions to all the Slavic speaking people in Europe but the fact remains that they were from Solun, a Macedonian city and that they were Macedonians.

So, how could the Macedonians have stolen something that already belonged to everyone anyway, especially to the Macedonians?

For example, I can claim that my great grandfather was “mine and mine alone” but he is not uniquely only my great grandfather. In fact there are at least a few dozen great grandchildren who can also lay that same claim and accuse me of robbing them of “their” great grandfather. My great grandfather was a common great grandfather to all of us, to all of his great grandchildren; he was never mine and mine alone. The only things I can claim to be “mine and mine alone” are things I acquired after I was born.

We all must accept the fact that before the Balkan nation states were created, Balkan history was common to all the people and belonged to everyone in the borderless Balkans. This is how pre 19<sup>th</sup> century

Balkan history must be treated. If we want to be honest about it, we have to accept the fact that the Balkan people, before each nation state was created in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, had a common history and no one should be claiming historical events or historical figures to the exclusion of the others.

We must also accept the fact that the Balkan territory also belongs to all the people in the Balkans. Unfortunately that has not been the case and we have hundreds of examples where Macedonians have been driven out of their homes and lands for wanting to be Macedonians and for not wanting to be Greeks, Serbians, Bulgarians, or Albanians.

On the question of who has the right to the “Ancient heritage”? I would say all the Balkan people do! Unfortunately that’s not how history has been re-written. Balkan history has been “re-written” so that each modern Balkan nation state can fit in its new artificial environment. In other words the past has been changed so that it can fit the present... This is precisely what is causing the problems among the various people in the Balkans today. The accusations of infringing on each other’s territory... on each other’s history... accusations of theft of historical figures... people being exiled from their homes for non-compliance... These are symptoms of misunderstanding stemming from the historical myths that pass as history especially written for each of the Balkan nation states by their patrons the Great Powers. Especially written for them to keep them divided!

As I mentioned earlier, this behaviour is not accidental, it is part of the long-term plan to keep these nation states from recombining; from forming a large state and from reclaiming their common heritage. Being small and existing among “belligerent neighbours”, who constantly have territorial claims against each other, also makes these states dependent on their patrons, the Great Powers, and they must remain loyal to them in order to be protected.

This is how the Balkans was set up by the Western European Powers after the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire and this how the situation has remained to this day, over 200 years later.

Greece has a custom made history, a fictional history, for Greeks only. There is no room for anyone else, even if that “anyone else” is indigenous to the territory today called Greece. Bulgaria has done exactly the same.

Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria took chunks of Macedonia in 1913 but their histories did not change to reflect that. There is no history to show who these new people were. In other words, Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria acquired Macedonian territories with Macedonian people living on them and these Macedonians were simultaneously treated as if they were Greeks, Serbians and Bulgarians and the histories of these countries remained unchanged. Non-Greeks, non-Serbians and non-Bulgarians were forced to conform and fit into Greece’s, Serbia’s and Bulgaria’s fictional molds because there was no room or tolerance for anything else...

So, when the Greeks today say “Macedonians do not exist” and “Macedonia is Greek”, they literally cut the Macedonian people completely out of existence, not only from Greece, but also from the entire planet, so that the Greek world can conform to its fictional setting and history.

The Macedonian people, however, do exist and have lived on Macedonian lands for many generations, side by side with the people who today call themselves Greek, Serbian and Bulgarian and don’t want to be cut out... assimilated or exiled...

If you ask me “what is the most important period of time for the modern Macedonian people as a nation”, the way “nationalism” defines a nation, I would have to say the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This was the time when nationalism was brought to the Balkans. One cannot talk about nationalism before nationalism was introduced.

When Greece was born for the first time in 1829 it was unclear what its national character was going to be. 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)

None of the modern Balkan nation states had a defined national character or a unique history of their people when they were first created. Like I said, everything was intertwined and everyone was mixed. It took outside intervention to forcefully define each nation and give it its unique characteristic which, as I said, in most cases, infringed on the others. For example, Macedonia had to die in order for Greece and Bulgaria to live. There was no room for a Greece or for a Bulgaria to exist with a living Macedonia... Their true histories (not the myths that have been written for them) are so close and intertwined that their distinctions are blurred. The ancestors of the people who lived in Greece and Bulgaria before the 19<sup>th</sup> century, before those two states were created, as I said, have a 2,300 year-old common existence.

The Macedonian people's unique history as a modern nation began when the modern Macedonian people made their bid for independence. Macedonia's unique history began when the Macedonian people understood what a nation was by definition and recognized themselves as a nation, a unique Macedonian nation. Unlike Greece and Bulgaria where their "nations" were created after their "states", the Macedonian people considered themselves a nation, unique and separate from the artificially created Greek and Bulgarian "nations" long before they had a state. Unlike the Greeks who had "never" had a state before, and unlike the Bulgarians who only had a "fluid empire" that belonged to a Turkic Tatar tribe, the Macedonian people had a name, a state and an empire upon which to build and model their state and nation.

The Macedonian people's first aim was to free the entire Balkans of the Ottomans and regain the old Eastern Christian Empire under Christian rule. But as small nation states like Serbia and Greece began to pop up in the Balkans, the Macedonian people started to make their own bid for an independent Macedonia with a multi-ethnic, multicultural and multi-religious character. Proof of this can be found in the various Macedonian proclamations and manifestos.

Here is a bit of Macedonian history that deals with that:

[On April 17<sup>th</sup>, 1880 the Ottoman government informed the Great Powers that the anticipated reforms had been drafted and prepared for their approval. Many Macedonian intellectuals, however, were not happy because the reforms neglected their demands, including the recognition of the Macedonian language. In May 1880 about two hundred prominent Macedonians signed and submitted a request to the European Commission protesting against the Ottoman Constitutional amendments because, among other things, the Ottomans neglected to recognize the Macedonian language. Unfortunately their written pleas were yet again ignored so a Macedonian delegation lead by Karandzhulov was dispatched to meet with Lord Fitzmorris, the British representative of the European Commission. Even though Lord Fitzmorris met with the Macedonians in person and heard their pleas, the Commission still ignored their demands.

Dissatisfied with the way the reforms were carried out, particularly by the attitude of the Great Powers, Macedonian leaders began to look inwards to find a solution to their problems.

A number of prominent leaders, including Leonidas Vulgaris from Berovo Region, Pop Kostandin Bufski and 30 others, got together and held a National Assembly from May 21<sup>st</sup> to June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1880 in Gremen, Ostrovo Region (now Greek occupied Macedonia). Among other things, one of the items on the agenda was the Macedonian situation after the Berlin Congress. On this item the Congress concluded that the reason Macedonia was given back to the Ottomans was because of the neighbouring propaganda, mainly that of Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria, which falsely represented the ethnic composition of the Macedonian population. The Congress came to the conclusion that once the foreign propaganda was exposed and neutralized, the Macedonian people would have a better chance of uniting behind a Macedonian cause and creating an Autonomous Macedonian state within the Ottoman Empire or creating an independent Macedonian state. The Assembly also decided to challenge Ottoman authorities on articles 23 and 62 of the Treaty of Berlin which called for political and religious rights for the Macedonian people. If those rights were ignored then the Macedonians would have no other choice but to arm themselves and

fight under the slogan “Macedonia to the Macedonians, for reestablishing Ancient Macedonia”. (Vanche Stojchev. “Military History of Macedonia”. Military academy. Skopje, 2004. Page 252)

The National Assembly was concluded with the formation of an executive authority responsible for carrying out political decisions under a Macedonian Provisional Government called “Unity” which was to represent all ethnic groups living in the territory of Macedonia. Vasil Simov was appointed President of the Provisional Government and Stefo Nikolov was elected President of the National Assembly. Pop Kostandin Bufski and Leonidas Vulgaris were given the task of organizing the Macedonian military.

Decisions made at this Assembly were communicated to the Great Powers diplomatic missions in Solun which initially ignored them but later accepted them as the “Macedonian way” of dealing with problems.

On March 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1881 the Provisional Government of Macedonia approved a Manifesto and submitted it to the various diplomatic missions in the Ottoman territories.

The opening statements of the Manifesto began as follows:

“Macedonians, our precious fatherland Macedonia was once the most glorious country in the world. The Macedonian people have civilized Asia and mankind by the victorious Phalanx having laid the foundation of military arts, and Aristotle of education and enlightenment. Unfortunately the once so glorious Macedonia today is on the brink of disaster because we have made mistakes and forgotten our past. Aliens are now trying to take our country away from us and destroy our Macedonian identity, the brightness of which can never be darkened.

Macedonia has become a poor widow abandoned by her sons and no longer flies the glorious flag it once flew in triumph by its victorious Macedonian armies. Today Macedonia has been reduced to a geographical term as if someone is attempting to extinguish its glory and send it to oblivion.

Intriguers are digging Macedonia's grave and trying to destroy it by bringing in Austrian- Hungarian troops, but replacing the shackles of one with another will only destroy Macedonia. Macedonia will not be regenerated, and our nation will perish.

This moment is critical for Macedonia- it is a matter of life or death.” (Vanche Stojchev. “Military History of Macedonia”. Military academy. Skopje, 2004. Page 253)

Realizing that Macedonia had become a pawn of the Great Powers, the Provisional Government of Macedonia called upon all the Macedonian people, regardless of religion and ethnicity, to unite and fight for liberation and the creation of an independent Macedonian state.

“True Macedonians, faithful sons of Macedonia! How much longer are you going to put up with the decay of our fatherland?

Macedonia is calling you, crying out the words ‘You, my faithful children, successors of Aristotle and Alexander III of Macedonia, you who bleed with Macedonian blood, do not let me die, help me!’ What a sad sight it will be for you, genuine Macedonians, if you become witnesses to my death. Do everything in your power, carry my flag of unity and call out the words ‘United Macedonia!’ Be brave, throw out those murderers who hold in their hands the flag of disunity and divide you, my children of various ethnicities.

Gather under the flag of Macedonia, raise it high and write on it unanimously: Long live the Macedonian people! Long live Macedonia! Let them hear the voice of our fatherland; let us gain liberty, the most precious heritage of nations. Say these words, for the liberal people who will applaud you. Call their noble hearts to hurry and give their help, to join your Holy fight for liberty, which has been away from our precious country for so many centuries. Macedonians, think about our origin, and do not give it up.” (Vanche Stojchev. “Military History of Macedonia”. Military academy. Skopje, 2004. Page 253)

The Manifesto was signed by President Vasil Simon, secretary Nikola Trajkov and three other members of the Provisional

Government of Macedonia, Petro Jovanov, Kosta Bufski and Hriste Gorgov. The signatures were confirmed by two government seals and on April 11<sup>th</sup>, 1881 and the Manifesto was taken to Kjustandil where the transcript was translated to Russian and French and distributed to various foreign and domestic diplomatic representatives in Tsari Grad (Constantinople).

While the Provisional Government of Macedonia operated in Gremen, another Macedonian organization was formed in northeastern Macedonia called the Macedonian League. The League's purpose was to unite Macedonian immigrants in neighbouring countries, particularly the large Macedonian Diaspora in Bulgaria. After the creation of the Macedonian League and the establishment of a General Headquarters in Pirin Mountain, the League initiated the drafting of a constitution in order to define the aims and structure of a future government in Macedonia. All in all the constitution was divided into fifteen chapters constituting 103 articles. The first article dealt with Macedonia's territory within Ottoman borders, which consisted of the Solun, Bitola and Skopje sanjak vilayets comprising historic and geographic Macedonia.

Among other things the constitution defined the various ethnic and religious populations living in Macedonia, the ministries and departments necessary to run the administration, the division of power in the legislative body of the government and the regulation of security including the army and police.

The government structure proposed was based on gaining broad autonomy within the Ottoman Empire. Through the drafting of the constitution Macedonians made it clear that they wanted an autonomous Macedonia, based on Article 23 of the Treaty of Berlin, emphasizing the distinct Macedonian national identity that was to be separate from the other Balkan countries.

Article 99 of the constitution called for use of military force to be exercised by the Macedonian Liberation Army should Ottoman authorities or the European Powers disagree with the request to form an autonomous Macedonian state within the Ottoman framework.

On matters of the Macedonian army, the Chief of the General Headquarters responsible for drafting the security part of the constitution added a separate chapter to the constitution for regulating the military. This Chapter known as the Military Instruction constituted 246 Articles was divided into two parts. The first part defined the structure and organization of the Macedonian army and the second part defined the tactics required if the liberation of Macedonia became necessary. The second part was put in place in case the Ottoman government or the Great Powers refused to grant Macedonia autonomy and the Macedonian people would then have to fight for it.

The constitution drafted by the Macedonian League in aid of establishing a Macedonian government and a military organization was quite detailed and comprehensive, especially the Articles regarding the formation of a Macedonian army. For more information see chapter 14 of Vanche Stojchev's book "Military History of Macedonia".

After the Macedonian League established its General Headquarters it began sending out communiqués. On June 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1880 it sent a letter with a copy of the Macedonian Constitution to the six Great Power ministries of the European Commission requesting their approval. Expecting no reply, the General Headquarters then went ahead and created a Manifesto calling on all the Macedonian people to organize a united national uprising. Among the signatories of the Manifesto were Iljo Maleshevski, Vasil Dijamandiev and eight other leaders.

Among other things the Manifesto said: Article 23 of the Treaty of Berlin was the last hope for our freedom and that hope is now lost. It is time for us to rise and settle the century-old account with our oppressor. We call on you to unite under the Macedonian flag and fight for liberty and independence. Only united we will be able to reclaim our precious fatherland for ourselves and gain absolute autonomy.

The Manifesto also warned the Macedonian people to watch out for opportunists who claimed to be fighting for the Macedonian cause while they were supporting alien interests.

The Manifesto ended with the slogans “Liberty or Death!” and “Long Live Liberated Macedonia!”

Even though the Manifesto was distributed far and wide, and the call for an uprising was loud and clear, the people could not muster the will because the Ottoman government had learned its lesson in the past and was prepared for such an event.] (Risto Stefov, “Macedonian struggle for Independence”)

As you can see from the above Manifestos, the Macedonian people in the 1880’s knew exactly who they were and what they wanted, even before they had a country. But, it seems, the European Great Powers did not want them to have a country of their own and this is how it has been for the Macedonians since then until 1944 when the People’s Republic of Macedonia was established by the will of the people... by accident and without Great Power consent.

## **The Macedonian people's bid for independence and for creating a Macedonian state**

After 1878, while the Macedonian economy was crashing down by leaps and bounds, the Bulgarian economy was improving dramatically. This was partly due to the cheap labour provided by a large influx of Macedonian pechalbari (migrant workers).

Experiencing a very different life in Sofia, in contrast to life in the village, many Macedonian pechalbari were seduced by the good life and tended to believe Bulgarian propaganda.

After 1878, the first Macedonians to take up arms against the Ottomans were those who were wronged and wanted to see justice done. Soon, however, they realized that their efforts were futile and their revenge only resulted in the loss of innocent lives (relatives and neighbours were punished for their crimes, sometimes by death). Macedonian leaders came to the conclusion that what they truly wanted could only be achieved if the Ottomans were expelled from Macedonia for good.

It was the charismatic humanitarian William Gladstone, a three time British Prime Minister, who uttered the words "Macedonia for the Macedonians" which rang out like loud church bells throughout Macedonia. "Macedonia for the Macedonians" was the signal that rallied the Macedonians into action and gave them hope that finally the West would support their cause. In spite of his great sympathy for the Macedonian people, unfortunately, Gladstone was not in a position to help. The most the Great Powers wanted to offer were "reforms". A great number of reforms were drafted and agreed upon but never implemented. The Ottoman Pashas continued to humour the westerners with reams of fictional statistics and accomplishments, while the Begs (feudal lords) continued to dominate the "Chiflik" (estates) and squeeze the village peasants out of their existence.

Ironic, isn't it? While he was Prime Minister, the so-called charismatic humanitarian Englishman, William Gladstone did nothing for the Macedonians but he was all for them when he was in opposition!

The western powers wanted to “squeeze” as much as they could out of the Ottoman Empire, their goose that continued to lay golden eggs, for as long as possible so they offered to help in ways that would only benefit them and their capitalist ventures inside the Ottoman Empire. They knew very well that the Macedonians were economically squeezed to a breaking point but they couldn’t care less. Or was there another, more sinister motive? Yes, there was! This motive, however, did not become apparent until later, until after the 1903 Macedonian Ilinden Uprising commenced.

It became apparent to the Macedonian people, and the entire world for that matter, that the Great Powers were not going to help the Macedonian people liberate themselves from the Ottomans. This became most obvious when English warships docked in the Aegean Sea did nothing to stop the Ottomans from burning down Macedonian villages. The English sat in their ships and watched Macedonian villages burn in the distance and did nothing! They did nothing to stop the Ottoman slaughter of innocent Macedonians. Why? Because perhaps they did not want to interfere in local affairs! If that were true then why did they have their ships standing by in the Aegean Sea?

Was it because they didn’t want the Macedonian people to win and were there to make sure they didn’t? Or was there another motive?

One thing is for sure, they did not want the Macedonians to liberate themselves and form a Macedonian state. The English wanted to weaken both the Macedonians and the Ottomans by fighting each other so that they could later have their proxies easily invade and occupy Macedonia, just as they had in 1912.

“Let the Ottomans and Macedonians fight it out and when they are both weak and unable to defend themselves we will let our proxy states, Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria finish them off and divide the spoils amongst themselves!” And that is exactly what happened!

The English were well-aware of what was going on in Macedonia and while the Macedonian villages were burning, they sat in their ships in the Aegean Sea watching and waiting. What else were they waiting for?

Obviously they were not waiting to help the Macedonians? They could have and had the power to stop the Ottomans from burning down Macedonian villages but obviously they did not. They were probably also waiting to pre-empt a Bulgarian invasion in Macedonia.

The Macedonian people in the mid 1800's had high hopes that after Serbia and Greece were freed from the Ottomans, the Greek and Serbian people would also help the Macedonians free themselves. Many Macedonians took part in both the Serbian and Greek uprisings in hopes that the Greeks and Serbians would do the same for them when their turn came. Macedonians even participated in the Russian-Ottoman war of 1875 in an attempt to drive the Ottomans out of Bulgaria and Macedonia but in the end the Western European Powers intervened and while Bulgaria was given autonomy and eventually independence, Macedonia was handed back to the Ottomans. And, as we know, Macedonia was later invaded, occupied and partitioned by Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria.

Right after Bulgaria was given autonomy the Macedonian people came to the realization that "no one" was going to help them if they did not help themselves, so they took matters into their own hands and began to prepare for a massive uprising of their own.

The first step they took was to form a national revolutionary organization.

On October 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1893 in Solun two high school teachers, Damian Gruev and Anton Dimitrov, together with Petar Pop Arsov, a former editor of the newspaper Loza and Hristo Tatarchev, a doctor, got together in bookshop owner Ivan Nikolov's house for an informal meeting to discuss the plight of the Macedonian people and what to do about it.

As word got around a committee was formed, more Macedonians got involved and a second (formal) meeting was held on February 9<sup>th</sup>, 1894 which resulted in the formation of a revolutionary organization known as the Vnatrezhna (Internal) Makedonska (Macedonian) Revolutsionerna (Revolutionary) Organizatsia (Organization), VMRO (IMRO).

It was called an “Internal” Macedonian Revolutionary Organization to distinguish it from the “External” Macedonian Revolutionary Organization more commonly known as the “Supremacist” Organization that pretended to struggle for the Macedonian cause but in reality supported the Bulgarian cause for Macedonia to be annexed by Bulgaria.

The Supremacists were based in Sofia. Most of them were military officers in the Bulgarian army. Pretending to work for the Macedonian cause, this organization actually worked for Bulgarian interests and was responsible for starting the 1903 Ilinden uprising early, before the Macedonian people were ready.

In time every time the Macedonian people took a step forward, this Bulgarian sponsored organization did something to impede them. Its aims were to make sure the Macedonians did not win if there ever was an uprising against the Ottomans.

To rally the masses the charismatic Gotse Delchev, a man of vision matched by only a few, dubbed as the father of the Macedonian Revolution and the soul of the movement, was chosen to lead the revolution.

By 1896 IMRO was able to exert influence to a point where it acted like a state within a state, taking over administrative positions from the Ottomans, leading boycotts against Ottoman institutions and offering isolated villages protection from Greek and Bulgarian sponsored brigands.

In time IMRO operatives were able to penetrate Ottoman economic, educational and even judicial functions.

IMRO demonstrated great leadership by its ability to organize Macedonia into seven revolutionary districts (Solun, Serres, Strumitsa, Shtip, Skopje, Bitola and Endrene {Dardanelles}). It also demonstrated its weaknesses. Having allied itself with the poor village peasants, because no Great Power was prepared to help the Macedonian people, and striving to refrain from obligations and debts, IMRO found itself strapped for finances.

The lack of funds to purchase sufficient arms brought home the realization that this “uprising” was going to be a long one.

Delchev knew what was at stake but tragically the Ottomans killed him on May 4<sup>th</sup>, 1903 before he had a chance to put his plans into action. In Delchev’s absence Gruev took charge of the organization and preparations for the uprising began.

In Delchev’s absence the Bulgarian supremacists were able to exert their influence over the Macedonian district leaderships and convinced them to start the uprising early, before the districts were prepared.

In due time plans were made, a military strategy prepared, weapons, medical supplies and food-stuffs were requisitioned and stock piled. Cheti (fighting units) were organized and training drills were performed.

On July 26<sup>th</sup>, 1903, by a dispatch to the Great Powers via the British vice-consul in Bitola, the General Staff formally announced the uprising. Then on July 28<sup>th</sup>, 1903 IMRO dispatched mounted couriers to all the sub-districts with the message “let the uprising begin”.

On the same day the Macedonian Revolutionary General Staff informed the Ottoman Director of Railways to warn travelers to choose a different mode of transportation in order to avoid being hurt.

Following Damjan Gruev’s orders from Smilevo, the village Cheti combined forces to form the following: the Smilevo and Giavato Region Cheta (650), the Krushovo Region Cheta (400), the Kichevo Region Cheta (350), the Bitola Region Cheta (250), the Ohrid Region Cheta (880), the Resna Region Cheta (450), the Demir-Hisar Region Cheta (420), the Prespa Region Cheta (300), the Kostur Region Cheta (700) and the Lerin Region Cheta (450).

The Cheti, under the command of capable leaders such as Damian Gruev, Vasil Chakalarov, Petar Pop Arsov, Pitu Guli and others,

faired well and enjoyed considerable success in the few weeks before the Ottoman militia began to amass. The local villagers also joined the movement giving moral support to the fighters. Even men from other regions that had not yet risen left their homes and came to fight. All in all the Macedonian people possessed the will to fight but lacked the rifles and ammunition with which to do it.

As battles raged on throughout western Macedonia, the Cheti put down most of the local Turkish garrisons. They destroyed bridges, railway lines and communications centres, captured most chifliks (Ottoman estates) and briefly liberated some regions such as Kichevo, Demir-Hisar, Kostur, Lerin, Klisoura and Neveska.

The cities of Kostur and Lerin themselves were not liberated. The most successful and highly celebrated of all battles was the storming of the town Krushevo. Nikola Karev led the Cheti in the attack and defeated the local Ottoman garrison with ease. The Macedonians quickly took over the most strategic points like the Post Office, Town Hall and local Police Station and declared Krushevo liberated.

True to their democratic commitments, the leaders of the liberating force constituted the Krushevo assembly which appointed a committee of sixty members, twenty from each of the community's Macedonian, Vlach and Albanian populations. The Krushevo Manifesto was drafted, which basically recognized each ethnicity as an equal partner in the struggle and declared Krushevo a multiethnic community.

The committee in turn elected an executive body of six delegates, two from each community, which operated as a provisional government. The government in turn established a financial, judiciary and police force.

[“At Krushevo, under the rays of temporary liberty, fraternity and equality, national hatreds were dispelled and peace and concord reigned. For eleven whole days Krushevo lived as a little independent state, and although in miniature, clothed with flesh and blood that idea which spurred Macedonians to fight, against tyranny up to the Ilinden rising.”] (Page 193, Vasil Bogov, Macedonian

## Revelation, Historical Documents Rock and Shatter Modern Political Ideology)

The “Krushevo Republic” unfortunately, only lasted two weeks but it was a glorious Republic that will forever remind the Macedonian people of their eternal struggle for independence and thirst for freedom. The liberation of Krushevo imprinted on the new Macedonian generations the legacy of a timeless and irreversible march towards self-determination.

The initial success of the rebellion was a surprise to the Ottomans especially since the Ottoman forces were numerically superior to those of the rebels. The Cheti, however, demonstrated their abilities in battle and more than matched the numbers with will. The Ottomans, unfortunately, were determined to put down the rebellion and amassed additional forces, deploying a total of 167,000 infantry, 3,700 cavalry and 440 pieces of artillery (all cannons).

Krushevo alone was surrounded by 20,000 Ottoman troops with 18 cannons against an encircled force of no more than 1,200 rebel fighters. The battle to retake Krushevo began on August 12<sup>th</sup> with the Macedonians crying out “Sloboda eli Smrt” (liberty or death) against the onslaught of Ottoman cannon fire. Pitu Guli and his men fought gallantly. They provided stiff opposition to the Ottoman advance but were no match for General Baktiar Pasha. Baktiar was a skilled war veteran who overwhelmed the Cheti by attacking the entire region simultaneously. The region was surrounded by soldiers, encircled by cannon fire and every Macedonian stronghold within was attacked simultaneously, cutting off all reinforcements and outside support.

Once Krushevo fell, one by one other IMRO strongholds began to yield, winding down the ten-week-old rebellion. In Krushevo, Baktiar Pasha allowed his troops to kill, pillage and rape for three days. The town was permanently devastated with 117 civilians murdered, 150 women raped and 159 houses burned down.

In the Ilinden aftermath, according to Michael Radin, in total 4,694 civilians were murdered, 3,122 women raped, 12,440 houses burned, 201 villages razed, 75,835 people left homeless and about 30,000

people left the country for good, becoming permanent refugees.  
(Page 105, “IMRO and the Macedonian Question”)

Besides the atrocities committed against the civilian population in Macedonia, the most significant impact of the uprising was the loss of so many great IMRO leaders.

(For more information on the Macedonian people’s bid for independence and for creating a Macedonian state please read chapters twenty-three and twenty-four of my book “History of the Macedonian people From Ancient times to the Present”, published in 2005).

## **Why the 1903 Macedonian Ilinden Uprising failed**

There are several obvious and some not so obvious factors that contributed to the failure of the 1903 Macedonian Ilinden Uprising.

Even though the conditions for an uprising were right and the people were ready to fight they were not properly prepared and supported.

Here are some of the reasons why the Macedonian Ilinden Uprising failed:

1. The Macedonians were pitted against a much bigger and more powerful opponent who had a massive army and the resources to support a long and massive war.
2. The Macedonians lacked the arms and ammunition to sustain a prolonged struggle.
3. The Macedonians lacked inside and outside sponsorship and depended on the poor people for their resources and for financing the war.
4. The start of the Ilinden Uprising was instigated from the outside by the Supremacists behind whom stood the Bulgarian government and behind which stood the Great Powers.
5. The Macedonian people did not have the support of the Great Powers.
6. The Macedonian people were set up to fail by the Western Great Powers.

As I mentioned several times earlier, the Western Great Powers in 1878 gave Macedonia back to the Ottomans after most of it was liberated by Russia. I also mentioned that Macedonia was given back for the financial benefit of some of the Western Great Powers, such as England and France, because capitalists from those countries had a vested interest in the Ottoman Empire. But there was also another reason, a more sinister reason why Macedonia was given back to the Ottomans.

If England and France had a vested interest in the Ottoman Empire then why did they force the Ottoman Empire to give Bulgaria autonomy? The Western Europeans also had a vested interest in Bulgaria. There must also have been another reason why only Macedonia was given back to the Ottomans.

As I mentioned several times before, the Western Great Powers did not want a Macedonian state to exist in the Balkans and did everything in their power to prevent it. But there is more. Unfortunately preventing a Macedonia from surfacing was not enough. Something had to be done to get rid of it and its people permanently.

The Western Great Powers wanted to get rid of both the Ottoman Empire and Macedonia and replace them with their own creations. They had two options of how to do it. The most obvious and easiest option was to attack the Ottoman Empire from the outside. But because the Great Powers did not trust each other they were reluctant do this themselves. The second option was to have their proxy states, Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria, attack the Ottomans and drive them out, as was done later. This is why Macedonia was promised to them. But even though the proxy states had the will and were eager to expand their territories, they did not have the strength to take on both the Ottoman Empire and the Macedonian people at the same time.

Something had to be done to weaken them both. So, the Great Powers created the right conditions where there would be a conflict between the Macedonian people and the Ottoman Empire, which as we know culminated into the 1903 Ilinden Uprising.

This explains why the Western Great Powers gave Macedonia back to the Ottomans in 1878 but allowed Bulgaria to become autonomous. This also explains why the Western Great Powers, England in particular, did not ask for safeguards or guarantees for the Macedonian people. England knew that the Ottomans would exact their revenge on the Macedonians for their participation in aid of the 1876 Russian invasion.

After 1878, living conditions in Macedonia became predictably harsher while the Bulgarians began to enjoy their autonomy protected by the Great Powers.

After Bulgaria became autonomous it began to take an active role in controlling the development of the Macedonian struggle. As much as the Western Great Powers wanted a massive clash between the Ottomans and the Macedonians, they did not want the Macedonians to win. So the Bulgarians were there to make sure that did not happen...

There were two reasons the Western Great Powers wanted to start the uprising in Macedonia early. The first and most obvious was to do it before the Macedonian people were fully ready so that it would fail. The second was to prevent Macedonia from becoming autonomous and an Ottoman province.

But in order to make sure the Uprising failed it had to be controlled and to do that it had to be taken out of the hands of the Macedonian revolutionary leadership. But in order to do that the top Macedonian leadership had to be removed.

Since the Bulgarians already knew who the Macedonian leaders were and where they were located, all they had to do was inform the Ottoman authorities so that they could capture them.

When the time was right the Bulgarians gave the Ottomans a list of names of people to arrest and after they were arrested Bulgaria sent its own people from the Supremacist organization to take over the leadership in Macedonia and start the uprising. Almost every one of the Macedonian leaders was arrested and put in jail except for Gotse Delchev. Delchev was really good at avoiding capture.

After the Macedonian revolutionaries were betrayed to the Ottomans and arrested, the Supremacists began to take their place and declared, on their own, that an Uprising needed to take place and better sooner than later.

Right after the Macedonian leaders were arrested in February 1903, the Supremacists arrived in Macedonia from Bulgaria and coaxed

the various district revolutionary leaders to prepare for an early uprising, even after almost every district reported that it was not ready for an uprising.

Gotse Delchev, the supreme commander of the Macedonian revolutionary forces, was against an early uprising and was determined to stop it. Unfortunately he was killed by Ottoman forces on his way to the meeting.

History has failed to adequately inform us that Gotse Delchev was well aware of the Western Great Power plans to have Macedonia invaded, occupied and divided between Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria and was against an uprising, especially an early one. He also knew what the Bulgarians were up to. His plan was for Macedonia to remain a province of the Ottoman Empire and agitate the Ottomans for its autonomy. In Delchev's mind, this was the safest way for Macedonia to survive, and it would have probably worked. The Great Powers also knew that a Macedonian-Ottoman alliance was in the works and were eager to start the Uprising as soon as possible under the condition that it would cause maximum damage and weaken both the Macedonians and the Ottomans.

In order to prove my point that the Bulgarians were indeed involved in a conspiracy to start a war in Macedonia, I would like to raise the following questions:

1. How did it come about that almost all the Macedonian revolutionary leaders were captured and sent to jail at the same time?
2. Why was a massive general uprising raised in their absence?
3. Why was the Uprising initiated by the Supremacists, especially at a time when the people were not ready for a general uprising?
4. Why was Delchev, the supreme commander of the Macedonian forces, bypassed and ignored on this issue, and
5. How is it that the Ottomans could not find and catch Delchev in all the years that he operated in Macedonia and yet they were able to

find him and kill him on his way to a meeting to stop the early uprising from taking place?

These questions show a pattern. The Bulgarians created the Supremacist organization... why? There was already a Macedonian revolutionary organization working effectively ... The Bulgarians betrayed the Macedonian leaders to the Ottomans... Why?

The Bulgarian government was running the entire show in Macedonia through the Supremacists and the Great Powers were right there behind the Bulgarian government. If the Western Great Powers did not support Bulgarian interference in Macedonia they would have stopped it. They stopped Russia, a much stronger opponent, when it invaded the Balkans and liberated part of Macedonia. Why wouldn't they stop Bulgaria? Because it was in their interest to undo what Russia had done and to support Bulgaria in doing their bidding.

The Bulgarians reassured the Macedonian revolutionaries that Bulgaria was prepared to help them, even by declaring war on the Ottomans if necessary, all the Macedonians had to do was "fire the first volley of shots".

In other words the Bulgarians desperately wanted the Macedonians to become involved in a massive armed conflict with the Ottomans as soon as possible, even when they knew that the Macedonians were not prepared. The fact that no Bulgarian army crossed into Macedonia after the first shots were fired, or at any time after that, proves yet again that the 1903 Ilinden Uprising was staged and controlled from the outside, by the Western Great Powers through their proxies.

There were also those Macedonians, including some of the revolutionary leaders, who truly believed that if the Macedonians started an Uprising against the Muslim Ottomans, their Christian brothers, the Great Powers, would come to their rescue, just like they did with the Greeks, Serbians and Bulgarians. But they were mistaken. That did not happen!

The Ottomans at the time were aware that something was being prepared and were going from village to village looking for arms. Basically the Ottoman approach was to demoralize the people, punish them for what they were about to do in order to stop them from doing it. This put extra pressure on the Macedonian revolutionaries to get moving with the preparations for the uprising.

The Supremacists gave the Macedonians a choice: “Wait and get shot like fish in a barrel or rise up and fight right now.”

A while later most of the Macedonian leaders were released from prison under a general amnesty. The amnesty came as a result of external pressure, mainly from the Western Great Powers. People in the west were basically fed up with how the Ottomans treated the Christians in their empire and pressured their governments to do something. So the Great Powers squeezed the Ottomans to open the jails and let everyone go. But by now Delchev was dead and out of the picture, and he had not been replaced. In the meantime preparations for the uprising were gaining momentum and there was no turning back.

After Damian Gruev was released from prison he took Delchev’s job and command of the Macedonian revolutionary forces. Unfortunately he had been in jail for about six months and was not up to speed with what was going on.

Gruev called for a Congress to take place, which unfortunately was completely dominated by Supremacists who again voted for an early Uprising. At the same time it was decided to start the Uprising on August 2<sup>nd</sup>. August 2<sup>nd</sup> is a religious holiday – Sveti Ilia, a day of celebration not of violence. The Ottomans would not expect violence during a Christian holiday so it was an ideal time to start the Uprising.

The most unfortunate thing about this uprising, however, was not that the Ottomans would be surprised but that the Macedonians were not prepared for such a venture and for its aftermath. They had willing fighters but not the arms and ammunition. It was very difficult to get arms and ammunition.

The Bulgarians sold the Macedonians their old army guns but without ammunition. The Greeks refused to sell them any arms. There was a company in Athens that made guns and some Macedonians who spoke Greek had to lie about their use in order to purchase some. But even after purchasing them, it was difficult to smuggle them inside Macedonia. The Ottomans were vigilant and kept their eyes open.

If the Greeks and Bulgarians were genuinely in support of a Macedonian Uprising they would have helped the Macedonians. The fact that the Bulgarians did not supply the Macedonians with ammunition and the Greeks refused to sell them arms, is again proof that they did not want the Macedonians to win.

So even though the Macedonians were unable to find sufficient arms to fight an uprising, Gruev, the supreme leader at the time, decided to start the uprising anyway. The Macedonians were damned if they did and they were damned if they didn't start the uprising so they decided to start it. The Ottomans were going from village to village destroying every village looking for arms, so the villages were going to be destroyed anyway; uprising or no uprising.

These were the conditions under which the August 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1903 Macedonian National Uprising took place, which ended in disaster as the Western Great Powers had hoped.

The Russians had their ships patrolling the Aegean Sea and so did the British, watching Macedonia burn from the distance and they did nothing to stop it.

The brunt of the uprising lasted about 12 days. Parts of Kostur Region, Klisura and Neveska were liberated for a longer period of time but the town Krushevo, as I mentioned earlier, got most of the credit because its liberators declared it a republic, the first republic in the Balkans or maybe even in all of Europe.

After the failed uprising, to save themselves the Macedonian people were even willing to look to the Greeks for help.

The Macedonians were losing all hope, even in their own abilities to protect themselves. And this is exactly what the Western Great Powers were hoping for.

And the Greek, Bulgarian and Serbian propaganda was right there behind them. “Christian brothers don’t worry we are here to save you.”

Where were they when the Macedonians were fighting to liberate themselves, especially the Bulgarians who openly promised to help them? Many volleys were fired and yet not a single Bulgarian soldier came to their rescue! The English had their ships sailing the Aegean Sea to make sure the Bulgarians, or anyone else, did not offer help.

When will the Macedonians learn not to believe empty words?

Times were desperate for the next ten years from 1903 to 1913 for the Macedonian people, a decade of misery under the Ottoman yoke.

But things were about to get worse.

After the Macedonian people failed to liberate themselves, Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria began preparations to invade Macedonia and kick the ailing Ottoman Empire out. They each could not do it alone so they were convinced by Russia, I believe, to form an alliance, or a Balkan League as it was later called. And so in 1912 they invaded and took Macedonia while driving the Ottomans out.

Some top Macedonian revolutionary leaders, including Iane Sandanski, who survived the 1903 Ilinden Uprising and later fought against the Bulgarians, were well aware of Bulgarian plans to annex Macedonia. Sandanski was of the opinion that Macedonia should fight for autonomy, following Delchev’s philosophy. Macedonia could only gain its independence by first becoming an autonomous province inside the Ottoman Empire. Delchev and Sandanski were well aware of the Great Powers and their meddling in Macedonian affairs through their proxies Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria and that Macedonia would eventually be swallowed up by one or all of them. Unfortunately none of these Macedonians was aware that the

Western Great Powers had plans not only to occupy and partition Macedonia but to wipe out everything that was Macedonian, something that was never done before.

Delchev had seen what Russia had done with the San Stefano Treaty when Russia gave Macedonia to Bulgaria. He had also seen what the Western European Powers had done with the Treaty of Berlin in 1878 when, instead of giving Macedonia autonomy, they gave it back to the Ottomans with absolutely no safeguards for the Macedonian people.

So, if anyone was to protect Macedonia from being “swallowed up” by the Great Power proxies, it would have to be the Ottoman Empire. But first Macedonia had to gain its autonomy.

As I mentioned earlier, the Western Great Powers did not want Macedonia to gain its autonomy and become an Ottoman protectorate and that is precisely why the Bulgarian Supremacists started the Ilinden Uprising early.

Let us not get confused here by the Greek and Bulgarian propaganda that “somehow” the Macedonian revolutionary leaders trusted Bulgaria to “liberate” Macedonia and create an independent Macedonian state. Bulgaria wanted Macedonia for itself. The Macedonian revolutionary leaders wanted an independent Macedonia. Delchev believed that this could only be achieved through an autonomous Macedonia under the protection of the Ottoman Empire.

There were, however, Macedonian individuals who looked to the Bulgarians as saviours. You have to understand that the Bulgarian propaganda sounded very attractive to some. The Bulgarians were not saying “We are here to occupy your country and turn you into Bulgarians”, they were saying “Christian brothers we are here to help you...”

We have to remember that Bulgaria too was under the Ottoman yoke until 1878 and because of that some Macedonian people felt that the Bulgarians had sympathy for them and wanted to help.

There is also the fact that the Macedonian revolutionary leadership was infiltrated by Macedonians who worked for Bulgarian interests, knowingly or unknowingly. They too were convinced that Bulgaria could be their saviour.

Let us not forget that Bulgaria also promised the Macedonian people that it would intervene on their behalf and help them liberate themselves. All the Macedonians had to do was start the Uprising.

“Just fire one shot and the Bulgarian army will come in and save you” was the message they were getting from Bulgaria.

And why wouldn't the Macedonian people take advantage of such a generous offer?

Well the Macedonians fired many shots and no Bulgarian army showed up. So this proves that Bulgaria's aim was to get the Macedonians into a confrontation with the Ottomans and when the two sides had destroyed each other, walk in and invade Macedonia. This was also the plan of the Western Great Powers but without the promise that Bulgaria would alone be allowed to invade and occupy Macedonia. If that promise was made to the Bulgarians it was a false promise. If the Western Great Powers wanted the Bulgarians to have Macedonia they would have given it to them in 1878 under the Treaty of San Stefano. But that did not happen because the Western Great Powers had no intention of giving Macedonia to the Bulgarians... then... now... or ever!

But in the end the Bulgarians did not invade. And this is why: The Russian King warned them that there would be severe consequences from the Western European Great Powers if they invaded Macedonia. He reminded them of what happened in Berlin in 1878... He also advised them that this time Russia would not be there to save them.

But the Bulgarians kept making empty promises.

As mentioned earlier the English were there, in the Aegean Sea, watching the rebellion play out and making sure the Bulgarians did not invade and the Macedonians did not win.

Ten years later, the same Great Powers, including the English, authorized Bulgaria along with Greece and Serbia to invade, occupy and partition Macedonia.

Later we find out the decision on “how to divide Macedonia” was left up to the Russian King.

What surprised me the most is that the Russian King, who obviously was biased towards Bulgaria, was put in charge of deciding how to divide Macedonia.

And what did he decide? Did he decide to divide Macedonia along “national lines” as was previously planned? No! When he was asked “How should we divide Macedonia”, the Russian King replied: “No one knows how to divide Macedonia. So go, drive the Ottomans out and wherever your armies stop, that’s where you put your dividing lines.”

And that, more or less, is what happened until the Austro-Hungarians (Hapsburgs) decided they were not going to allow Serbia to have access to the Adriatic Sea.

So what happened after that?

Well, all hell broke loose and the Second Balkan War started.

Italy and Austro-Hungary called for an Albanian state to be created in the lands that Serbia had occupied. Serbia was not happy about losing those lands and asked Bulgaria for more land because at that time Bulgaria had occupied the largest part of Macedonia.

Bulgaria did not answer the Serbian plea and kept ignoring Serbia. Serbia was not strong enough to take those lands by force by itself so it asked Greece for help. A secret pact was made to strike Bulgaria. Bulgaria found out about it and preemptively struck back at both Serbia and Greece and started to drive them out of Macedonia.

Romania from the north sought this opportunity to regain some territories it had lost to Bulgaria and attacked Bulgaria from the north. The Ottomans, having just lost Macedonia, decide to take a chance on getting some of it back and struck Bulgaria from the east.

The Great Powers decided to intervene and stop this from becoming a World War. The Second Balkan War ended with the signing of the 1913 Treaty of Bucharest. Again, the division was determined by where the armies stood when the war ended. And that's how Macedonia was divided.

So after their country was invaded and occupied, the Macedonian people faced another prospect; their country was partitioned in three pieces. Greece was given 51%, Serbia 39% and Bulgaria was lucky to even receive 10%. But Bulgaria was not happy about that and every time there was a conflict, it tried to take more of Macedonia.

In addition to having their country portioned into three pieces, (four pieces, Albania was later given a small piece of Macedonia) the Macedonian people were now faced with three (four) new occupiers who were not satisfied with just occupying Macedonian lands but wanted to assimilate the Macedonian people, by force if necessary in order to extinguish the Macedonian identity, which was part of the Western Great Power long-term plan, which is ongoing to this day... In other words, in order for Greece and Bulgaria to live Macedonia had to die!

Having said all that and knowing that our most gallant and massive Uprising was staged and instigated from the outside, does not take away from the fact that the Macedonian people fought gallantly and sacrificed their lives to liberate themselves and Macedonia and to create their own independent Macedonian state. It was a noble cause and it will be remembered and celebrated forever.

(For more information on the Macedonian people's various uprisings over the years read my book "Macedonian Struggle For Independence", published in 2008.)

## **Divided Macedonia and the atrocities committed against the Macedonian people**

The jubilation of liberation died down quickly as the fires of burning Macedonian villages lit the night skies. Macedonia was in flames again. Liberators turned into occupiers and rained havoc on the Macedonian population. The political, economic and ethnic unity of Macedonia was no more. Greek soldiers who came to liberate their Christian brothers from the oppressive Ottomans and terrible Bulgarians were now burning, torturing and murdering people. In the words of Sir Edmond Grey, “The Balkan war began as a war of liberation, became rapidly a war of annexation, and has ended as a war of extermination.” (Page 294, Vasil Bogov, Macedonian Revelation, Historical Documents Rock and Shatter Modern Political Ideology)

Atrocities were being committed by all sides and those caught in the middle, the Macedonian people, were their victims.

The Greek atrocities were revealed to the world when a lost mailbag was discovered containing letters from Greek soldiers in Macedonia to their families in Greece. The mailbag was turned in to the Carnegie Relief Commission and the contents of the letters were made public. Expecting to fight for the glory of the fatherland, the soldiers instead found themselves torturing, murdering, burning houses and evicting women and children from their homes in a most vile way. The letters revealed that the soldiers were acting on direct orders from the Greek authorities and the Greek king himself. Macedonian families of known Exarchists (Macedonians affiliated with the Bulgarian Church inside Macedonia) were ordered by force to “take with them what they could carry and get out”. “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 his or her ancestral home. 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.

“A thousand Greek and Serbian publicists began to fill the world with their shouting about the essentially Greek or Serbian character of the populations of their different spheres. The Serbs gave the unhappy Macedonians twenty four hours to renounce their nationality and proclaim themselves Serbs, and the Greeks did the same. Refusal meant murder or expulsion. Greek and Serbian colonists were poured into the occupied country... The Greek newspapers began to talk about a Macedonia peopled entirely with Greeks-and they explained the fact that no one spoke Greek by calling the people ‘Bulgaro-phone Greeks’ ... the Greek army entered villages where no one spoke their language. ‘What do you mean by speaking Bulgarian?’ cried the officers. ‘This is Greece and you must speak Greek.’” (Page 104, John Shea, Macedonia and Greece, The Struggle to define a new Balkan Nation)

In 1913 Professor R.A. Reiss reported to the Greek government: “Those whom you would call Bulgarian speakers I would simply call Macedonians...Macedonian is not the language they speak in Sofia...I repeat the mass of inhabitants there (Macedonia) remain simply Macedonians.”

When war broke out in the Balkans in 1912 and 1913, the Carnegie Endowment dispatched a commission on a fact finding mission. The mission consisted of seven prominent members from the United States, Britain, France, Germany, Austria-Hungary and Russia. Among them was the distinguished journalist Henry N. Brailsford, author of the book “Macedonia its Races and their Future”.

The commission was dispatched from Paris on August 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1913, shortly before the end of the second Balkan War and returned to Paris nearly eight weeks later, on September 28<sup>th</sup>. 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.” (George F. Kennan. “The Other Balkan Wars” A 1913 Carnegie Endowment Inquiry in Retrospect with a New Introduction and Reflections on the Present Conflict. Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment For International Peace, 1993).

And like I said earlier, according to the Carnegie report, the Macedonians were not the only ones duped. The soldiers of the invading armies were lied to also. “The Servian soldier, like the

Greek, was firmly persuaded that in Macedonia he would find compatriots, men who could speak his language and address him with *jivio* or *zito*. He found men speaking a language different from his, who cried *hourrah!* He misunderstood or did not understand at all. The theory he had learned from youth of the existence of a Servian Macedonia and a Greek Macedonia naturally suffered; but his patriotic conviction that Macedonia must become Greek or Servian, if not so already, remained unaffected. Doubtless Macedonia had been what he wanted it to become in those times of Douchan the Strong or the Byzantine Emperors. It was only agitators and propagandist Bulgarians who instilled into the population the idea of being Bulgarian. The agitators must be driven out of the country, and it would again become what it had always been, Servian or Greek.”

It’s worthwhile picking up the report and reading it, especially the eyewitness testimonies, the statistics of people murdered and the letters the Greek soldiers wrote home confessing to the atrocities they had committed. The book is authored by George F. Kennan and called “The Other Balkan Wars” A 1913 Carnegie Endowment Inquiry in Retrospect with a New Introduction and Reflections on the Present Conflict. Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment For International Peace, 1993.

The second Balkan War was about grabbing territory and exacting revenge. As the armies clashed there were winners and losers. The losers took revenge on the civilian population by looting, burning, killing and raping the Macedonian population.

Among many other things, following is the kind of information you will find in the book:

“Deny that your enemies are men, and presently you will treat them as vermin”. (P 95)

“When you have to deal with barbarians, you must behave like a barbarian yourself.” (P 95, a quote from a Greek officer.)

According to the Carnegie report, Greece was the first to instigate aggression by attacking Kukush on July 4, 1913. In retaliation

Bulgaria attacked Demir-Hissar on July 7, Serres on July 11 and Doxato on July 13.

On July 12, according to the Carnegie report, King Constantine dispatched the following telegram to the representatives of Greece in the European capitals;

#### KING CONSTANTINE'S TELEGRAM

July 12, 1913.

The general commanding the Sixth Division informs me that Bulgarian soldiers under the command of a captain of gendarmes gathered in the yard of the school house at Demir-Hissar over one hundred notables of the town, the archbishop and two priests, and massacred them all. The headquarters staff ordered the exhumation of the bodies, with the result that the crime has been established. Further, Bulgarian soldiers violated young girls and massacred those who resisted them. Protest in my name to the representatives of the powers and to the whole civilized world against these abominations, and declare that to my great regret I shall find myself obliged to proceed to reprisals, in order to inspire their authors with a salutary fear, and to cause them to reflect before committing similar atrocities. The Bulgarians have surpassed all the horrors perpetrated by their barbarous hordes in the past, thus proving that they have not the right to be classed among civilized peoples.

(Signed) CONSTANTINE, King. (Page 300)

The accounts you are about to read are of those who either witnessed or themselves experienced the Greek atrocities at Kukush.

#### EVIDENCE OF FATHER JOSEPH RADANOV, of Kukush.

On July 2 he could distinctly see from Kukush that the surrounding villages were on fire, Salamanli among others. Fields of corn and stacks' of reaped corn had been set on fire even behind the Greek positions. The Greeks moreover had fired upon the reapers who had gone to work in the early morning in their fields. The refugees from the neighbouring villages began to arrive upon the heights called

Kara-Bunar about a mile away, and were there bombarded by artillery.

Next day (July 3) the battle approached the town, but the Bulgarians retained their position. About midday the Greeks began to bombard Kukush, but when I left no house had taken fire. (Page 300)

FATHER JEAN CHIKITCHEV.

I took refuge after midday on July 3 with Father Michel and meant to stay with him. I saw the shells falling upon the sisters' orphanage. I saw the hospital struck by a shell. There were at this time no Bulgarian troops in the town, although they were in their positions in front of it. The town was unfortified. The bombardment seemed to be systematic. It could not be explained as a mistake incidental to the finding of the range. Quite forty shells fell not far from the orphanage and three or possibly four houses were set on fire. At this point I left the town and fled with the refugees. Next night it looked as if the whole plain were burning.

NOTE.-Both the above witnesses were priests of the Catholic Uniate Church. (Page 300)

MR. C. [the name may not be published] a Catholic resident in the village of Todoraki near Kukush, states that on July 6 the Greek commandant of Kukush arrived accompanied by thirty infantrymen and eighty armed Turks. He was bound and left exposed to the full sun without food or water from 7 a.m. until 3 p.m. His house was pillaged, and 200 francs taken with all his personal property. On being released he learnt from the villagers that they had lost in all £T300 during the pillage. Two men were beaten and twelve were bound and sent down to prison in Salonica. The women were not maltreated. (Page 301)

PETER SHAPOV, of Zarovo near Langaza, a shepherd.

He was taking his sheep and goats on the road to Demir-Hissar when Greek cavalry overtook the refugees on the edge of the town and began to slash out with their sabres to left and right. They took 600 goats belonging to himself and his two brothers. One of his

brothers was wounded by a cavalryman and died afterwards at the Bulgarian frontier. The Bulgarian army was quite half an hour's walk away. There were no Bulgarian troops near them. (Page 301)

MATE, Wife of Petro of Bogoroditsa, near Langaza.

I saw the Greek cavalrymen when they entered our village. I fled and in my haste was obliged to leave a baby of eighteen months behind in the village in order to flee with this one which I have with me, a child of three. I saw our village in flames. I want my child. (Page 301)

ELISAVA, Wife of Georghi of Zarovo, near Langaza.

We all fled when the shells began to fall in our village and got safely to Demir-Hissar. Then I heard people saying the Greek cavalry are coming. There was a panic; children fell on the ground and horsemen rode over them. I lost my children, save one whom I was able to carry. My husband had two others with him. I do not know what has become of him, and have not seen him since that day. (Page 301)

RHODOPE, 11<sup>th</sup> July, 1913.

This war has been very painful. We have burnt all the villages abandoned by the Bulgarians. They burn the Greek villages and we the Bulgarian. They massacre, we massacre 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.

I embrace you tenderly, also  
your brother and your wife,  
Spiliotopoulos Philippos.

The Bulgarians and Serbians also committed similar atrocities. You will have to read the report because it's unbelievable what was done to the Macedonian people.

Unfortunately for the Macedonian people history again turned its eyes away from the Greek, Bulgarian and Serbian atrocities in Macedonia to focus on new events that were about to unfold and engulf the entire world, World War I.

While World War I raged on consuming the lives of millions of young men and women, Greece, Bulgaria and Serbia were serving their own brand of chauvinism in Macedonia. For the next five years, with the world busy with its own problems, there was no one to hear the cries of the Macedonian people at the hands of the new tyrants. If the gravestones of the dead Macedonians could speak they would tell tales of torture and executions, deception and lies. They would say, “Our Christian brothers came to liberate us but instead they murdered us because we were in their way of achieving their greatness. We were labeled ‘criminals’ because we would not yield to their demands. I ask you is it a crime to want to live as free men? Is it a crime to want to be Macedonian? Is it a crime to want to exercise free will? It is they who are the criminals for befouling everything that is Christian, for their lies and deception, and for murdering us to possess our lands. History will record August 10<sup>th</sup> 1913 as the darkest day in Macedonia, the day our future died.” (Risto Stefov)

The triple occupation worsened living conditions in Macedonia but the fighting spirit of the Macedonian people continued to live underground and abroad. Three generations of fighting for liberty, freedom and an independent Macedonia came to a close. The Ilinden generation was defeated, not by Ottoman or Muslim oppression but by the Christian cruelty and deception of the Great Powers and their proxies.

Soon after the occupation, underground societies sprang up everywhere urging the Macedonian people to refuse their new fate and oppose the partition. Accordingly, many Macedonians did so by refusing to obey the new officialdom and by not participating in the new institutions. This, however, did not stop the military regimes occupying Macedonia from systematic abuse, denationalization and violent assimilation.

The battle for “dominion of the world”, which started over Balkan affairs, soon took a sinister turn to again involve Macedonia. As the Entente Powers (Britain, France, Russia and Italy) were fighting against the Central Powers (Germany and Austro-Hungary), Bulgaria, smarting from her losses at Bucharest, remained neutral. In a turn of events, to the amazement of the Greeks, the Entente Powers approached Bulgaria with an offer of a substantial portion of Macedonian territory in exchange for its alliance. Bulgaria, however, seemed to prefer the company of the Central Powers, perhaps they offered it a bigger portion, because by late 1915 its armies marched in and invaded Macedonia. To quote the Bulgarian War Minister General Nikolaev: “We care little about the British, Germans, French, Russians, Italians, Austrians or Hungarians; our only thought is Macedonia. Whichever of the two groups of Powers will enable us to conquer it will have our alliance!” (Page 154, Radin, IMRO and the Macedonian Question)

Soon after establishing the Solun front, the occupation of Greece was complete. France had dispatched 60,000 troops to the Balkans with hopes of safeguarding the Skopje to Solun rail links. By late 1917, Entente troops were emerging victorious over the Bulgarians and Germans in Macedonia. No sooner was the battle over than a problem developed between British and French commands in Macedonia. While the British General, Milne, supported Venizelos and his attempts to constitute a pro-British provisional government in Greece, the pro-Macedonian French General, Sarrail, opposed Venizelos and sought to drive the Greek army out of Macedonia. “The ambitious plan for Macedonian autonomy drafted by the French command in 1915 and 1916 were but mere progressive steps to ensure France a strategic outpost for capital expansion.” (Page 155, Radin, IMRO and the Macedonian Question)

Once again Macedonians were caught in the middle of someone else’s war. To save face France recalled Sarrail and replaced him with a pro-Greek commander, thus avoiding a diplomatic disaster.

After establishing a government in Athens and consolidating his power in Greece, Venizelos committed nine divisions to the Macedonian front to assist Entente forces on the Solun front. To

further prove his devotion to the Entente, Venizelos committed two more divisions to fight the Bolsheviks in Russia.

When the war was over, on November 11, 1918, a general armistice was signed and a Peace Conference was convened in Versailles, France. Venizelos arrived in Paris as the principle negotiator for Greece, determined to reap his reward for his solid support to his victorious allies. One of Venizelos's objectives was to resurrect the "Megaly Idea" by annexing parts of Asia Minor, Smyrna (Ismir) in particular. He convinced the world that the Christians living in Asia Minor were Greek and should be part of Greece.

Unfortunately for Venizelos, Italy had prior claims in Asia Minor (Anatolia) which created a problem for the peacemakers. Greek ambition was viewed with suspicion by Italy so to strengthen its claims, in March 1919, Italy began to build up troops in the region. The Greeks viewed this as a threat to their own claim and before a final territorial solution was reached they demanded concessions. The reasons given were that the Greek people in Asia Minor were endangered by Turkish aggression and needed protection. After much protest on the Greek side, Britain, France and the Americans finally gave the Greeks permission to send a small defense force. Under the protection of allied warships, on May 15, 1919, Greek troops began their landing in Smyrna. Instead of staying put however, as per prior agreements, they began to occupy western Asia Minor.

No sooner were the Central Powers driven out of Greek territories than the Greek Government, by passing LAW 1051, inaugurated a new administrative jurisdiction for governing the newly acquired lands in Macedonia.

When it started to become clear that the Entente Powers were winning the war, encouraged by Woodrow Wilson's principles of nationality, many Macedonian lobby groups placed their faith in the Peace Conference in Versailles. Wilson's fourteen principles of nationality implicitly asserted the right of all nations to self-determination.

In his address to the Pan Slavic Assembly in Odessa in August 1914, Krste Misirkov called for achieving autonomy by diplomatic means. An article was written and extensively circulated in May 1915, which specifically dealt with the autonomy call.

The student organization “Independent Society”, in Geneva Switzerland under the slogan of “Macedonia for the Macedonians”, demanded the application of Wilson’s principles to create an autonomous Macedonia based on the principles of the Swiss Federative model.

Remnants of the old Ilinden guard also took action in the rally for an Autonomous Macedonia. After the Bulgarians murdered Iane Sandanski in 1915, his supporters fled the Pirin region to save their own lives and later regrouped in Serres to form the “Serres Revolutionary Council”. “Having noted the impetus for unification of the Southern Slavs against the Central Powers, the Council issued a ‘Declaration of Autonomy’ in October 1918, in which it appealed for membership of a Balkan Federation on the basis of Macedonian territorial integrity. This plea was ultimately rejected by the ruling cliques of the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, which later became known as Yugoslavia”. “By striving for political and economic hegemony over the Balkans, Balkan nationalism has thrown the Balkan peoples and states into deep contradictions and conflicts which must be begun by war, and finished by war and always war.” (Pages 158-159, Radin, IMRO and the Macedonian Question)

Once again the Macedonian people came to the forefront to plead their case and once again they were shut out. How many more wars must be fought and how much more blood must be spilled for the world to realize that there is no end to Balkan conflicts without involving the Macedonian people in resolving the Macedonian question? But, you see, that’s how the Western Great Powers want the situation to be. It was designed from the onset to be this way. They created the little Balkan states and set them on a course to fight against one another forever...

The Peace Conference, which was supposedly “the tribunal of international conscience”, had no place for “Wilsonian Justice” or

the opportunity for self-determination. Instead of practicing what they preached, the so-called “peace makers of Versailles” rewarded aggression in exchange for self-interest. A practice which has continued to this day!

With the stroke of a pen, in 1919 at the Treaty of Versailles (Paris), England and France sealed Macedonia’s fate by ratifying the principles of the 1913 Bucharest Treaty and officially endorsing the partitioning of Macedonia. This gave Greece the license it needed to pursue forced expulsion and denationalization of Macedonians and to begin a mass colonization by transplanting “potential Greeks” into the annexed territories of Macedonia.

The Neuilly Convention allowed for forced exchanges of populations. About 70,000 Macedonians were expelled from the Greek occupied part of Macedonia to Bulgaria and 25,000 “so-called Greeks” were transplanted from Bulgaria to Greek occupied Macedonia.

“Macedonia’s fate has been the subject of every kind of political combination, negotiation and treaty since 1912, each more immoral than the last, each ignoring completely the local interests and desires of a population which, with the stroke of the statesman’s pen, can be condemned to national dissolution, and denied the right to a free national life while Armenians, Albanians and Jews receive political freedom.” (Page 160, Radin, IMRO and the Macedonian Question)

The Great Powers did not dare lose the strategic importance and untapped wealth in Macedonia or dare disappoint their trusted proxies in the Balkans. Think of the endless bickering and complaining!

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.

It is important at this point to mention that there was “some sort of conspiracy” worldwide to stop writing about the existence of Macedonians and to erase everything about the modern Macedonians from the world scene, particularly in the press and in most publications in general. Any books written after 1913, especially the school books, mentioned no Macedonians existing in any of the divided parts of Macedonia. Also, statistics published after 1913 showed no Macedonians living in Macedonia, that is, up until 1944 when the People’s Republic of Macedonia came into existence. The Great Powers made sure there was no mention of modern Macedonians existing after Macedonia was invaded, occupied, partitioned and parts of it annexed by Greece, Serbia, Bulgaria and later Albania. A prime example of this is the “Carnegie Endowment for International Peace” report, mentioned earlier, compiled by the International Commission set up to inquire into the cause and conduct of the Balkan Wars. This Commission was specifically sent to Macedonia to investigate crimes committed against the Macedonian people yet it mentions nothing about “Macedonians” in its report or in the book later written by George F. Kennan.

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. Why is this? Because to this day, Greece and Bulgaria claim that “the Macedonian identity” does not exist and has never existed. So, what minorities should they be protecting? In response to the Greek claim I would like to ask the Greeks the following questions:

1. To what minorities were you referring, when on September 29, 1924 your Minister of Foreign Affairs Nikolaos Mihalakopoulou signed an agreement with the Bulgarian Foreign Minister Kalkoff?

2. To what minorities were you referring, when on August 17, 1926 you made an agreement with Yugoslavia regarding the nationality of the “Slavophones” in Greece?  
(Pages 159-161, G.A.L. I Kata Tis Makedonias Epivouli, (Ekdosis Deftera Sympepliromeni), Athinai 1966)

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

As it turned out, the loudly proclaimed “Wilson principles” at the Paris Conference were only for show. The real winners at the end of the conference were the “players”, the biggest one of all being Venizelos of Greece. “The entire forum was a farce, and its offspring the Versailles Treaty, the ultimate insult to the dignity and self-esteem (what remained of it after continuous war and bloodshed) of the long-tormented Macedonian people. Those Macedonians prodded by conscience, by the mistrust gained after generations of suffering, and by the desire for freedom, thereafter treated the Versailles Treaty, and all political treaties, with the contempt they deserve.” (Page 166, Radin, IMRO and the Macedonian Question)

At the conclusion of the Treaty, Greece got back what it had previously annexed and, additionally, received a large portion of Epirus, western Thrace, Crete and the Aegean Islands.

It is important to mention here that when Albania’s affirmation for independence was signed, at the London Conference in February 1920, more of Macedonia’s territory was partitioned. A narrow strip of land running through Lake Ohrid and southward along Macedonia’s western boundary was awarded to Albania.

Soon after arriving victorious in Greece, Venizelos, in a speech in Solun, announced his plans for a “Greater Greece” (Megali Idea) and to bring together all “Greek peoples” under a single Greater Greek State.

I remember, as a child, listening to old men in my village, sitting on the porch telling tales of bygone wars when, as young soldiers, they chased the Turks to Ankara yelling “two Turks to a bayonet”. They also told stories of how it took them sixty days to gain sixty miles and how they lost them in one day of retreat. I didn’t understand what they were talking about then but it was about the Greek exploits in Asia Minor. As mentioned earlier, after building up a large military presence in Asia Minor, Greece launched a major offensive in March 1921, and by the end of the summer it ended in disaster. Many Macedonians were also killed.

An entire generation of young Macedonian men, who were drafted into the Greek military, was sent to the Asia Minor campaigns and many lost their lives. The Greek authorities never acknowledged their service and no compensation was ever paid to the families of those “breadwinners” who lost their lives. The reason for the omission, according to the Greek authorities, was because “they were Bulgarians”.

By the Treaty of Lausanne in July 1923, the Greco-Turkish war came to an end. Greece and Turkey signed a population exchange agreement using “religion as the basic criterion for nationality.” (Page 120, Richard Clogg, A Short History of Modern Greece)

The November 1925 issue of National Geographic Magazine best illustrates the magnitude of the human wave, the audacity of the Greek and Turkish authorities and the total disregard for human life. “History’s Greatest Trek, Tragedy Stalks the Near East as Greece and Turkey Exchange Two Million of their People. ...1922 began what may fairly be called history’s greatest, most spectacular trek—the compulsory intermigration of two million Christians and Muslims across the Aegean Sea.” “...the initial episodes of the exchange drama were enacted to the accompaniment of the boom of cannon and the rattle of machine gun and with the settings pointed by the flames of the Smyrna holocaust.” (Page 533, Melville Chater, National Geographic, November 1925)

“Stroke of the Pen Exiles 3,000,000 People. It is safe to say that history does not contain a more extraordinary document. Never

before in the world's long pageant of folk-wanderings have 2,000,000 people-and certainly no less than 3,000,000 if the retroactive clause is possible of complete application-been exiled and re-adopted by the stroke of the pen" (Page 569, National Geographic, November 1925). "Even if regarded as a voluntary trek instead of a compulsory exchange, the movement would be without parallel in the history of emigration." "One might just add that history has never produced a document more difficult of execution. It was to lessen these difficulties that exchangeability was based in religion and not race. Due to five centuries of Turkish domination in Greece, the complexities in determining an individual's racial status are often such as would make a census taker weep." (Page 570, National Geographic, November 1925)

"Greece with one-fifth Turkey's area has 1,500,000 more people. Turkey with a population of 5,000,000 and naturally rich territory contains only 15 people to the square mile...Greece, with less than one fifth of Turkey's area, emerges with a population exceeding the latter's for the first time by 1,500,000 people averaging 123 to the square mile." (Page 584, National Geographic, November 1925)

"History's Greatest Trek has cost 300,000 lives. Conservative estimates place it at 300,000 lives lost by disease and exposure." (Page 584, National Geographic, November 1925)

"The actual exchange was weighted very heavily in Turkey's favour, for some 380,000 Muslims were exchanged for something like 1,100,000 Christians." "The total population in Greece rose between 1907 and 1928 from 2,600,000 to 6,200,000." "After the Greek advances of 1912, for instance, the Greek elements in Greek Macedonia had constituted 43 percent of the population. By 1926, with the resettlement of the refugees, the Greek element has risen to 89 percent." (Page 121, Richard Clogg, A Short History of Modern Greece)

After all this, surprisingly (and shamefully) Greece still claims her population to be homogeneous; direct descendents of the peoples of the ancient City States.

“If Greece exists today as a homogeneous ethnos, she owes this to [the Asia Minor Catastrophe]. If the hundreds of thousands of refugees had not come to Greece, Greek Macedonia would not exist today. The refugees created the national homogeneity of our country. (Antonios Kandiotis, Metrpolite of Florina, Page 141 in Anastasia Karakasidou, Fields of Wheat, Hills of Blood)

According to Karakasidou, almost half of the refugees were settled in urban centres and rural areas in Macedonia. “Searching for locations in which to settle this mass of humanity, the Greek government looked north to the newly incorporated land in Macedonia...” “...by 1930, 90 percent of the 578,844 refugees settled in rural Greece were concentrated in the regions of Macedonia and western Thrace. Thus Macedonia, Greece’s newly acquired second ‘breadbasket’ (after Thessaly), became the depository for East Thracian, Pontic, and Asia Minor refugees.” (Page 145, Anastasia Karakasidou, Fields of Wheat, Hills of Blood)

While Greece was contemplating repopulating Macedonia with alien refugees, new developments were boiling to the surface in Greek occupied Macedonia.

“A book of great importance to Macedonian linguistics and historiography was published in Athens; that was the primer entitled ABECEDAR (A B C), printed in the Latin alphabet, and intended for the children of the Macedonian national minority in Greece - the ‘Slav speaking minority’ as Sir Austin Chamberlain, British diplomat and delegate to the League of Nations, and Sir James Erick Drumond, General Secretary to the League of Nations, referred to the Macedonians in Greece.” (Page 184, Voislav Kushevski, ‘On the Appearance of the Abecedar’ in Istorija magazine, 1983, No. 2)

“In 1920 Greece signed before the League of Nations a treaty obliging it to grant certain rights to the minorities of non-Greek origin in Greece. Four years later, in 1924, at the suggestion of the League of Nations, Greece and Bulgaria signed the well-known Kalfov-Politis Protocol under which Bulgaria was obliged to grant the Greek minority in Bulgaria their minority rights (language, schools and other rights), while Greece, recognizing the Macedonians from the Aegean part of Macedonia as a ‘Bulgarian’

minority, was to grant them their minority rights. This agreement was seemingly very much in favour of Bulgaria, but when in 1925 the Greek government undertook certain concrete steps towards the publication of the first primer made for the specific needs of that minority, it made it clear that there were no grounds on which Bulgaria could be officially interested in any 'Bulgarian minority' or expect the primer to be in Bulgarian, for that minority - though speaking a Slav language - was neither Bulgarian nor Serbian.

The very fact that official Greece did not, either de jure or do facto, see the Macedonians as a Bulgarian minority, but rather as a separate Slav group ('Slav speaking minority'), is of particular significance. The primer, published in the Latin alphabet, was based on the Lerin - Bilola dialect. After Gianelli's Dictionary dating from the 16th Century, and the Daniloviot Cetirijazicnik written in the 19th century, this was yet another book written in the Macedonian vernacular. The primer was mailed to some regions in Western Aegean-Macedonia (Kostur, Lerin and Voden), and the school authorities prepared to give Macedonian children, from the first to the fourth grade of the elementary school, instruction in their own mother tongue. (Grigorios Dafnis, 'Greece between the two world wars', 'Elefteria' newspaper, March 15, 1953, Dionisios Romas in 'Elefteria' newspaper of October 9 and 12, 1954 and Dimitrios Vazuglis in Racial and religious minorities in Greece and Bulgaria, 1954)

The Greek governments have never made a sincere attempt to solve the question of the Macedonians and their ethnic rights in Greece. Thus, while measures were being undertaken for the opening of Macedonian schools, a clash between the Greek and Bulgarian armies at Petrich was concocted, which was then followed by a massacre of the innocent Macedonian population in the village of Trlis near Serres. All this was aimed at creating an attitude of insecurity within the Macedonians so that they themselves would give up the recognition of their minority rights and eventually seek safety by moving to Bulgaria. The Greek governments also skillfully used the Yugoslav-Bulgarian disagreements on the question of the Macedonians in Greece, and with organized pressure on the Macedonian population, as was the case in the village of Trlis, tried

to dismiss the Macedonian ethnic question from the agenda through forced resettlement of the Macedonian population outside of Greece.

The ABECEDAR, which actually never reached the Macedonian children, is in itself a powerful testimony not only of the existence of the large Macedonian ethnic minority in Greece, but also of the fact that Greece was under an obligation before the League of Nations to undertake certain measures in order to grant this particular minority their rights.” (Hristo Andonovski).

Let us face the facts here. All these treaties that Greece signed with Bulgaria and Turkey on population exchanges and the rights of these people were sanctioned and guaranteed by the Great Powers. The Great Powers were well aware of what Greece was up to and what it was doing with the Macedonians but they continued to create conditions to not only allow the torment of the Macedonian people but to hide their own involvement behind Greece, a practice which is exercised to this day.

The League of Nations (the United Nation’s predecessor) may have undertaken certain measures to protect the national minorities in Greece but this was done in theory only because no processes were put in place to ensure that these measures were properly implemented. And this has also been the case, without exception, with the Great Powers when it came to the Macedonian people. The Great Powers, in the short term, did everything in their power to secure the Macedonian people’s support, even if they had to work contrary to their objectives, but in the long term they “never” delivered anything that was in the interests of the Macedonian people.

## Hellenizing Greek Occupied Macedonia

When the Greeks consolidated their power in Macedonia they told the Macedonian people that this is Greece now and that they were now Greeks, and if they didn't agree with it they could pick up what they could carry and leave immediately. Many did just that, particularly those who were affiliated with the Bulgarian church; they just picked up their things and left.

The Muslims were all kicked out and so were the Macedonians who insisted on being Macedonian and not Greeks, Serbians, or Bulgarians. Those who insisted too much found themselves with a noose around their necks hanging from a tree.

Sometime later Greece exchanged populations with Bulgaria and got rid of more Macedonians who were refusing to become Greeks and imported all kinds of non-Greek people from Bulgaria and from the Caucasus's who claimed to be Greeks.

Greece had no problem accepting anyone who agreed to be "Hellenized" and accept the Greek definition of being Greek. And what was this definition you ask? Just look up the old Greek constitution from the 1820's and you will find out.

It said that anyone who was an Orthodox Christian could be a Greek provided they agreed with the Greek philosophy (to be given a Greek name and baptized in the Greek Church and not to work against the Greek cause) and were willing to learn to speak Greek.

People from Armenia and even Russia have claimed to be Greeks. All they had to do to prove this was say that their great grandmother was Greek and have a couple of witnesses sign their claim and they became instant Greeks. That about sums it up...

But allow me the opportunity here to emphasize that by "Greek" I don't mean "Greek citizen", I mean "Greek nationality". I don't know if the same rules apply today but in the past one could not simply be a Greek citizen and belong to an ethnic minority in Greece. Greece claims no minorities live in Greece, only the 2%

Muslim minority, but that is a religious minority and not an ethnic one. These Muslims are considered to be of “Greek” nationality.

Before 1913 and before the Greco-Turkish war, the Macedonian people were a majority in Macedonia with minorities such as Albanians, Vlachs, Christian Turks and others. After Greece occupied Macedonian territories it cleansed itself of non-Greeks; it assimilated everyone it could, evicted those who did not agree with its principles and jailed and murdered all those who caused trouble.

But those who remained in Macedonia were still Macedonians and still a majority in Greek occupied Macedonia, that is until Greece deposited 600,000 Turkish Christian settlers and colonists acquired during the population exchange with Turkey by the Treaty of Lausanne. After that Greece published demographic statistics claiming that the population in Greece was 98% pure Greek and 2% Muslim Greek.

Another point I want to make here is that Greece recognized a 2% Muslim population on its territory. Doesn't that strike you as odd, that Greece, who evicted every Muslim from Macedonia, would now recognize a Muslim minority in Thrace? Why?

I believe Greece did this in order to preserve the Patriarchate in Istanbul and the Christian people living around it. Greece made an agreement with Turkey to preserve the Muslims in Thrace if Turkey spared the Christian population in Istanbul. Greece had high hopes that, in time, this population would grow, expand and become a majority in Istanbul. But it is disappointing for Greece that the future did not turn out in its favour. While the Muslim population in Thrace is growing, in spite of all obstacles, the Christian population in Istanbul is shrinking.

Did you know that Greece does not allow the Muslims living in Thrace to purchase new homes, properties or even tractors? And as Muslims leave to visit Turkey, they are not allowed to return. Yes, this is going on in Greece today. I saw this in a Greek television documentary as well as heard it from Greek human rights activists.

Even before Greece had secured its grip on its occupied part of Macedonia, Greek officials were sent to administer “the new lands”. The first official Greek administrator arrived in Solun near the end of October 1912, accompanied by two judges, five customs officials, ten consulate clerks, a contingent of reporters and journalists and 168 Cretan soldiers. Among other things, the first order of business was to “Hellenize the New Lands”.

“After the Greeks occupied Aegean Macedonia, they closed the Slavic language schools and churches and expelled the priests. The Macedonian language and names were forbidden, and the Macedonians were referred to as Bulgarians, Serbians or natives. 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 the 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.”

I am sure that Hild and many others like him were well aware that the “living Slavs”, and dead ones for that matter, to whom he is referring were actually all Macedonians but, as I said earlier, the “world” by this time had conspired to hide that fact from public view.

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 Elepeterios 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’s 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.

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." (Page 8, What Europe has Forgotten: The Struggle of the Aegean Macedonians, A Report by the Association of the Macedonians in Poland)

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.

In Vardar (Serbian occupied) Macedonia, the Serbian authorities attacked the problem of denationalization and assimilation by enacting laws, such as the September 24, 1920 "Resolution for the Settlement of the New Southern Regions", designed to effectively exclude Macedonians from owning any property. The Macedonian language was banned along with cultural institutions through a uniform code known as the December 30th, 1920 EDICT, which was aimed at persecuting all political and trade union associations.

The bulk and most arable of Macedonian lands were awarded to Serbian army officers who survived the World War I Solun front. Land was also awarded to the Serbian administrators of Macedonia including government bureaucrats, judges and the police.

The denationalization measures were complemented with aggressive re-education programs producing "little Serbs" out of the Macedonian children. As for the unwilling adults, they were given two options - "live as a Serb" or "die as a Macedonian"!

In Pirin (Bulgarian occupied) Macedonia, the Bulgarian government enforced compulsory name changes and, through repressive political and economic means, stepped up the assimilation process. Initially land reforms favoured the poor, including the Macedonian peasants. Later, however, that too changed and Macedonians here were exposed to a similar fate as the Macedonians in Greek and Serbian occupied Macedonia.

The Macedonians in Albania posed little threat to Albania's authority and fared relatively better than their kin in Greece, Bulgaria and Serbia. The village inhabitants were not persecuted or subjected to any comprehensive denationalization programs. As a result the Macedonian culture flourished, original names remained and the people spoke Macedonian uninhibited.

Many of the Macedonian regional revolutionary leaders, fooled by the Balkan League's propaganda, voluntarily joined the League's armies in 1912 to help oust the Ottomans and liberate Macedonia. When it was over and the so-called "liberation" turned into an "occupation", they found themselves prisoners of the League's soldiers. Those fortunate enough to have escaped, fled to Pirin Region and joined Iane Sandanski's Cheta, which was still active at the time. After Sandanski's assassination in 1915, however, many of his followers went underground and later re-emerged in Serres to form the "Serres Revolutionary Council".

The left wing of the Macedonian revolutionary organization re-emerged prior to the 1919 Paris Peace Conference with high hopes of settling the Macedonian question by lobbying the peace delegates. After realizing that their efforts were futile, they gave up and merged together with the Provisional Mission of western Macedonia to form the Macedonian revolutionary organization (United). Macedonia is alive, "United" in spirit if not in substance. Unfortunately, because of Macedonia's division and the impenetrable barriers (closed borders) erected, putting up a united national front was difficult if not impossible. Even though there was much desire to achieve a 'united autonomous Macedonia', no form of mobilization was practical. So how was the Macedonian revolutionary organization going to achieve its objectives? Some leaders believed that by internationalizing the Macedonian question and by working with the supportive political elements of each Balkan State, the denationalization process could be slowed down, even reversed, and a climate for reunification created. The Macedonian revolutionary organization believed that by employing new, revolutionary and non-nationalistic tactics the barriers erected in Macedonia could be penetrated. By joining the "international class struggle against a common oppressor", the Macedonian revolutionary organization believed self-determination could be

achieved. The only political elements that sympathized with the Macedonian revolutionary organization's objectives, at the time, were the Communist Parties of the respective Balkan States. The Macedonian revolutionary organization called on the Macedonian people to join the class struggle and support those sympathetic to the Macedonian cause. Many Macedonians did rise to the task but found they had very little in common with the exploited working class in their respective new countries. Macedonians felt they were exploited first because they were Macedonians and second because they were a working class. To win them over, the Communist International (Comintern) was obliged to consider concessions like offering Macedonians autonomy and the right to self-determination or at least recognize the Macedonian nation with full rights and privileges.

Unlike the Great Powers and the European monarchies of the past, the Comintern saw the Macedonian people as a potentially strong ally that could be persuaded to rally for its cause. Unfortunately there were problems, many problems. First, there were disagreements between the various Balkan State Communist Parties regarding the degree of concessions to be awarded. Then there were fears of losing Macedonian territory if autonomy was considered. Moscow, the leading Comintern figure, favoured a Balkan Federation with the whole of Macedonia as one of its republics. Unfortunately Bulgaria, still dreaming the San Stefano dream, backed out.

Without a way of breaking the "impenetrable, artificial barriers" imposed on Macedonia by the Balkan States, the Macedonian revolutionary organization was never again able to rise to the glory days of the Ilinden Rebellion. As a consequence, its role slowly diminished and it became extinct after the German occupation of the Balkans in 1941.

After the Great War (WW I) there was peace in Europe. Unfortunately, Macedonians continued to endure denationalization, forced assimilation, forced emigration and economic neglect at the hands of their new masters.

One of the worst Greek masters to face the Macedonian people was Metaxas. Metaxas and his Fascist supporters were extremely anti-Macedonian and wanted everything that was Macedonian erased, including the Macedonian language that the Macedonian people spoke both publicly and in private. This was the only language the vast majority of Macedonian people spoke at that time.

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.

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. Metaxas'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)

We Macedonians often joke about this because it is so bizarre, but people were also fined for giving commands to their animals or calling out to their pets in their native language.

Sometimes when I think about this I am amazed at the cruelty perpetrated against the Macedonian people... not allowing them to speak the only language they know in their own ancestral homes... This is beyond understanding for a westerner yet it was westerners who allowed it to take place by being complacent. First let me say that there is no way in the world that the Western Great Powers did not know that this was happening in Greece, and second, no one did anything to stop it. This tells me that, without a doubt, Hellenization in Greece was taking place with Western Great Power consent. Imagine walking around in your own home, on your ancestral lands and not being allowed to speak your mother tongue. This is how it was and still is for the Macedonian people living in Greek occupied Macedonia.

Another place to stalk unsuspecting victims was at their home. Greek policemen often stood outside people's windows just to hear what language they were speaking and fined the entire family if they were caught speaking Macedonian.

“The Metaxas regime, haunted by the specter of Slavism and communism, initiated a policy of accelerated assimilation. Applied by incompetent and short-sighted civil servants, it antagonized even Slavophones of the Greek faction. To peasants of Bulgarian [ethnic Macedonian] orientation it served as proof that the Greek state could not offer them a national shelter. In 1941, the occupation of Greece by the Germans and the entrance of Bulgarian troops in eastern Macedonia and Thrace offered the opportunity for accumulated bitterness to reach maturity.” (Kofos. “Nationalism and Communism in Macedonia”. Page 255) I don't agree with Kofos on many things but I do agree with him on this point.

After the realization set in that people would be fined and even physically punished and force-fed castor oil for repeat offences, fear and suspicion began to set in, forcing people to keep silent. It was best to look down or to look the other way when passing your neighbours on the street because you never knew who might be listening. Keeping silent was preferable than speaking to someone you had known all your life in that despicable foreign Greek language which you so much despised.

“In the past, Macedonian life and events were preserved in the folksongs, thus enabling an articulation of feelings and grief as well as cultural self-expression. When the Macedonian language was proscribed in Northern Greece, the folksongs ceased.” (Kita Sapurma & Pandora Petrovska. “Children of the Bird Goddess”. Pollitecon Publications. 1997. Page 163)

This assimilation-ist policy however was not new. It was started a long time ago and became evident around 1875 when it became clear that Macedonia would not be allowed to become a nation state and would be divided among the other Balkan nations. Metaxas tightened and accelerated the assimilation process before the communists could do damage to his Fascist Greece.

But what was really scary was not how Metaxas was going to “assimilate” the Macedonian people but how he went about “renewing” Greece.

Metaphorically speaking, in order to build a new building on the foundations of an old building you must first tear down the old building. To get rid of the undesirables inside Greece, which included the communists and the minorities, Metaxas began a hate campaign vilifying everything he did not like. He then used the Greek people to tear them down. First he vilified the communists and then he vilified the Macedonians and every other ethnic group he did not like. He convinced a lot of his followers that the real Greeks were superior, more intelligent and God’s gift to Greece... just like Hitler did with the German people. The rest of the people, he said, were not only useless, but a danger to Greece and had to be purged.

This created a lot of hatred and xenophobia in the Greek people, which apparently has survived to this day.

Let me tell you that the Fascists inside Greece were never defeated or removed from power; they are alive and well, even today. Just have a look at how Greece is behaving, especially towards the Macedonian people in exile, who Greece exiled after the Greek Civil War. Take a good look at how Greece is behaving towards the Republic of Macedonia; that should tell you what kind of country it is. And what have the Western Great Powers done to curb Greece’s behaviour? Nothing! In fact the Western Great Powers are directly responsible for this behaviour not only for looking the other way but also for setting Greece on this course in the first place.

Unfortunately, as we found out in retrospect, the communists were no better. The Macedonian people never knew where they stood with the Greek communists. First they recognized the Macedonians as an identity but as “Slavo-Macedonians”, then they refused to recognize their rights unless the Macedonians did what they were told to do and won the war against the Fascists.

The communists did take the lead in Greece when Greece was under Fascist and Nazi occupation and, with a lot of help from the Macedonians, won the war and Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy and Fascist Bulgaria were driven out of Greek occupied Macedonia.

After all that, you would figure the Macedonian people would be rewarded with at least recognition and some basic human rights? But no, the Macedonian people were again entangled in another foreign war, the so-called Greek Civil War, which almost exterminated them from their ancestral homes and lands. This was a very tricky war but I want to say a few things about the Macedonian people and what happened to them during World War II, before we get into the Greek Civil War.

The Macedonian involvement in World War II was not about “Communist ideologies” or about alliances or obligations to the Great Powers. It was simply the next stage in the long struggle for “liberation from oppression” and to fulfill a longing for freedom, re-unification and self-rule. The Macedonian contribution in fighting against Fascism is not only under-emphasized but also misinterpreted by historians.

I will once again say that the Macedonian people, during the Second World War, rose on the democratic side and fought against fascism for the liberation of the states in which they lived. The Macedonian people, like other people in the Balkans, fought to liberate their homeland and thus earn their place in the world. This cannot be ignored and must be recognized and recorded in the annals of history.

Word of a Macedonian Partisan movement in Greek occupied Macedonia spread like wildfire. People came out in the streets to freely speak their native Macedonian language, to sing songs and write Macedonian plays and poetry. The Partisans even set up Macedonian schools and taught children patriotic songs, poems and Macedonian history, using local Macedonian dialects. The younger generations, for the first time, saw written words in their beloved, sacred Macedonian language. The newfound freedom brought happiness to the lives of the oppressed Macedonian people who welcomed the Partisans into their villages as “our own boys and

girls". The newfound confidence and strength projected by the Macedonians terrified the Greeks, especially the gendarmes and the collaborators.

The Germans and Italians did not care one way or another about Macedonian affairs as long as there was no trouble for them. Macedonian interest in Partisan activities continued to climb, bringing new recruits and volunteers to the cause. Youth organizations were created with young men and women recruited to be the eyes and ears of the community and to help defend the villages. Many young volunteers of military age were recruited and trained to perform policing and civic duties in the newly formed organizations.

But once the war (WWII) was over the Macedonian people were betrayed again. In their zeal to divide the world into spheres of influence, Stalin and Churchill decided to put Greece under British influence even though Greece, at the time, was in communist hands.

After this deal was made Britain asked Greece to disarm the partisans and get rid of the Macedonians. It's not hard to believe that Churchill would want Greece out of communist hands, but it is hard for Macedonians to believe that he would want the Macedonians out of Greek occupied Macedonia.

Ideologically I would estimate that Greece during WW II was 80% pro-communist. The groups that established the resistance movements were all communist organized and so were the armed units of ELAS (the Greek resistance army) which included Macedonian fighters.

So, what exactly happened and why didn't the Macedonian people in Greek occupied Macedonia gain their rights as Macedonians, like the people in the People's Republic of Macedonia?

## **The great deceit - the Greek Civil War**

As I mentioned earlier, the Communist International (Comintern) was obliged to consider concessions like offering the Macedonian people autonomy and the right to self-determination or at least recognize the Macedonian nation with full rights and privileges. The Comintern saw the Macedonian people as a potentially strong ally that could be persuaded to rally for its cause. This was opposite to earlier considerations made by the monarchist families in Europe and the Western Great Powers whose aims were to “partition” Macedonia and “assimilate” the Macedonian people into the nations which annexed Macedonian territories in an attempt to erase them. It is important to understand that the Macedonian territories and people were “divided” with the blessing of the European monarchies and the Great Powers. The annexation of territories was expected but the “total assimilation” of the Macedonian nation into three and later four different parts was not only unexpected but unprecedented. It was meant to destroy the Macedonian nation and erase it from history. So, here we have two opposing forces working against each other; one “helping” the Macedonian people for its own interests and the other “destroying” them for its own interests. Which one would you choose? The more enlightened Macedonians chose those who offered to help them!

When the issue about the “Macedonian question” and what to do with the Macedonians was raised by the Comintern, the communists and so-called progressive Greeks, who until now denied or kept quiet about the existence of the Macedonian people, did admit that “Macedonians still existed” in Greece, despite all attempts to forcibly Hellenize and assimilate them. The Greek communists made a promise to the Comintern that the Macedonian people would achieve equal rights as one of the peoples living in democratic Greece.

But when the time came for these “promises” to be implemented, the Greek communists did their best to stall and avoid the issue altogether.

There was also the Atlantic Decree which offered self-determination to anyone who fought against Fascism on the side of the Allies and

the Macedonian people in Greek occupied Macedonia did fight against the Fascists on the side of the Allies. So, if the Greeks were to “recognize” the Macedonian nation living in Greek occupied Macedonia, as a unique nation, then following the principles of the Atlantic Charter they would have to give them their freedom to choose their own destiny.

According to the five principles of the Atlantic Charter, all people who fought to liberate their lands from the Fascist occupier had the right to fight for their national freedom and create their own state. The Macedonians took up arms to do exactly that, to achieve the right to free themselves. The Macedonians were prepared to die to the last man to achieve exactly that. But even though they fulfilled the Atlantic Charter requirements for self-determination, by willfully and voluntarily fighting against the occupiers and disarming the Fascist groups inside Greece, the Macedonian Partisans in Greek occupied Macedonia received no recognition and no rewards. In fact they were treated as if they did not exist as Macedonians. To the outside world they were Greeks. Even when the Macedonians fought against the fascist Italians in the front in Albania they were presented to the world as Greeks. The vast majority of soldiers who fought against the Italian invasion of Greece were Macedonians, the first to be sent to the front, yet not a word was mentioned about them in the international press then or in western history books afterwards.

No one can dispute the fact that it was the Macedonians who disarmed and disbanded the so-called Fascist counter-bands armed by the German, Italian and Bulgarian occupiers just as no one can dispute that proportionally more Macedonian fighters joined the liberation struggle against these fascist occupiers and fought harder than the Greeks to drive them out. Yet still the Macedonians received no recognition and no reward; not even a mention in history.

The Atlantic Charter offered the Macedonian people a country of their own which could have separated from Greece. Unfortunately no Greek or Englishman was willing to see Macedonia leave Greece. No Greek, communist or not, was going to say “I am going to help give Macedonia away...”

So if no Greek or Englishman was prepared to allow an independent Macedonia then the least they could have done was create a federal Greece, just like federal Yugoslavia. But then again, we must remember that the Western Great Powers of today, with the exception of the United States, were the same Western Great Powers who wanted to erase everything that was Macedonian and went through a lot of effort to Hellenize the Macedonians and break their spirit in Greek occupied Macedonia. The United States of America later took on England's role to drive the Macedonian people out of Greek occupied Macedonia by actively supporting the Greek government in the so-called Greek Civil War.

It is most unfortunate that the Greeks have this inherent fear, introduced to them by the Western Great Powers and magnified by the Metaxas regime, that somehow the "Slavs", meaning the indigenous Macedonians, are going to "steal" their precious Macedonia and that they are not to be trusted. And basically everything after that took a turn for the worse for the Macedonian people in Greek occupied Macedonia.

This became apparent when representatives from the communist parties of Greece, Albania and Yugoslavia met several times and signed a number of agreements. The agreement signed on June 20, 1943, among other things, said:

"The representatives from these countries have unanimously pointed out the fact that, given the significant rise in the national liberation struggle in the Balkans, today's conditions require the immediate establishment of mutual co-operation between the national liberation forces in all the Balkan countries in a patriotic struggle for the liberation of the oppressed Balkan peoples. The representatives agree in principle that it is necessary not only to establish mutual cooperation but to also, above all, establish unity of action involving all the national liberation forces in the Balkan countries by creating a single command under one chief general staff. All the representatives are aware of the historical significance of forming a General Balkan Headquarters, which would amplify the struggle of the Balkan peoples who are fighting for their liberation. Forming one General Staff would make it possible to stamp out chauvinistic

tendencies and will contribute to strengthening the convergence and twinning of the Balkan peoples. It will provide new forces in the struggle for a final and universal victory of true democracy in the Balkan countries. It will also eliminate all the difficulties and, after the fascist occupiers are expelled from the Balkans, will pave the way for the creation of a Balkan federation...” (The original document, written in French, can be found in the Republic of Macedonia Archives in Skopje.)

However, shortly thereafter, the first CPG Central Committee secretary denounced the document and declared it invalid..., just like he did with the other agreed and signed documents...

So, instead of looking to the north, to Russia, the Communist Party of Greece (CPG) decided to look towards England. Namely, the CPG put ELAS, its armed forces, under English control. ELAS was placed under the command of the Middle East English General Staff. According to G.D. Kiriakidis, (Civil War in Greece, p. 17), Sarafis, then ELAS Supreme Commander, signed a joint declaration with Eddie Myers, Chief of the English military mission and representative of the English general headquarters for the Middle East, on July 5, 1943. In his book “ELAS”, Sarafis wrote: “We signed a Declaration that made ELAS an allied army and placed it under the command of the Middle East General Staff. The operations it will perform will be executed on orders given by English General Headquarters...” (Stefanos Sarafis: ELAS, p. 120.)

After this all ELAS units were restricted from doing their functions and systematically prevented from growing and conducting combat engagements. According to Vasilis Bardzhotas, member of the CPG Central Committee Politburo, “large ELAS units, ELAS divisions and groups of ELAS divisions, were all placed in the hands of the British Intelligence Service...” (Vasilis Bardzhotas, “CPG staffing policy during the National Liberation War”, Neos Cosmos, no. 9, 1950.)

Another, similar, Agreement was also signed on July 18, 1943, between Eddy Myers of the Middle East General Headquarters, and Vasilis Samariniotis (A. Dzhimas), Stefanos Sarafis and Aris

Velouhitis, representatives of EAM, the Greek national liberation organization and ELAS.

Based on this Agreement, the EDES quisling forces which cooperated with the Nazis, led by Colonel Napoleon Zervas, and those of EKKA, led by Colonel Psaros, were to also be placed under English command. Originally EDES and EKKA were organized by the bourgeoisie and the English to fight against EAM and ELAS. According to Sarafis: “On June 21, 1943, EDES units accompanied by English officers entered our territory around Gotista and Kalama-Filiates, and there, especially around Filiates, liquidated our organizations, arrested and abused EAM members and even committed murder... In my opinion, by doing this, English Majors Chris and Miller, for political purposes, wanted to expand Zervas’s territory to include the whole of Epirus and, once reinforced, be used against ELAS. This English tendency and Zervas’s actions resulted in many ELAS - EDES clashes which ultimately led to their great collision in October 1943.” (Sarafis, ELAS, pp. 122-123.) Again, according to Sarafis: “These covert forces, which even cooperated with the occupiers against EAM and ELAS, were recognized by the English as forces that fought against the occupiers. And there was more to it than that. A joint headquarters was set up for all of them...” According to Sarafis: “ELAS demanded that Colonel Eddie Myers create the joint headquarters to include Sarafis, Aris, Samariniotis, Zervas, and Psaros.” (Sarafis, ELAS, p. 111.) In other words, the Greek communists “demanded” that the English include the fascists, their arch enemy, in the same headquarters as themselves. That is, communists and fascists working together under English control.

At this point one would have to ask themselves why would the Communist Party of Greece align itself with the fascists and Western capitalists, its supposed enemy, and work against the interests of the communist Balkan nations, its supposed allies...?

By doing this, almost a year before the Lebanon Agreement was signed, the CPG leadership officially and practically acknowledged the English right to lead the struggle in Greece and interfere in Greece’s internal affairs. Accordingly, to say that “an accidental error” was somehow made during the talks in Lebanon was

completely pointless, and only served to blur and conceal the historical truth. The top CPG leadership was responsible for systematically implementing “treacherous policies” right from the very beginning...

The Greek resistance leadership signed an agreement on May 20<sup>th</sup>, 1944 in Lebanon to form a coalition government with other civilian parties from Greece. The agreement however was viewed with suspicion by the Macedonians because much of its content was insulting and demeaning to the Macedonian people. The agreement called for disarming the Macedonian people and was interpreted as a means to destroy the Macedonian national liberation movement. The Lebanon agreement was the end result of the so-called “national unity” with other Greek parties, including the parties in the political right, which the CPG so desperately desired to create. Here one has to wonder why the Greek communists wanted to include their natural enemy the political right, in the so-called “unity” and not its ally the Macedonian movement. Was it because this is what England wanted? Was it because England wanted to legitimize the former quislings and vilify the Macedonians?

While the Macedonian people who once lived under Serbian occupation achieved their human rights just like the Atlantic Charter promised, the Macedonians in Greece not only lost their promised rights but, in the long run, lost their homes and became exiled and drifters in this world.

Before we continue with the story of what happened to the Macedonian people, I want to take a moment to explain why it happened and who the architects behind it were. I will provide evidence to back my claims.

Allow me to come right out and just say it:

I believe the Greek Civil War was not a Greek Civil War at all, I believe that it was a war perpetrated against the Macedonian people in Greek occupied Macedonia to get rid of them once and for all.

This is hard to believe, right?

Well, it is also hard to believe that millions of Jews were murdered in gas chambers and that two atomic bombs were dropped on Japan, on a civilian population. But these atrocities did happen. So why is it so hard to believe that the Greek Civil War was a perpetrated war; a means to get rid of the Macedonian people from Greek occupied Macedonia?

Intentional and controlled wars concocted and supported by the Great Powers have been a common occurrence in our world for many years.

We have experienced several planned genocides in the last century or so alone and these have been masked by concocted wars. Acts perpetrated against the Macedonian people were no secret; look at what happened in 1912 and 1913, when Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria invaded, occupied and partitioned Macedonia and annexed its territories. Everyone knew about it, the Great Powers knew about it, but did nothing to prevent it or to punish the perpetrators. Why? Because the Great Powers themselves sanctioned everything that happened in Macedonia, including its partition and annexation.

These acts of genocide were purposely committed by Greece against the Macedonian people in an effort to eradicate them. Genocide was committed in Macedonia while the Western Great Powers looked on. What actually prevents us from seeing the truth is our own inability to see that this truly happened to us under the watchful eyes of the world. There are people today who still believe that the Great Powers who signed our death warrant are our friends. So, believe me when I tell you that Macedonia has been under the Great Power radar for a long time, perhaps stretching as far back as Roman times, with one intention in mind; to eradicate us.

Unfortunately for generations we have been programmed to believe that Greece, Serbia, Bulgaria and Albania alone are doing this to us... Even in moments when we witness atrocities for ourselves, we still believe that the Great Powers are our friends... Unfortunately it is our own value system that is keeping us from seeing the truth and as long as we allow our own blind and naïve values to guide us, we will be willing victims.

Let us face some facts: The English never wanted a Macedonian state to exist in the Balkans and did their best to stop it from becoming one. After they instigated the Greeks to take appropriate measures to “eliminate” the Macedonians, they continued to look the other way, that is, until World War II broke out and the Macedonians began to openly surface in Greece. Fearing that these Macedonians might get in the way of their future interests in the region and in the Mediterranean in general, the English decided to take “drastic measures” to remove them from Greek occupied Macedonia, in other words, to remove them from their own ancestral homeland.

Here I have an English secret diplomatic report that outlines the problem and the measures that needed to be taken to remove the Macedonians from Greek occupied Macedonia.

Start of report: [Balkan States – Report 1 - December 11, 1944

Mr. Leeper to Mr. Eden  
Athens 24<sup>th</sup> November, 1944

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to submit the following comments on Research Department paper of the 26<sup>th</sup> August, 1944, on the subject of Macedonia. (1)

2. The two formidable Macedonian problems in which Greece is concerned are: (a) that of Greek relations with the Slav world as represented by Serbia and Bulgaria, both of whom must be expected in the immediate future to be under strong Russian influence and to have Russian sympathy for their aspirations; and b) that of the surviving Bulgarophone minority in Western Macedonia.

3. The former problem turns chiefly on that of Serbian and Bulgarian access to the Aegean, the subject discussed in paragraphs 35-40 and 41-43 of the paper under reference. There is clearly no case for handing over to Slav Powers any part of the North Aegean coast, which in 1940 had nowhere anything but an infinitesimal minority of Slav inhabitants. On the other hand, the strategic

position of Greece here, even with Turkish backing, is very weak, vis-à-vis the Slav world, so that even in her own interests it behooves Greece to come to terms with her northern neighbours. The only possible solution-however difficult in practice under present conditions-seems to be that referred to in paragraph 51, namely, a return to, and preferably an extension of, the system of free zones. A Serbian free zone at Salonica is not difficult, but a Bulgarian zone at Kavala, or even at the outlying Alexandrupolis, would probably be out of the question for a considerable period to come, in view of the passions aroused by the atrocious conduct of the Bulgarians in Northern Greece since 1941. It remains, nevertheless, a Greek no less than a Bulgarian interest that Bulgaria's desire for access to an Aegean port should be satisfied so far as possible; since otherwise Bulgaria's southward political aspiration, which are now largely artificial, will be kept alive by the real and continual irritation of an unsatisfied economic need. (How far this need might be met by the alternative of a free zone at Durazzo is a matter for separate study.) It may further be pointed out that the grant of free zones at her northern ports would, in fact, be of direct financial benefit to Greece herself through the revivifying influence of increased trade on the life of those ports in general and through the restoration of a natural degree of intercourse between these Greek ports and their Slav hinterland.

4. The problem of the Western Macedonian Bulgarophones, who are briefly mentioned in paragraph 7 of the paper, also remains serious and formidable, in spite of its limited dimensions. This minority, which extends through the region from Florina and Kastoria through Siatista to the plain of Yannitsa, has proved exceedingly unreliable during the war. Satisfactory data are not available, but it appears from events during the occupation that the dissatisfied minority must be considerably larger than is suggested by Greek census figures; and it is certain that successive Greek Governments have shirked facing the problem and have preferred to persuade even themselves that it did not exist. On the assumptions (1) that the policy of His Majesty's Government is to treat Greece as the most important Balkan country from the point of view of British interests, and to support those elements in Greece which are most stably pro-British and (2) that Greece does not wish to belong to a Balkan Federation in which there would be a large Slav majority, it would appear to

follow that Greece had better not contain any Slav minorities at all. And since the amputation of the Slav areas in Western Macedonia and their annexation to a Slav Federation is a practical impossibility and would also be economically disastrous for Greece. It would follow that, difficult as it may be, a home must be found for perhaps 120,000 Slav Macedonians north of the Greek frontiers of 1941.

5. I have sent copies of this dispatch to the Resident Minister at Caserta, to Mr. Houstoun-Boswall at Sofia and to Mr. Broad at Bari.

I have, &c. R. A. Leeper.

(1) See “Balkan States” print section, 26<sup>th</sup> August, Section 6.] End of report.

I would like to draw your attention to part 4 of the report, particularly the sentence “It would follow that, difficult as it may be, a home must be found for perhaps 120,000 Slav Macedonians north of the Greek frontiers of 1941”. This was a shocker for me which sent me into a tail spin. Before that I believed that the Greeks alone were doing this on their own, that they tormenting us all on their own. After that I began to look at the situation in a different light.

And why were the English planning to get rid of the Macedonians from Greece?

Well that too is in the above report. Take a look at part 2. England could not stand Greece, its protectorate, being influenced by Russia. Greece had to be under English influence to protect English interests, at any cost, even at the extinction of the Macedonians in Greece.

You see, England still did not want to allow Russia access to the Mediterranean waters and did not want it to encroach on its sphere of influence. It is clear from the report that England does not trust the Macedonian people and passionately despises Russia.

Now that we have established who was behind the idea of getting rid of the Macedonians from Greek occupied Macedonia and why, let us have a look at how they were planning to do it.

The first step the English took was to ask the fascist government in Serbia if the Serbians would take these Macedonians and settle them in today's Republic of Macedonia. The fascist government in Serbia agreed but Serbia fell to the communists and the move was postponed.

At this point the English were worried that Russia might intervene on behalf of these Macedonians. This would have put Greece in jeopardy as mentioned in the above report. And since it would have been a practical impossibility to include them in a Balkan Federation with Greece in it, which England was against, then the best choice for England was to have them "removed" from Greece. But how, and send them where without raising suspicions? After all it was illegal to just uproot people from their homeland because they just didn't fit with England's political agenda and interests.

The next step the English took was to make a deal with the Yugoslav communists when Tito was in charge. But, as the negotiations were taking place the war was winding down and by the time a deal was reached the war (WW II) had ended. To move a massive number of people (120,000), especially civilians, at peace time would have attracted a lot of attention. So a new war had to be started, a controlled war where England would have the upper hand.

The "move" had to be done legally so that there would be no legal consequences for either Greece or England. Unfortunately such a move would be legal only if the people left voluntarily. But the only way people would leave voluntarily was if they were war refugees. So, another war was needed in Greece in which the Macedonians would be involved en masse.

One way to do this was to instigate the Macedonian people to pick up arms and fight against Greece in a bid to separate themselves from Greece by carving out Greek territory. In this scenario Greece would have no choice but to "legally" fight back and defend its territorial integrity.

This had to also be a controlled war to make sure Greece won. If this war was to take place on the territory where these Macedonians

lived, it would create the right conditions for a flood of war refugees. These refugees, to save themselves, would then flee the country. All Greece had to do after that was close its borders and not let them return. Problem solved! And that is exactly what happened! About 120,000 Macedonians were uprooted from their homes, some were killed and many were exiled forever.

But how can we be sure that what I am telling you was not purely a coincidence and not part of this English plan?

First, we have the secret diplomatic dispatch, the English report that calls for 120,000 Macedonians to be uprooted from their homes and sent north beyond the Greek border. This, in itself, highlights the problem and what needed to be done. Then, we have about 120,000 Macedonians, some killed and most permanently exiled, which highlights the solution.

All we have to do now is show how this was done and prove that it was perpetrated, controlled and supported by England. For that we need to examine the architects and players of this war and analyze exactly what happened, how this war was started, how it progressed and how it ended. We need to look at the evidence, the timing and the patterns. But first let us have a look at some critical issues that support my arguments that the Greek Civil War was started on purpose to drive the Macedonians out.

1. On the surface we are told that the so-called Greek Civil War was a struggle to bring a socialist system to Greece. This was a lie because the Great Powers, Russia and Britain, had already decided that Greece would remain a capitalist country under English influence. It was agreed that Greece would remain intact with Greek occupied Macedonia in it. Russia, a Great Power and one of the biggest players in WW II, was in agreement with that. Therefore we can assume that the communists in Greece had no Great Power support to bring socialism into Greece, quite the opposite; England was totally against Greece becoming socialist. Remember: nothing can be achieved without the support of the Great Powers. The communists in Greece should have known that from the start. And I believe that they did, at least the top communist party leadership

knew. But it seems, as it turned out, gaining power in Greece was not their real objective.

Russia's position regarding Greece was very clear: Even though Stalin wanted to interfere in capitalist affairs he had already agreed with the Western Powers that: Greece in its entirety (90%), Greek occupied Macedonia included, was going under the English and American spheres of influence. This Agreement was made in Yalta which guaranteed that no socialist system would be implemented in Greece. The Yalta Agreement was guaranteed and supported by the Great Powers, which means that Greece could not be turned into a communist country, even if every Greek wanted it. So why then did the communists in Greece start the so-called Greek Civil War?

The War in Greece was not about "installing" a socialist system in Greece, it was about legally crushing the communist movement and cleansing the ethnic Macedonian population in Greek occupied Macedonia. The only way this could be done "above board" (legally) was if the communists and Macedonians picked up guns and started a war.

2. Nikos Zahariadis, leader of the Communist Party in Greece (CPG), the person who actually started the so-called Greek Civil War, was a German prisoner. He was freed by the English and sent to Athens on an English plane to take over the Communist Party of Greece. Now ask yourself why would the English send a known and influential communist to Greece, to take over the communist party, especially when Greece was in the hands of the communists already? It doesn't make any sense. It was in England's interest to weaken the communists in Greece, not to strengthen them. The only thing that actually makes sense is if the English sent Zahariadis to Greece to control the situation. In the end, that is exactly what happened.

3. Being in control of all of Greece already, why would the communists sign the Varkiza Agreement passing control to its arch enemy, the English supported Greek government of Athens?

The Varkiza agreement was signed on February 12, 1945 requiring all Partisan and other bands to demobilize and surrender their

weapons. The English, once again, confirmed their allegiance to the Greek Government by giving Athens full political and military support, committing their willingness to fight to prevent a Partisan (communist) victory. The biggest losers of the Varkiza agreement were the Macedonians. As soon as the agreement was signed, all anti-Macedonian laws were back in force and the Macedonian people lost all that they had gained during the German occupation, including the right to form their own state as per the Atlantic Charter. The Greek Communist Party made absolutely no effort to safeguard Macedonian rights in the agreements with England. This was not only a betrayal to the Macedonian people but it also left them vulnerable to persecution from the Greek Fascists. Here again, as was during the 1903 Ilinden Uprising, we see England doing nothing to help the Macedonian people. On top of that everything possible was done to torment them in order to instigate them to fight back.

4. Why was NOF, the Macedonian Liberation Front, created in Yugoslavia and sent to Greek occupied Macedonia to prepare for a new conflict right after World War II ended and before the Greek Civil War had started? NOF was created in Yugoslavia (People's Republic of Macedonia) with the CPY (Communist Party of Yugoslavia) and Marshal Tito's approval and blessing.

The ELAS fighters, the fighters who liberated Greece from the fascist German, Italian and Bulgarian occupiers, who earlier had left Greek occupied Macedonia and went to Yugoslavia, came under the leadership of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia and the Communist Party of Macedonia (CPY/CPM). It was from these fighters that, in Skopje on April 23, 1945, the organization NOF (People's Liberation Front) was formed under the initiative of the CPY/CPM and sent to organize the Macedonian people in Greek occupied Macedonia in preparation for a new conflict - the Greek Civil War.

This shows that the Greek Civil War was foreseen before it happened. It was anticipated. Yugoslavia knew about it and was probably part of it. The top Yugoslav leadership knew about it. And how was that possible? Could they see into the future? The only way Yugoslavia would have known about the so-called Greek Civil War

was if Yugoslavia was part of the conspiracy to start it. And if they were part of the conspiracy to start the war then they were part of the conspiracy to get rid of the Macedonians from Greece.

And surprise, the classified document I posted earlier was dated December 11, 1944, which means that, at the diplomatic level, this plan was already in motion by 1945 when NOF was created. There was no way that England could have gotten rid of the Macedonians from Greece without Yugoslav help. The fact that Yugoslavia put together NOF to start a new war in Greece proves it.

NOF was created on April 23, 1945 before the Greek Civil War was even thought of. The Greek Civil War did not officially begin until March 31, 1946 by a decision of the CPG Second Plenum held on February 12, 1946. It did not happen by accident, it was planned.

After the Second World War, the Greek Civil War was a new test for the Macedonian people. Unbeknown to them the war had a dual purpose; one, to expel the Macedonian population, and for that reason the war was located inside Greek occupied Macedonia; and two, to liquidate the Communists who obviously were grossly misinformed and wanted to create socialism inside the English Protectorate of Greece.

5. When NOF was unable to motivate the Macedonian people to re-arm themselves and go to the mountains, the Greek political right escalated the so-called “white terror” campaign and began to torment the Macedonian population to no end.

The war (WWII) was over, so why was there a need to torment the population? Most people after World War II wanted to end all hostilities, to rest and live in peace. They were craving peace. The Macedonian people were craving peace. They had had enough of wars. That is why the Macedonian people were reluctant to pick up arms and go to the mountains. When NOF failed to motivate the Macedonian people to rise and fight, the Greek reactionaries stepped in and resorted to using Metaxas’s tactics to terrorize the people and get them to fight back or leave their homes and run off over the border. This was the expected reaction.

[“The idea here was to have the Macedonian people raise arms against Greece so that Greece would have ‘no other choice but to defend itself against an aggressor who wants to carve out parts of its territory’! Yugoslavia, for the sake of having good relations with the West, naturally prepared the groundwork through the creation and indoctrination of NOF and AFZH (Women’s Anti-Fascist Front) with aims at starting an armed uprising in Greek occupied Macedonia. The Macedonian people, however, did not want to fight and initially refused to participate. To get them motivated the Greek right, the Fascists, pitched in and initiated what was later termed the “white terror”. Greeks indiscriminately began to kill people and burn properties and homes. Fearing for their lives many Macedonians fled to the mountains (Vicho and Gramos) where they were armed and trained by NOF to protect themselves. And this is how the conflict was started. This was a war that would be fatal to the Macedonian people; it had to be an ideological war in order to involve the international factor (US and Britain); a war that Greece would have no choice but to fight in order to save its territory. This was going to be a legal genocide because these ‘Slavs’ were prepared to carve out Greek territory! The Macedonians were told they needed the guns to protect themselves but as soon as the shooting started they were told they were fighting to ‘re-unite their Macedonia’ and after Yugoslavia abandoned them they were told they were fighting for their human rights to gain equality with the Greeks. Then, when the war became very hot, they were told to fight for their lives; ‘to fight or die!’...”] (Stoian Kochov a fighter in the Greek Civil War.)

There was not a single Macedonian in those days that not only publicly proclaimed that he or she was fighting to re-unite Macedonia, but many Macedonians were made to believe that it was possible to do that! And why do you suppose they believed that? Because the architects of this war, through NOF and AFZH, told them so..., naturally through lies and deception!

Again, there was no reason for starting the Greek Civil War because it had been decided by the Great Powers that Greek occupied Macedonia was staying with Greece. The most likely reason for starting the Greek Civil War, as I said before, which actually makes

sense, was to eradicate the communist menace and exterminate the Macedonian population like the English wanted and supported.

6. During the Greek Civil War: (a) the Macedonian people were led to believe that they were fighting to re-unite Macedonia and to gain their human rights, even though they were robbed of their rights afforded to them by the Atlantic Charter, (b) the Greek people were led to believe that the Partisans were actually “Slav bandits” and, with the help of the “communists”, were attempting to carve out Greek territory and give it to Tito’s Yugoslavia, and (c) the outside world was led to believe that this was a Civil War - Greeks fighting against Greeks.

There is not a single word in Western history that “Macedonians” were actually involved in the so-called Greek Civil War and that they were fighting for their human rights. Why the three different narratives about one and the same war?

The English and the Americans were the “overseers” and “architects” of this war; couldn’t they tell who was involved and what the war was about? According to declassified documents from that time, and I have hundreds of them, the English and Americans knew exactly what was going on and who was fighting against whom. Why then call it a Greek Civil War? Why cover up the truth?!

Even though, proportionally, the Macedonian people were a larger factor in this war, they were never mentioned. Why? Was it done to cover the English plans to get rid of them? To cover up the fact that genocide was perpetrated against them at the hands of the English and Americans? The English and Americans insisted that the so-called Greek Civil War was about Greek communists fighting against Greek capitalists and that the Greek communists were in the wrong and were working against the Yalta Agreement. Therefore this gave England and the United States the right to support their ally Greece to help it defend itself.

[“What do the Macedonian people in Greek occupied Macedonia remember about the Greek Civil War and how do they interpret what they remember? Many I have spoken with remember what they

had done and the events that took place around them. It was an intense moment in time. Human life did not matter much and hardly anyone cared to pay attention outside of trying to survive. A giant wave hit them and swept them away. In their struggle to survive they listened to the guiding voices coming from above and did what they were told! They remember these times as an era of brutal propaganda with destructive goals calling out on the people and wanting more of their blood... After the war ended it was followed by a half a century of fear and silence... no matter where these people were... at home or exiled abroad. This fear and silence kept them from talking about what happened during the war... about the genocide they experienced... a forgotten genocide... an unreported genocide... an un-registered genocide with world institutions and with the international community... a guilt free genocide for those who had committed it!”] (Stoian Kochov).

7. The so-called Greek Civil War was a controlled war that was concentrated in Greek occupied Macedonia and in the rural areas where Macedonians were the majority. But apart from that, what qualified it to be called a “controlled war” was the fact that this war was guided strictly by Greek hands and their English and American handlers.

It would be no exaggeration to say that of the 25,000 fighters mobilized into the ranks of the Democratic Army of Greece (DAG), 50% were Macedonians, most of whom were forcibly mobilized.

Looking at this in proportion, it means that half of the fighters came from the Greek population of 6 million and the other half came from the Macedonian population of no more than 300 thousand people.

So in terms of percentages, the Greek population contributed 0.21% of its total population while the Macedonian population contributed 4.17 %, that ratio being 20 to 1. In the long term, throughout the entire Greek Civil War, the total Greek contribution amounted to 18-20 thousand fighters while the Macedonian contribution amounted to 15-20 thousand fighters. The sum of the armed forces possessed by the Athens regime, on the other hand, was more than 300,000 soldiers belonging to all branches and armed by the English and later by the Americans, with the latest weapons.

Let us also not forget that on March 1, 1947 - U.S. President Harry Truman announced the decision to proclaim the “Truman Doctrine” for engaging the U.S. in Greece. Greece was granted credit and advanced military equipment to equip its government army. At the same time Van Fleet, an American General anti-guerrilla specialist, was made available to the Greek government. (See: Todor Chepreganov, 1997/178.)

“... Immediately after the ‘Truman Doctrine’ was proclaimed, information services were established in Greece by FBI and OSS agents. An American military mission was also sent to Greece. Invited by the Greek government, representatives of the United States began to arrive in Greece in order to assist in the preservation and sovereignty of Greece as a nation. They were there unarmed with aims at regulating material assistance and providing advisory functions. Upon its arrival in Greece however, the American mission took over the most important headquarter functions in the army, navy and aviation as well as the organization and management of military operations, which were established to fight against the rebels...” In other words, the Americans led and ran the Greek government and Greek military that fought in the Greek Civil War.

Given the number of Macedonian fighters involved, the lack of Macedonian leadership both in DAG (Democratic Army of Greece) and the CPG, the organizational tactics, the number of governments involved, the location where the war took place, do you still think this was a grass roots “Civil War”?

Also, given the numbers and proportion of Macedonian fighters involved, don't you think the Macedonian fighters deserved their own leaders? Why were Macedonians not allowed to lead their own people in battle and in the political field? Why was every aspect of this conflict strictly controlled by Greeks on both sides, with the English and Americans pulling the strings... also on both sides? Why were the Macedonians not allowed to fight freely and for Macedonian interests? Why did the Macedonians have to be tightly controlled by Greeks on all sides? The entire top DAG and CPG leaderships, the people who actually made all the decisions, were all Greek. The Greek leadership determined what battles were going to

be fought and where. The Greeks then led those battles. The Greek leadership determined and controlled the composition of fighters in the units and what units to deploy where. The Greek leadership determined how many Macedonians could be recruited and armed; who and how many could join DAG, and so on. In other words, the Greeks controlled this war by keeping a tight leash on the Macedonians and the English and Americans controlled the Greeks. Why?

Because this was a “controlled war” especially designed so that the Macedonians would fail and be driven out of their homeland.

One more thing...

“It is well-known that in 1947 DAG had not resolved either the issue of military supplies or the issue of arming its fighters with ordinary battle machine guns and other battle assets, as well as ammunition. It also remains to be explained why, on the one hand, Zahariadis gave Markos orders to increase the number of fighters in DAG to 60,000 while Ioannidis gave Markos orders to acquire arms for only 4,500 fighters. It is also well-known that Markos, in 1947, ended up sending home thousands of Macedonian fighters who wanted to voluntarily enter the ranks of DAG.” (See: “DAG-strategic issues and management tactics,” G. Maltezos Dzhumerkiotis, p. 354.)

The question here is: If this was not a war aimed at getting rid of the Macedonians, then why did General Markos conduct mobilization only in Macedonia, mobilizing young and old alike? If this was not a controlled war then why did Markos send home thousands of Macedonian fighters who wanted to voluntarily enter the ranks of DAG and fight for their homeland?

8. Speaking of the Greek leadership, let us examine who were the top leaders in Greece who led the Macedonian and Greek partisan forces. Who were the top leaders who led the Communist Party of Greece and the Democratic Army of Greece?

The two top leaders who led the resistance on the communist side were Nikos Zahariadis, CPG Secretary General, whom I mentioned earlier, and General Markos Vafiadis, supreme commander of the

democratic (Partisan) forces. They were the leaders of the political and military pillars of the rebellion on the one side of the Greek Civil War. Both Zahariadis and Vafiadis were Asia Minor colonists from Turkey who were deposited in Greek occupied Macedonia in the 1920's by the Greek government and were given free Macedonian homes and lands. So, why would Asia Minor colonists, who owed everything to the Greek government, turn against the very same people who helped them? Putting it another way, why would these colonists help the Macedonian people when they knew that they were occupying Macedonian homes and lands confiscated from the Macedonian people? Didn't they know that if the Macedonians won the war they would try to reclaim those lands? The answer is, and should be obvious, that they were not helping the Macedonians win; they were helping the Greeks and English control the war to make sure the Macedonians lost so that they could drive them out and eventually take over all their lands. And this is exactly what happened.

Nikos Zahariadis was born on April 27, 1903 in Edirne, Eastern Thrace. His father was employed as a clerk at "Razim", a French commercial tobacco company based in Tsari Grad (Constantinople). From 1911 to 1912 Nikos Zahariadis lived and attended school in the "Ibin Paiko" settlement in Skopje, where his father worked as a representative of the "Razim" Company. In 1913 he moved to Solun. In 1922 and 1923 he worked as a sailor, a job which took him to the Soviet Union where he became a member of the Communist Party. In 1924, with the exchange of populations between Turkey and Greece, Zahariadis's family was moved to Greece. In 1924 he visited the famous Communist University of Eastern European nations, KUTVE in Moscow. Nikos Zahariadis was leader of the Greek communist movement and secretary general of the CPG from 1936 to 1956. Zahariadis treated the CPG like a cult and had absolute confidence in Stalin and his Communist Party, which he believed to be infallible. He himself admitted to this.

Now let us have a look at what Zahariadis's contemporaries had to say about him: Elevation Stavridis was one of the most remarkable CPG leaders who led the CPG before Zahariadis entered the scene. He was a famous renegade and a provocateur who later told us that Zahariadis, early on, had fallen into the hands of the Gligaburg-

Metaxas August 4 dictatorial regime, but settled down nicely in his new position. Stavridis told us this in his anti-party articles published in the “Ethnos” Athens newspaper. (There were a series of articles published in the newspaper “Ethnos” which appeared from May 14, 1951 until April 12, 1952, and which in 1953 appeared as a book entitled “Behind the CPG scenes”). Namely, Maniadakis, then a Greek Minister of the Interior, discreetly arranged “special evenings” during which he invited his most prominent agents... hunters of the communists. Zahariadis also participated in these “special evenings”, and after the feasts gave lectures on how the CPG works and how effective the struggle with communism in Greece can be.

When the Nazi Germans occupied Greece the Greek Asfalia (police) handed him over to the Gestapo and Zahariadis was then taken to the infamous Nazi camp Dachau. According to Stavridis, there too “Zahariadis lived and worked perfectly”. Namely, he “worked” at the Nazi camp headquarters as an interpreter.

After Nazi Germany was defeated the Nazis surrendered him to the Western allies, and they returned him to Greece on a special English airplane, where he immediately became the head of the CPG as CPG Secretary General.

Because Stavridis was a renegade and a provocateur it appears that no one was obliged to take the information about CPG Secretary General Zahariadis seriously. However, a person has to wonder, with admiration, about the fact that this CPG Secretary General, a well-known communist, survived for years in a Nazi camp and managed to return to office? This becomes even more bizarre when one considers the fact that the Nazis, the Gestapo and the SS furiously pursued all communists and shot them on the spot. What Zahariadis accomplished is indeed a feat worthy of a genius (according to some) and a traitor (according to others).

One cannot write something about this and keep quiet and not talk about the unusual man behind it. His work proved to be significant and far-reaching both to the Greek people, the people’s revolution, as well as to the Macedonian people and the Macedonian

revolutionary movement in Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia.  
(Pavle Rakovski)

Zahariadis committed suicide in 1973 while serving a prison sentence in Sorgun, Siberia.

General Markos Vafiadis was born in the village Tosi near Ankara, in Asia Minor, and was planted as a colonist in Greek occupied Macedonia in 1922, a man who we, again and again, meet throughout our history, who for some reason that escapes me, we see as some sort of “great legend”, when it is well-known what he told the magazine “Epikera” about us Macedonians when he returned to Athens. Markos, at best, was an ordinary person; he was no General let alone the great general who headed the army with more than 50% of the soldiers being Macedonians. He was also not a Greek... he was a pseudo-Greek at best, just like Zahariadis.

And to add insult to our injuries, when Markos returned to Greece, after the Greek Civil War had ended, he was welcomed with hugs by the Athens press in the Athens airport, as the Chief of Staff of the armed forces of Greece who fought in the Civil War. At that point a journalist from the weekly “Epikera” asked him a question alluding to the “struggle” and if it was worth it. Markos replied: “The sense was that the Slavo-Macedonians were driven out of the northern parts of Greece and that Macedonia remains Greek.” (See “Nova Makedonija”, February 25, 1992.) In other words, he told the truth that the Greek Civil War was nothing more than a perpetrated war to drive the Macedonian people out of their homeland.

This was said by Markos Vafiadis, the main culprit who led DAG during the so-called Greek Civil War and who contributed to this disaster in which so many lives were lost. He was a colonist from Asia Minor brought to Greek occupied Macedonia. His role in the war was to lead DAG as a General and, as he said “he fought to preserve Greece by driving the Macedonians out of their homeland”... This has been our fate so that the Christian Turkish colonists could have more of our lands and Greece could live in the glory of knowing that Greek occupied Macedonia was only populated by “pure Greeks and Greeks by genus”... even though

none of them are Greeks... But that does not matter! What matters to the Greeks is that there are less Macedonians in Greece today!!

“And this is how this colonist dog, General Markos, was prepared to solve the Macedonian National Question. And we, the Macedonian army, gave ourselves to him to lead us to our death.” (Stoian Kočov, a partisan under Markos’s leadership.)

During the Second NOF Congress, held on March 25, 1949, just prior to DAG’s liquidation, Zahariadis said: “You Macedonians have a right to secession, within a Balkan federation...” But this was not what Russia and Stalin supported.

As mentioned earlier, Stalin had already given Greek occupied Macedonia to Greece and to the English. Stalin gave away Greek occupied Macedonia at Yalta. This was decided between Stalin and Churchill in Yalta and in Moscow from October 5<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> 1944, during the division of spheres of influence in the Balkans. Stalin was clear on this and was very upset when Zahariadis announced during the CPG Central Committee 5<sup>th</sup> Plenum that he was going to create a “United and Independent Macedonian state within a Balkan Federation”.

Was Zahariadis not aware that the Iron Curtain had already been drawn and that ran right through Macedonia dividing Greek occupied Macedonia from the Republic of Macedonia and Bulgarian occupied Macedonia? How then was Zahariadis with his rag-tag partisans going to take on both Russia and England to breach the Iron Curtain? Clearly Zahariadis was well-aware of the Yalta decision but what he said was for internal consumption only. He made this commitment on paper only to fool the Macedonian people, who did not know any better, and got them involved in the war so that he could destroy them all!

This should give you an idea of what kind of people Zahariadis and Vafiadis were and their role working as pawns for the Greek fascist regime and the English.

Stalin may or may have not known about this, that Zahariadis was an English pawn, but he made his dislike of it very clear in the

correspondence files between the USSR leadership and Chernishov, Soviet Ambassador to Athens. Basically Stalin was against the communist movement in Greece because he had already committed himself to giving Greece up along with Greek occupied Macedonia, when he made the Yalta Agreement with Churchill.

Stalin, however, was more upset with Tito than he was with Zahariadis. He repeatedly told Tito to stop aiding the communist movement in Greece not only because he gave Greece away to the English at Yalta, but also because he saw what the Americans did in Japan with the atomic bombs. Whether it was true or not, Stalin knew that eventually he would be accused of helping the communists in Greece which would have been a breach of the Yalta Agreement. That is why he ordered Tito to stop helping the communist movement in Greece. But Tito, for the longest part, refused to obey! Why? Why would Tito prefer to endure Stalin's wrath than stop helping the partisans in Greece? Was it because he "cared" so much for the partisans or because he had made a deal with England to commit genocide against the Macedonian population in Greek occupied Macedonia? We will never know for sure but actions taken at the time tend to point to the "genocide" direction. Tito eventually did stop helping the communist movement in Greece and also closed the Yugoslav border on them, but for different reasons. More on this later.

Tito turning his back on the communist movement in Greece prompted Zahariadis to say the following in a speech he made during the 6<sup>th</sup> Plenum: "... And here we need to openly say that, if provocateur Tito's role was known in 1946 the CPG would not have taken a resolution to take up arms and enter the War. It would have been assigned to another time and by a different method of struggle..." (See "I trihroni epope tu DAG, 1946-1949", p. 422.) In other words, if Tito was not prepared to help the Greek Civil War, Zahariadis would not have started it.

Zahariadis here not only put the blame on Tito for his own failure but also identified Tito as one of the culprits in the disaster called the Greek Civil War.

“They should stop telling us that we need to respect Zahariadis’s Testament otherwise known as the ‘Communist Pledge’ for a ‘United Macedonia’, which was nothing more than a ruse to draw us into the communist camp so that we would be wiped out to the last one! The Greeks understand why Zahariadis did this! Why can’t some Macedonians? Why are they still beating the communist drum and asking us to respect someone who tried to destroy us... to the last one?” (Stoian Kochov)

So at this point I need to ask one more time. Why would Zahariadis and Vafiadis, two Christian Turkish colonists deposited in Greek occupied Macedonia, who were given illegally confiscated Macedonian lands to live on, want to help the Macedonian people liberate themselves? The Christian Turkish colonists were the very so-called Greeks who had occupied Macedonia and lived on confiscated Macedonian lands. What did they and their kind think would happen to them if Macedonia was free of them? Wouldn’t they be thrown out of Macedonia? So why do we think they were “helping” the Macedonians and not “hurting” them? Who can we blame but ourselves if we allowed our enemies, the very people who replaced us in our native lands, to lead us?

About the only thing that makes sense in this scenario is that the Christian Turkish colonists and settlers led us to our destruction in order for them to acquire more of our homes and lands, which is exactly what happened! The Macedonian people were driven out of their homes and native lands during the so-called Greek Civil War and replaced by colonists, the likes of Zahariadis and Vafiadis.

9. The February 12, 1949 battle for Lerin was one of the bloodiest battles in the so-called Greek Civil War, which was unnecessary because the partisans were already losing the war. But Zahariadis insisted on capturing Lerin because, as he said, if the Partisans won this battle and captured a city then they would be taken seriously by the outside world. So the Macedonian people granted Zahariadis his wish... they fought...

The available forces for that battle were as follows: In its composition DAG had brigades 13, 103, 14 and 107. It also had the school of officers, one mining battalion, one sanitation battalion and

one battalion for transferring the wounded. DAG had approximately 5,354 soldiers at its disposal. The government forces stationed in Lerin numbered about 4,000 soldiers. After about eight hours of fighting DAG suffered devastating losses: 334 dead, 1500 heavily wounded and 199 missing.

But that's not the whole story. A lot of the partisans who fought in that battle were local and untrained young Macedonian boys and girls, some of whom I interviewed for my books.

In part here is one of those stories:

“Her final mission before the war was over was the attack on Lerin. After spending a couple of weeks in Karadzova they were told to prepare for battle at an undisclosed time and location. When they arrived at Bigla, they saw that the artillery and machine guns were set up to face the city Lerin but still they were not told when the battle was going to take place. They expected the attack to be a surprise ambush carried out at night. When the order to attack was given, however, it was already dawn and the Partisan frontline was in full view. After the initial contact, the response from the Royalist (Greek government) side was quick, fierce, and decisive. No sooner had the battle started than the Partisans were in retreat. Those like Leffa, in support of the frontlines, were trapped. They had two choices, surrender and face the consequences or run and take their chances dodging machine gun fire. Those brave enough ran and lost their lives in the process. Most, however, were too afraid to run and waited for a rescue attempt which never materialized. By the time it was over, many young Macedonian men and women died, cut down by machine gun fire and buried in a mass grave. Among them was Leffa's friend Trena Boglevska, from Oshchima. It seemed like moments ago that Leffa and Trena hugged and wished each other good luck before they parted company. Trena was working on the opposite side of the frontline from Leffa. She was dead now, cut down in her prime by a Greek bullet. To this day, Leffa still mourns her loss.

In a few hours the battle was over and huddled together with two male officers, thirty Partisan women were trapped in a school awaiting their fate. Leffa ripped off the pins and symbols from her

uniform and threw them away. Soon after, the Greek soldiers came accompanied by an old General. The General went from girl to girl as they sat on the floor, patting each on the head and whispering to them in a soft voice, “You saved your life by surrendering.” The women were expecting the worst, but no harm came to them. After their capture each woman was sprayed with pesticide to kill the lice and was placed under arrest in the Lerin prisons. Six days later, Leffa was transferred to Kozheni, a larger prison camp that looked like a town of tents. There, Leffa endured three months of daily interrogations being asked the same questions day after day after day. Leffa insisted that she was drafted by force by the Partisans and stuck to her story. Leffa is grateful to her brother Naso for his frequent visitations to the prison and for making life a little more bearable.

Thanks to UNDRA, Leffa was given a change of clothing that was a welcome contribution in prison. While Leffa was in prison, her family was working on her immigration papers to Canada. With her record there was no future for her at home. Leffa’s father came to Canada in 1947 and wanted to give his daughter a better life away from the conflict. Leffa arrived in Toronto on August 15<sup>th</sup>, 1949, and soon after took a job in a Laundromat where she worked for two years.” (Stefov/Oshchima, 2003.)

Today there are no graves or markers to commemorate the sacrifice of our fighters who fought to take Lerin, but certainly there are graves and markers for the soldiers of the government army. There is no trace of our people anywhere in Lerin because they were buried in a ditch, in a mass grave; both dead and heavily wounded - but still alive, were buried together in a common grave. This, however, is only one part of our whole tragedy; “Those who were buried we buried everywhere, wherever they fell, most without markers on their graves. Many we left where they had fallen, for nature to take care... we ran for cover to save our own lives... What is most tragic about all this is that we were victims of someone else’s doing... victims of someone who wanted to start a war... the Greek Civil War... in order to turn us into casualties... for their own interests...” said Leffa.

This problem may look complicated but it is very simple... if we open our eyes, set our prejudices aside and look impartially at it, we will discover the truth. We don't need to look at how historiography reflects the facts, because history is written by those who won and who want to change the past to reflect the present; history is written by those who want to put the blame elsewhere... All we need to look at is exactly what happened and ask ourselves "why did it happen the way it did?"

First we were not ready or able as a people to seek justice with fire and sword. But we did anyway... Following the lead of strangers... Second, we were led by Greek generals, the likes of Markos, whose interest was not for us to win the war. In other words, the Greeks who led us had a lot more to gain if we lost the war and were driven out than if we won and stayed in our homes. Looking at this from a different angle, if the Greeks wanted us to "win" like they said they did, then they would have allowed us to have our own generals! And why did we not have our own generals? Why did we need "permission" from the Greeks to have our own generals? Because, as I said earlier, "we were not ready or able as a people to seek justice with fire and sword" on our own! And thus we not only relied on strangers to lead us, we believed their lies until it was too late and we all became sacrificial casualties... for foreign interests.

The end result? Many of the fighters who fought in the Lerin battle were young people from the neighbouring Lerin Region villages. They died for nothing. They were taken and told the fight would be over in hours, they did not need to be prepared... but then they were left outside, all night long... in the cold; they were not allowed to light fires. By morning they were all frozen and demoralized. Most of them were 17 to 19 year-old girls. There was snow on the ground. They were visible as they ran towards the Greek front line. By the time the battle was over the snow had been painted red with blood...

10. One of the most devastating acts in this so-called Greek Civil War, which leads me to believe it was a perpetrated war, is the fact that there was no negotiation for surrender and no exit strategy for the partisans and for the refugees, except to leave the country. There was no plan B, no "what happens if we lose the war". It was always assumed that the partisans would win the war and anyone who

thought differently was a coward and a traitor. Even when the partisans lost the war, Zahariadis spun it and told the fighters to go to Albania to regroup; the war was not over... and they were going to win it. All the fighters left their positions and went to Albania believing they would regroup and return to fight.

Many Macedonian fighters still believed Zahariadis when he told them that DAG was going to win the war and that it was only a matter of time! They only stopped believing after Zahariadis accused the NOF leaders of losing the war, of being traitors and Tito's agents and after Zahariadis sentenced them to live out the rest of their lives in the Siberian camps... Initially Zahariadis wanted the NOF leaders executed but because they were on Albanian soil, the Albanian authorities would not allow it.

The Macedonian people, including the majority of NOF leaders, were completely taken by this change of events and surprised and confused by the development of them being guilty of losing a war they did not lead? They were well-aware of their duty which was to urge the Macedonian people to fight; i.e. to do as they were commanded by the Greek leadership, especially Zahariadis; and they did exactly what they were told! And now they were being accused of losing the war; especially after Zahariadis kept telling them that they were winning it? If they did not trust the Greeks, then they surely trusted the Yugoslavs who, only a short time ago, had passed them on to the CPG and told them to follow the CPG's lead because the CPG would look after their interests? Surely the Yugoslav's would not put them in such a harmful position... at least not intentionally?

Well, no! Or perhaps yes! But the fact of the matter is that DAG was ordered to go to Albania, outside the Greek border and was never allowed to return and fight... and win the war, as promised. Once the fighters and the Macedonian civilian population, driven out by the war, were outside the Greek border, Greece closed its borders. The partisans were completely confused as to what had happened and did not know what to do...

Here is what Vera Foteva, leader of AFZH, had to say about the last moments of that dreaded war:

[From August 10<sup>th</sup> to the 15<sup>th</sup>, 1949 the Monarcho-Fascists carried out a violent, hellish attack against DAG with unprecedented air support supplied by the United States. The poet Atso Shopov was right when he wrote the poem “Gramos” telling us that “no bird can fly in Vicho from the hail of bombs and grenades”. This struggle has been objectively presented in two volumes by Greek historian Giorgos Margaritis, a professor at the University of Crete. Margaritis has relied on the memoirs of prominent anti-Fascists for his source material. The information presented is the best example I have read that describes why DAG aborted Vicho and pulled out of Gramos, leaving the population unprotected and running for its life.

One hundred and thirty bombing runs were made on August 10<sup>th</sup>, 1949 by the American supplied air support using “Dakota” and “Spitfire” military aircraft to bomb units of DAG and columns of fleeing refugees. The next few days the military aircraft did the same, at the same pace, providing air support for the Monarcho-Fascist artillery and infantry. There was not a square foot of space that had not been bombed on Mount Vicho, on Lisets, on Mount Malimadi and in Prespa along the Albanian and Yugoslav border. The entire area had been bombed with aerial bombs, grenades, napalm bombs and rockets and was garnished with machine gun fire by the dive-bombing aircraft. This clearly indicates the conditions under which DAG was placed and the kind of pot its fighters were put in to boil. There was an insurmountable amount of pressure and worry placed on the fighters not only for saving their own lives but also for caring for the wounded and for saving the huge columns of fleeing refugees. DAG was again attacked in Gramos with the same vigour. It was under these circumstances, created mainly by foreign intervention, that the “freedom-loving democrats” of Gramos dropped the “last flag”.

DAG was defeated by the Monarcho-Fascists on Mount Gramos on August 30<sup>th</sup>, 1949 with Anglo-American support. After Vicho fell to enemy hands, Nikos Zahariadis, General Secretary of the CPG Central Committee, said: “Gramos will be the tomb of the Monarcho-Fascists.” But that did not turn out to be the case. DAG suffered numerous casualties but had it not backed down and fled to Albania, the opposite would have been true. Gramos would have

been the tomb for DAG. For the longest part, after removing General Markos Vafiadis from his command and after abandoning the proven military strategies of the so-called “Supreme War Council Law”, Zahariadis worked personally with his Politburo installing new “military strategists” who had absolutely no relevant experience. Units of DAG from Gramos and from other places withdrew to Albanian territory.

The main culprits for DAG’s defeat naturally were Nikos Zahariadis, General Secretary of the CPG Central Committee and his Politburo. But that’s not who they found guilty. Instead of laying blame where it squarely belonged, Zahariadis and his clique pointed their fingers at the Macedonians, specifically at the NOF and AFZH leadership and at the Provisional Democratic Government of Greece. In Bureli, a town in Albania, Zahariadis staged a fake political trial, similar to those staged by Informburo countries. He had the last word.

On October 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1949 we were camped in a meadow under some olive trees beside a creek outside Elbasan. There was a beautiful white building on top of the hill. It had been converted into a hospital for the sick and wounded DAG fighters, cared for by doctors and nurses who were also members of DAG. There were both Macedonian and Greek patients and caregivers in the hospital, they were people who had fought shoulder to shoulder in the struggle and who had suffered and celebrated together. All the anti-Fascists were united as one people then and had the same goal.

From earlier on, October 2<sup>nd</sup> was designated International Day of Peace in honour of the International Congress which was held in Prague on April 20<sup>th</sup>, 1949 as well as in Paris and Tokyo. A delegation from Greece also attended the Congress including representatives from Macedonian organizations. We, the cadres of NOF, AFZH, DAG, Ministers of the Interim Government of Greece and members of the CPG Central Committee were planning and making preparations for that extra-special occasion to mark this day with an appropriate program followed by speeches from several leading cadres, including some from the Macedonian side.

Even before the celebrations began many fighters and civilians began to gather and fill the hospital courtyard. Around 8 o'clock a jeep arrived carrying an officer from DAG Headquarters, whom I did not recognize. As soon as he got off the jeep the officer came in the direction where we were standing: Mihail Maliov, Urania Iurukova, Tashko Hadzhiianov, Gora Petrichevski, my (not yet married) spouse Mincho Fotev and I. The officer knew me. When he came close to me he said: "Comrade Vera, this letter (he handed me a blue envelope) is for you from Comrade Bardzhotas, he wants to meet with you at his place." Vasilis Bardzhotas was a political commissar of the DAG General Staff and a member of the CPG Politburo inner circle. I quickly opened the envelope. In it was a short letter with the following text: "Comrade Vera, You, Mincho, Urania and Hadzhiianov, the moment you receive this letter, are to immediately get in the jeep and come to Bureli" signed "Vasilis Bardzhotas". When I read the letter I was stunned, I froze like lightning had just struck me. I looked at my friends all around me. I had the feeling that something bad was going to happen and I could not get that feeling out of my head; an evil feeling that had been hovering in my head for a while now.

My friends looked at me strangely as I was eager to tell them what the letter said. Mincho became impatient and grabbed the letter out of my hand. I quietly squeezed my words out of my mouth and said: "Us four: Mincho, Urania, Hadzhiianov and I are being called to immediately take the jeep and go to Bureli, to DAG's General Headquarters". There was silence. The message was worrisome to everyone and we all kept silent. A group of civilian men and women traveling with DAG units from the free territory, with whom we had camped together in that place, surrounded us and wondered what was going on.

We told our friend Gogo Petrushevski, a seasoned NOF fighter, that "we were sure that they would arrest us. If you can, leave now because you will suffer the same fate." I also told some of my fellow villagers, my aunts and a first cousin that I was sure they would arrest us. This kind of threat against the central NOF leadership had been "circulating" for a long time and now they were putting it into practice in order to hide the real culprits for DAG's defeat. Despite the threats that we would be liquidated, taken by some provocateurs,

we were and remained to the end faithful to the people whom we organized, fought with, died with and rejoiced with.]

Vera was one of Zahariadis's staunchest followers and she truly believed they were going to win the war, like Zahariadis had told them.

There are volumes of history books written by Macedonian authors, among them eye witnesses who survived the dreaded Greek Civil War, who say that the Macedonians were nothing more than pawns in a war whose aims they did not understand and whose goals were fluid and changed with time. But they all agree on one point; the Greek Civil War was proved to be disastrous for the Macedonian people. This again reinforces the idea that the Greek Civil War was a perpetrated war to get rid of the Macedonians from Greece, just like the English wanted. But, I believe, the 10 points listed above are sufficient evidence to give credence to my theory and to also confirm the behaviour of the players in this war which otherwise would seem illogical.

One of the events that lacks clarity in our history books is why Tito closed the Greek-Yugoslav border at the most critical time of the war when DAG was about to lose the war. If Tito was all for saving the communist movement in Greece then he should have allowed the DAG fighters to enter Yugoslav territory and from there go to Albania to regroup. Many Macedonian fighters who arrived at the Yugoslav border were turned back. Some, in an attempt to get to Albania faster, and perhaps safer, decided to swim across Lake Prespa. Many drowned and many more were cut down by machine gun fire and bombs dropped from the English and American military aircraft flying above them. The Macedonian partisans would have been allowed to enter Yugoslav territory if they were willing to surrender their weapons, which they couldn't because if they did they would be charged with desertion. They still believed they would regroup in Albania and return to Greek occupied Macedonia to fight because those were Zahariadis's orders.

So, after aiding the partisan movement in Greece all those years, why did Yugoslavia suddenly close its borders on the Macedonian fighters?

The real reason why Tito refused to allow armed Macedonian fighters to enter Yugoslav territory was because of his tiff with Stalin. Stalin threatened that he would take the People's Republic of Macedonia away from him and would create an independent Macedonian state with it. And indeed he would have done that, but because of fear of retaliation with atomic bombs from the English and Americans he decided not to. Stalin was very angry with Tito and would have done anything to "eliminate him" but Tito knew how to play the diplomatic game and had one foot in the East and the other in the West. He kept the balance of power by playing on both sides.

After DAG was defeated the entire Macedonian population that aided the war effort, fighters and civilians, were convinced by the communists to leave their homes and flee to Albania. They would have preferred to go to Yugoslavia but the Greek-Yugoslav border was closed, at least that's what the people were told. After they crossed into Albania the Greek government closed the border behind them. All the fighters were sent to the Soviet Union, but when I asked why no one knew. The reason the DAG fighters were sent to the Soviet Union was because, as I said before, Stalin had plans to arm them and send them back to carve out the People's Republic of Macedonia from the Yugoslav federation and to create an independent Macedonian state. But, like I said before, Stalin changed his mind because Tito was playing on both sides and could have asked for English and American help. Stalin did not want to risk starting a new war with the west just to teach Tito a lesson. So he left it at that.

A few years later the vast majority of the Macedonian partisan fighters who were sent to the Soviet Union, not being welcome to return to their homes in Greece, decided to go to the People's Republic of Macedonia. But instead of being welcomed as heroes they were treated as criminals. Just as they entered the Republic of Macedonia they were all sent to jail where they were interrogated, and, among the many questions asked was the question: "Are you for Tito or for Stalin?" Of course the former fighters as well as the civilians had no idea why they were even asked such a question, but God help those who said "I am for Stalin". They were immediately

sent to special camps and remained there until they died. Tito was still afraid of Stalin. Seeing all these former Macedonian fighters coming to Yugoslavia, with whom Stalin had threatened him, must have given Tito shivers...

All the Macedonians who were expelled from their homeland or had left their ancestral homes without permission from the Greek government, including the war refugees who fled to save themselves, were not allowed to return to Greece, not even to visit their families or attend funerals.

In early 1948 as the so-called Greek Civil War began to escalate and move north into the northern part of Greek occupied Macedonia, the Macedonian villages were exposed to constant violence and aerial bombardments by English and American aircraft. So a program was started to supposedly save the Macedonian children by sending them outside of the country until the conflict ended. Over 28,000 children were collected and sent over the border mostly into Yugoslavia from where they were distributed to various Eastern European countries willing to take them. These children too were not allowed to return to Greece.

(For more information on the plight of the Macedonian children please read chapter twenty-eight of my book "History of the Macedonian people From Ancient times to the Present", published in 2005.)

Emptying the Macedonian children out of their Macedonian homes freed their mothers to join the war effort to go and fight at the front. The added incentive for this was that "if they wanted to see their children again they would have to win the war".

Unfortunately it would have been impossible to win the war because behind their enemies stood England and the United States. Unbeknown to them, the only "real" option those mothers had was to fight and die or flee and never return to their homes.

The child evacuation program must have been part of the plan to get rid of the Macedonians from Greek occupied Macedonia because

later, when the war was over, these children too were not allowed to return. Most have not been allowed to return to this day.

Years later some tried to return but Greece (act L-2) would not allow it. Even innocent Macedonians who had not participated 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.

As the war escalated the communists must have changed their mind about saving the Macedonian children and decided to secretly bring some back and have them “killed” by sending them to the front to fight against the Greek army backed by English and American support.

By the spring of 1949 the Greek Civil War became a “killing field” consuming the Macedonian population. Some of the children who were previously evacuated were brought back to fight against the battle hardened Greek army. Children who were strong enough to carry a rifle, regardless of age, were snatched from the child refugee camps in Romania and brought back to Greece. Two of the three groups that were brought back were instantly massacred upon engaging the Greek Army. They were all under the age of fifteen, had no combat training and no idea of what to expect. The third group was spared only because mothers protested against such barbaric acts. The Partisans demobilized the third group before it reached the battlefields and sent the children home.

“About three hundred thousand Macedonian people, organized in NOF from the youngest to the oldest, were actively involved in this titanic struggle between the democratic forces of Greece and the domestic and international reactionaries.

Three and a half thousand Macedonian women dedicated their lives to building fortifications on Mount Vicho under enemy artillery shelling and air bombardments. There were thousands of Macedonian women who supplied the DAG fighters with food and

ammunition carried in bags and sacks around their waist or on their backs, from Lerin and Kostur to the Gramos front. There were also Macedonian women, and even young girls, mobilized into DAG through several mobilizations who, after a short preparation, were sent to the front to fight in the frontlines. Tens of thousands of Macedonian children were evacuated alone and without their parents and sent to friendly European socialist countries.

The first woman to be sentenced to death by a Greek military court and executed was a Macedonian. Her name was Mirka Ginova, an AFZH activist during this struggle.

The men who served in DAG's ranks from the villages in the border territory were all Macedonian. More than ten thousand fighters who fell at the front were Macedonians.

According to official statistics from the 1940 and 1951 Greek censuses, the Macedonian population in 179 Macedonian villages dropped to half, while 46 other Macedonian villages were completely devastated during the Greek Civil War and were not even mentioned in the 1951 census.

Over sixty thousand Macedonians were forced to flee to Yugoslavia and other European socialist countries.

The only people who experienced similar devastation, compared to the Macedonian people, were the Spanish and Vietnamese people. The Spanish people fought epic battles against fascism and the Vietnamese people fought epic battles against imperialism and neo-colonialism. During the Greek Civil War, the Macedonian fighters represented about half of DAG's effective forces. At its peak DAG numbered about 40,000 fighters. And if we compare this to the total Macedonian and Greek population, it turns out that, percentage wise, seventeen or eighteen times more Macedonians fought in the war than Greeks.

It was one of the most massive revolutionary movements in the recent history of our people..." (Pavle Rakovski)

There are many more things that can be said in support of the Greek Civil War being a perpetrated and controlled war, including the fact that Zahariadis refused to expand DAG into its full potential when it was possible and the fact that Zahariadis turned DAG from a successful hit and run partisan army into a frontal army, opening it up for destruction. On the other hand there are fewer things that can be said to support the Greek Civil War being a war of “Greeks fighting against Greeks” in a bid to change the political system in Greece than a war to get rid of the Macedonians from Greece. Facts speak for themselves.

One last thing:

As I said before, after the Second World War ended the Greek Civil War was a new test for the Macedonian people. The war had a dual purpose; one, to expel the Macedonian population out of Greece, and for that reason the war was located inside Greek occupied Macedonia; and two, to liquidate the Communists who obviously were grossly misinformed and wanted to create socialism inside the British Protectorate of Greece.

If we are to accept the “strategic objective” that the CPM/CPY actually cared about the Macedonian people in Greek occupied Macedonia, then why did the highest Yugoslav bodies oppose the slogan: “Turn all weapons towards Solun...” i.e. “To Solun and not to the Srem front!” All Macedonian soldiers and officers who demonstrated for going to Solun were ruthlessly punished, jailed and many murdered. This was done by the Yugoslavs against their own army, the army that Tito himself created. This, obviously, was done because Tito and Yugoslavia were “well-aware” of the Yalta Agreement and the division of spheres of influence and that Solun was untouchable because it had already been decided by the Great Powers that Solun would stay in Greece and that Greece fell under the British sphere of influence. Knowing all this, then why would Tito, through the CPM/CPY, only three months later change his position and approve a plan for the Macedonians “...to struggle to attain national rights and the right to self-determination for the Macedonian people living in Greek occupied Macedonia” being fully aware of the consequences that may result from the Yalta Agreement and the division of spheres of influence?

Just knowing “what happened” does not explain the absurdity of what our Yugoslav supported Macedonian mainstream history has recorded, mainly that NOF was created “...to struggle to attain national rights and the right to self-determination for the Macedonian people living in Greek occupied Macedonia”. Our mainstream history has led us to believe that this was NOF’s “actual” objective, when in fact this was incorrect. The fact of the matter is that the architects and planners of the Macedonian people’s demise, since the beginning, needed NOF to rally the Macedonian people. They needed NOF to re-awaken the Macedonian people’s old national feelings and rally them to join the struggle quickly and in massive numbers. The real objective for NOF was to involve the entire Macedonian population in the war effort in Greek occupied Macedonia, so that Greece and its allies England and the United States would deal with them appropriately in accordance with their interests. During this period until November 21, 1946, according to our scant information, NOF managed to organize 5 large regions, 10 districts, 3 urban areas and 32 small regions and staff them with 120 professional NOF, NOMS and AFZH people. In the entire region of Greek occupied Macedonia, NOF managed to organize 220 villages with more than 170 rural and urban organizations staffed by 4,832 NOMS members and 2,201 AFZH Macedonian and Vlach women members. In August, over 100 fighters were acting in the area of Vicho and more than 500 NOF partisans acted in Central and Western Greek occupied Macedonia. The NOF partisans were deployed as follows: 200 in Kaimakchalan, 80 in Paiko, 120 in Vicho and 80 in Gramos. The Macedonian fighters were divided into small units of 10-15 and larger units numbering 40-50 partisans. A larger group, a battalion, was also formed in Voden Region. (Kiriazovski, 1985/143.)

We simply don’t know whether the NOF leadership believed it or not, or whether anyone in NOF had any reservations about its objective “...to struggle to attain national rights and the right to self-determination for the Macedonian people living in Greek occupied Macedonia”, but from the events that followed, NOF would, in part, be responsible for creating a local hotspot for a future war in Greek occupied Macedonia. How this war was going to be started was yet

unknown. NOF's initial task was to establish itself in Greek occupied Macedonia.

At this point we need to ask ourselves: "Why would the CPM/CPY encourage NOF to prepare for war in Greek occupied Macedonia in order "...to struggle to attain national rights and the right to self-determination for the Macedonian people living in Greek occupied Macedonia", when Tito and the CPM/CPY communists were fully aware of the signed Varkiza Agreement under which the political left had handed over power to the political right? Why would the CPM/CPY encourage NOF to prepare for war in Greek occupied Macedonia when, on October 1944, Stalin and Churchill decided that Greece would fall under British and American influence? We Macedonians, including NOF, may not have known about these agreements but the CPM, CPY and the CPG certainly knew. They certainly knew that what they were proposing: "...to struggle to attain national rights and the right to self-determination for the Macedonian people living in Greek occupied Macedonia" would be impossible under the conditions that existed at that time. And, of course, there was that "surprise" statement made by Marshal Tito in Moscow for the New York Times during which he said: "If the Macedonians in Greece express a desire to unite with the Macedonians in Yugoslavia, then we will respect their wishes." And how should we interpret this statement made by Tito when, at a meeting with Stergios Anastasidis, member of the CPG Central Committee Politburo, held in Belgrade on September 15, 1944, Tito himself said: "Yugoslavia has no pretensions and no claims on Greek Macedonia and the whole campaign about this unification has nothing to do with anything, it is just an opinion. You can share this news with the Greek people and let them know that we have no claims on Greek Macedonia. The question of changing borders is now in international hands and we should not be rushing that issue..."

## **Civil War in Greece – An outsider’s perspective**

In order to understand the events of the year 1947, which proved to be the decisive turning point of the post-war period, it is necessary to view them against the background of the civil war in Greece. For it was this civil war which provided Truman with the occasion to declare that the world was divided between alternative ‘ways of life’ and to proclaim an ideological crusade against the un-American way.

When the Second World War ended in Greece in 1944, the EAM, or National Liberation Front, was in control of nearly the whole country. In the words of one recognized authority:

By the time of liberation, EAM numbered about two million members, out of a total population of over seven million. They were incomparably superior to all rivals in their organization and enthusiasm, and had every reason to suppose that once the Germans were out of the way that they would be able to take over undisputed control. There seemed nothing that could hope to stand against them. (William H. McNeill, *The Greek Dilemma 1947*, p. 111. cf. also L. S. Stavrinou, *The Balkans Since 1453*, 1961, p. 807)

Among the leaders of EAM were many liberals and social democrats, but the Communists were clearly dominant. Had the issue of Greek sovereignty been left to be contested between this force and the returning Greek Army (controlled by monarchist officers), the outcome would have been an EAM victory. But EAM was not allowed to reap this victory. For aligned against them were not merely the discredited monarchists, but also the British forces. ‘The decisive factor in the ensuing struggle for power was the British Army, which entered the country as the Germans left.’ (Smith, *op. cit.*, pp. 232-4. cf. also Hugh Seton-Watson, *The Pattern of Communist Revolution*, 1960. ‘This was a defeat for the Greek Communists, and it was not due to factors within Greece, but to British intervention: without British action Greece would have had the same regime as Yugoslavia’ (p. 217).) EAM had entered the cabinet of a government of National Unity in 1944, and only resigned (on 2 December) when an order was issued by the British commanding general (Scobie) for all resistance movements and

most pointedly the largest of these, EAM, to disarm. On 4 December, police fired on an authorized public demonstration by EAM supporters in which 'women and children predominated' killing several of the demonstrators. This act triggered the civil war. (McNeill, *ibid.*, pp. 132, 138) Reinforced by two divisions from North Africa, the British mounted an all-out offensive using tanks and planes and on 12 February 1945, the beaten Greeks surrendered and yielded up their arms.

One would prefer to be generous to the British and say that they attempted to bolster what middle-way and democratic forces there were in order to create compromise and a basis for democracy. Unfortunately there seems little evidence to support this, and one is forced to conclude that the British were determined to break EAM and install in power the discredited monarchy and its blindly vengeful rightist supporters. (Howard K. Smith, *The State of Europe, 1949*, pp. 232-4) In the panic of the fighting, Premier Papandreou had opened the ranks of the National Guard. 'The whole force of the Nazi "security battalions" enlisted...' A British military commission placed monarchist officers in control of the Greek Army which it was to help rebuild, while a British commission assigned to re-form the Greek police failed to do so with the result that 'largely it remained the police force that had served the Nazis'. Then, with the left subdued, the British sent troops through the country, followed by the pro-Nazi National Guard, to 'pacify' it. 'Thousands of young men fled to the mountains; others fled into Yugoslavia for protection. Revulsion abroad to the right-wing excesses was such that Prime Minister Attlee felt constrained to issue a public protest.' (*ibid.*, pp. 234-5, McNeill, *op. cit.*, p. 150)

With the country thus pacified, elections were held on 31 March 1946, against the objections of Premier Sophoulis, and in the face of a boycott by the left. The monarchists won (although only 49 per cent of the registered voters cast ballots), and seven months later a referendum restored King George to the throne, making the renewal of civil war 'inevitable'.

The ground on which this civil war gained a footing was the incredible social and economic misery of the Greek people and the failure of the monarchist rulers to take steps to alleviate it. The

programme which the newly elected Prime Minister Tsaldaris announced ‘put major emphasis on the restoration of the King’. Everything else was subordinated to this issue. In foreign affairs he promised strenuous efforts to secure the annexation of new territory to Greece from Albania and Bulgaria. Economic recovery he passed over lightly...’ (McNeill, *op. cit.*, p. 197) In the first three post-war years the British poured \$760 million worth of supplies into Greece, but ‘no stone was laid atop another to repair the dreadful damage of war’. While ‘75 per cent of all Greek children were suffering from malnutrition’, the governments fostered by the British placed ‘all tax burdens on the poor’, and one government by selling Greece’s gold reserves to private buyers at the rate of 500,000 gold sovereigns a month depleted Greek capital by huge amounts. ‘UNRRA reckoned that more wealth was leaving the country at the time than UNRRA was bringing in to save the Greek people from starvation.’ (Smith, *ibid.*, pp. 227-8.)

‘Half the Tsaldaris Government’s expenditures was on army and police, only six per cent on reconstruction.’ (*ibid.*, pp. 234-5, McNeill, *op. cit.*, p. 198.) Typical of this government’s methods was its treatment of the labour unions:

...At the end of the war, union elections were held throughout Greece under the watchful eyes of British trade-union leaders. Leftists, with the Communists in the lead, swept the board. On assuming power, the royalist government removed the whole elected administration and set up an executive for the Greek Confederation of Labor with sixteen hand-picked rightists dominating five leftists and with Fotios Makris, a union official of the wartime quisling government, as chief. The five leftists rejected their appointments. With its organization crippled, labor’s position was miserable... There are few modern parallels for government this bad. (Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 236.)

This was the Greece Truman described to Congress in his ‘Doctrine’ speech in March 1947 as one of the ‘free peoples’ that it ‘must be the policy of the United States to support’. ‘Greece and Turkey,’ he later wrote, ‘were still free countries’ at this time, ‘being challenged by Communist threats both from within and without. (Foreign aid for the rebels was, of course, ‘an uncontested fact’. Both Yugoslavia

and Bulgaria were offering them supplies and the safety of their territory 'whenever pinched by a Greek Government offensive'. This was considerably less aid, however, than that given by the British to the rightists. Moreover, the rebels had widespread popular support. When the Greek Communist Vafiadis (later purged as a 'Titoist') launched his rebellion in the autumn of 1946, "Time" estimated his forces at 2,500. By 1948, though the Greek Government claimed to have killed or captured many times that number, the ELAS (military arm of the EAM) was estimated to have 25,000 troops or ten times the original number (Smith, op. cit., pp. 236-7)). These free peoples were now engaged in a valiant struggle to preserve their liberties and their independence.' (Truman, *Memoirs*, II, p. 101.)

With this background in view, it becomes possible to assess the critical events of 1946-7 which surrounded the promulgation of the Truman Doctrine and the formation of two hostile world camps.

The above was written by David Horowitz

(Horowitz, David. *From Yalta to Vietnam, American Foreign Policy in the Cold War*, Penguin Books, 1971.)

I decided to include the above piece by David Horowitz as background information to show that "greater forces" were indeed involved in "guiding" the so-called Greek Civil War, forces of "epic" proportion, to ensure that communism was "killed" in Greece and that the Macedonians were "exterminated" to such a degree that they would never again raise their heads. But it did not end there.

## **Post Greek Civil War life in Greek occupied Macedonia**

By 1950 Greece was taking extreme measures to close its borders with Albania, Yugoslavia and Bulgaria. Trusted Albanians from Epirus were brought into Greek occupied Macedonia and seeded throughout the border villages to act as eyes and ears for the Greeks to make sure the exiled Macedonians did not return home illegally. Greek authorities clamped down on the remaining population and no one was allowed to travel without permission. There were strict rules of conduct put into effect, including curfews. Anyone caught wandering outdoors past dusk was shot on sight. Many shepherds quit their jobs for fear of being killed and left their sheep wandering aimlessly. One little boy had an argument with his stepfather and ran away. The authorities were not at all sympathetic and wouldn't allow the family to go looking for him. The boy's mother and sister went looking for him anyway and brought him home safely at great risk to their own safety.

When the violence in Greece subsided, parents and relatives began to inquire about repatriating their children. Those who displayed some loyalty to the Greek cause were told that their children would be allowed to return if decreed by the Greek Queen Fredericka. Unfortunately this process required connections with the local Greek authorities and a lot of money, money that most Macedonians did not have. Those considered for repatriation had to meet a number of conditions including a willingness to accept permanent Hellenization. In other words they had to swear loyalty to the Greek state and embrace the Greek cause. Children from Partisan families were automatically disqualified. Those who weren't willing to change their names or weren't liked for some reason or another were also disqualified. As the years passed fewer children were allowed to return and requests for repatriation continued to be ignored. Parents and relatives died and still their children were not allowed to return, not even for a visit. All this took place under the watchful eye of the Great Powers yet no one from the west did anything to help the Macedonian children. No human rights violations were ever recorded against Greece by the competent authorities. In fact, outside of the Red Cross in various countries, no one gave a damn about the Macedonian children. It leaves one to wonder why Greece was allowed to exile its own innocent children without cause.

After travel restrictions to countries behind the iron curtain were lifted, parents, in spite of the expense, old age and ill health, made their way out of Greece to visit their exiled children in the various countries where they were living. One woman on her deathbed made her husband promise her that he would visit their daughter in Poland before he died. Feeling his own mortality the man, in poor health, made the long trek and after thirty years of separation saw his daughter for the first time. She said she would never forget her father's sacrifice.

Another woman who let all four of her children (two sons and two daughters) leave during the dreaded May 1948 evacuation also made the trek to Poland to see them. The woman was crippled from a war wound and could hardly walk but knew that soon she would die and wanted to see her children one last time. She traveled by train and in spite of her condition made it to Poland in good spirits. When she arrived, two of her children, a son and a daughter, came to greet her. The daughter recognized her mother and after a long and emotional hug asked her if she knew which daughter she was. Her mother would not answer because she didn't know and didn't want to make a mistake. That deeply troubled the adult daughter who began to weep uncontrollably. She did recognize her son and called out his name but would not answer her daughter's pleas. After a while she finally recognized her, wiped her tears and with a wide smile called out her name. It was an emotional but happy ending for that family. Unfortunately for every happy ending there were dozens of sad ones. One old couple did not have enough money or the strength to make the trip to visit their children. Since then both have passed on heartbroken, with their desire to see their children unfulfilled.

Many of the people I interviewed don't know why the Greek authorities wouldn't allow the children to return. In spite of pleas, even on humanitarian grounds, Greece, decade after decade, government after government, maintains the same policy and will not allow the Macedonian refugee children to return home. All kinds of pleas and petitions have been filed and yet the western world, including the United Nations, is silent on the issue.

After the Greek Civil War was over and all the remaining Partisans were captured or killed, people who were evacuated from the remote villages by the Greek authorities on American General Van Fleet's orders were slowly allowed to go back home to their own village. While many returned to their old homes a few families decided to make the new village where they were evacuated their home. While being evacuated and away from their homes many people lost their furniture, farm equipment, tools, livestock and personal belongings to looters. For most of these people life had to start all over again. As tensions began to ease, the people held in concentration camps were released and began to arrive home only to find their property gone. The Greek authorities, in addition to confiscating the properties of many of those who fled as refugees during the mass exodus of 1949, also confiscated the properties of those held in concentration camps.

My father was one of those people who, at age seventeen, was sent to the Greek prison camps. I often asked him why he was sent to prison, but to the day he died he did not know.

(To learn more about my father's story please read the chapter "The Greek Prison Camps - Nikola's Story" in my book "Macedonians in Greece 1939 – 1949" published in 2009.)

As I mentioned earlier, on March 1, 1947, U.S. President Harry Truman announced the decision to proclaim the "Truman Doctrine" for engaging the U.S. in Greece. Greece was granted credit and advanced military equipment to equip its government army. At the same time Van Fleet, an American General anti-guerrilla specialist, was made available to the Greek government.

With Van Fleet's strategy and tactics applied in the last battles fought in the Vicho and Gramos battlefields, DAG was defeated and ejected outside of Greece.

So, what exactly was Van Fleet's strategy and how did it involve my father?

Van Fleet was familiar with the concept of how to starve a guerrilla army. In order to do that, he said, you will have to rob it of the ability to feed itself and recruit new fighters.

Most of the food and recruits that supplied the partisan army (DAG) came from the Macedonian mountain and remote villages.

To stop the food supply all residents from the small villages were removed and placed in towns and large villages, places guarded by the Greek army and the Greek police. Curfews and restrictions of movement were then placed so no one could move without authorization. This cut off most of the food supply to the partisans.

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 government or was affiliated with the partisan movement and sent them to the Greek island prison camps.

My father was affiliated with the partisan movement. All his brothers and sisters were partisans and fighting in the war. He was the only young person left home to look after the farm and his aging mother and father, so he became a target of Van Fleet's strategy.

So, to starve the partisans out, Van Fleet basically emptied all the small villages of their population and arrested every man who might be a potential partisan.

The people from the small villages were moved to the large ones because the Greeks didn't have enough policemen to guard every village. The move, of course, was done by force.

In time people became demoralized and lived in constant fear of the authorities and retribution from their collaborators. There was a certain stigma attached to the relatives of partisans or their supporters that caused them to withdraw from society and keep to themselves. Those who served in the Greek concentration camps were constantly harassed with curfews, their mobility was restricted and they were treated like spies. Many were followed by plainclothes policemen and pressured to become informants and spy on their neighbours. Strangers were viewed with suspicion and

automatically assumed to be foreign spies. Those who served prison sentences, even though they were not criminals, were treated like criminals and with contempt.

As radios became affordable people began to purchase them and listen to various programs, including broadcasts from Eastern Europe and the Federal Republic of Macedonia. The Greek police became vigilant and on many occasions were observed outside people's yards listening to hear what programs the people were listening to. Those caught listening to foreign programs were accused of espionage. The Macedonian language was once again banned from use and the "M" (Macedonia and Macedonian) word became a dirty word even if it was spoken on the radio. Ever since Greece invaded the Macedonian territory in 1912, successive Greek Governments refused to acknowledge the existence of the Macedonian language.

One by one, all those who came back from the Eastern European countries and who were released from prison left for Canada, the USA and Australia because they could no longer stand the Greek oppression imposed on them. Those who came back from the Eastern European countries had tasted freedom and wanted more even if it meant abandoning their beloved ancestral homes. They remembered how life was before the latest Greek clampdown and now it had become worse. The people had also changed, they were afraid. They were still courteous and kind but suspicious of one another and their spirits were broken. Everyone was afraid, careful not to say anything incriminating as if every word was going to be judged and they were going to be punished. Children born during this time were brought up believing that this was how life was and that it was supposedly the best life one could have. They were taught to understand that Greece was the cradle of democracy and no one in the world was freer than the Greeks. Those who knew better did not dare say anything to contradict it. There were certain things that could not be done or discussed, especially the Greek Civil War. Children were taught Greek chauvinist songs in school and they sang them at home in front of their parents who didn't dare say anything because even their own children could unwittingly betray them.

The Macedonian language again became known as “our” language and could only be spoken in secrecy with relatives and trusted friends. The word “Macedonia” or “Macedonian” was banned from the peoples’ vocabulary and could not be spoken, especially in public. Pre-school children who learned “our” language at home from their grandmothers spoke Greek with a heavy accent and were constantly teased and scolded for not knowing how to speak Greek properly. If a child was caught speaking “our” language in class or in the yard, punishment ensued which varied from being publicly humiliated and told not to speak “those filthy words” to being given a good dose of castor oil.

Macedonian children often sang the Greek songs they were taught in school at home. These were chauvinistic and anti-Macedonian songs about the deeds of the Greek heroes who killed many “terrible Bulgars” (Macedonians)... Listening to their children sing such songs broke their parents’ hearts. Their precious children were unknowingly idolizing the vile criminals and murderers who became heroes by indiscriminately slaughtering Macedonians, their own people...

Some parents, when their children were old enough to keep a secret, taught them that they were a different people, that they were Macedonian, not Greek. Other parents, thinking that it was in the best interest of the children not to know their true identity, allowed them to believe that they were Greek. Their loyalties, however, were never rewarded since it was very rare for a Macedonian child to be accepted as a Greek. They were humored but never accepted as equals. It was not because of lack of loyalty but because they could not be trusted. Discrimination was common practice especially at the individual level. Macedonians were constantly put down and as a result kept to themselves. Sometimes, however, during heated discussions or unavoidable arguments Macedonians did show discontentment but arguments always ended with the Greeks insulting the Macedonians by calling them “Bulgars”, the lowest form of life known to Greeks.

The highest level of education a Macedonian child could achieve was grade six, no matter how bright they were. Junior high was

possible only for the children of those who had shown and continued to show loyalty to the Greek state and Greek cause.

One young man, whose Macedonian parents fought on the partisan side and were killed during the Greek Civil War, had joined the Greek military and afterwards considered the army to be his only family. He was very loyal, studious and hardworking but was constantly denied promotions. He did not know he was Macedonian or how his parents had died. During a military exercise he saved a high-ranking Greek officer from drowning. For saving his life the officer promised to help him if he ever needed any help. After years of frustration finally the young soldier went to the Greek officer with his complaint about being refused promotions. After some investigation the officer advised him that his requests for a promotion were turned down because he was not Greek, more specifically because his parents were of Slav origin. This unfair treatment angered the young soldier enough to leave the Greek military, the only family he had ever known. Disheartened he left Greece altogether and joined his aunt in Toronto, Canada where he is currently learning to speak Macedonian. Even though he speaks no other language, he refuses to speak Greek.

After the fall of the dictatorship in Greece, in the mid-sixties, many Macedonians were publicly encouraged by Greek politicians to leave Greece because “there was no future for them there”. Naturally there was a “future” for others because as the Macedonian villages in Greek occupied Macedonia were emptied of the Macedonians they were filled with Albanians from west central Greece who were loyal to the Greek cause. Also, the Vlachs who originally lived in the highlands of Thessaly and spent their summers in the Macedonian mountains moved into the Macedonian villages and took up permanent residence there. Many of these newcomers applied for and were granted the properties of the Macedonians who left or were exiled during the Greek Civil War.

Macedonians who immigrated to Canada, the USA and Australia at the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century organized village associations to assist 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 speaking their Macedonian language freely in the Diaspora. This, however, 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. The Greeks did this to divide the people. Many Macedonians who participated in Macedonian events and who had relatives still living in Greece were threatened not to go to these events or harm would come to their relatives living in Greece. On top of that they were blackmailed to join the pro-Greek organizations and attend their events. To avoid being harmed many Macedonians felt it was safer to stay away from all organizations. As a result many Macedonian voices were silenced in the Macedonian communities in the Diaspora. This suited the Greeks perfectly and left 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 who 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 they attempt to serve their own interests they suddenly become traitors.

Macedonians are refused entry into Greece at the border points without any explanation. Without consent their passports are stamped “void” and thrown back at them. They do the same to individuals with foreign passports without respect for the foreign state’s property.

After years of living in Australia one Macedonian man decided to visit the Republic of Macedonia. Upon entry his passport was stamped with a beautiful red symbol, a real treasure, which made him very proud and happy to be Macedonian. His visit to Macedonia was so wonderful that he decided to cross over into Greece and visit Nered, the village where he was born. Unfortunately the Greek customs officials would not allow him entry. No explanation was given. But the man already suspected he would not be allowed entry because he was Macedonian. What was most unbelievable and unexpected, however, was that the Greek border officer who took the man’s Australian passport would repeatedly stamped it “void”. The border guard literally destroyed the Macedonian symbol on the man’s passport by repeatedly stamping “void” over it many times until the Macedonian symbol was no longer visible. No explanation or apology was given. The man was not only refused entry, to visit his birthplace, but was left very bitter wondering what he had done to deserve such cruelty.

## **In search of the Modern Greek**

Before we continue with our story as to how the Macedonian people fare in the free and independent Republic of Macedonia, let us have a look at Greece one more time.

According to official Greece, Macedonia, particularly the Republic of Macedonia, is occupied by Slavs who came to Macedonia during the 6<sup>th</sup> century AD. Neither justified nor proven, this claim is used by Greece to negate the Macedonian identity and deny the Macedonian people their human rights. By this Greece is in violation of international norms and standards particularly in regards to the freedom of Macedonians to self-identify.

If the Macedonians are “Slavs” as Greeks claim then what are the Greeks, particularly in view that they both existed side by side as neighbours without borders for over 2,000 years?

How will the Modern Greek identity stack up to the Modern Macedonian identity if placed side by side?

Before answering the above questions, however, let’s examine “Who are the Modern Greeks?”

Edward Blaquiere Esq. author of the book “The Greek Revolution; Its Origin and Progress” on page 21 says: “Among the numerous islands of the Aegean, arise several barren rocks, some of which are however gifted by nature with small and commodious heavens. Of this number are Hydra Spezzia and Ipsara, the two first close to the Eastern shore of the Peloponnesus, and the later not far from Scio, on the Asiatic coast. Tyranny and want had driven some families, whose origin like that of nearly all the peasants, who inhabited proper Greece, was Albanian, to take refuge on the desolate crags, where they built villages, and sought a precarious existence by fishing.”

What is Edward Blaquiere trying to tell us in regards to the origins of the Modern Greeks, “whose origin like that of nearly all the peasants, who inhabited proper Greece, was Albanian”. By the

words of Edward Blaquiere nearly all the peasants inhabiting “proper” Greece were Albanian!

William St. Clair author of the book “That Greece Might Still Be Free” on page 9 says: “The Roman Catholic Greeks, who lived in the islands which had been under Venetian or Genoese rule, regarded themselves as a separate community. The Albanians of Hydra and Spetsae, many of whom could not even speak Greek, regarded themselves as Greek because their allegiance was to the Orthodox Church.”

William St. Clair says “The Albanians of Hydra and Spetsae regarded themselves as Greek” which implies that the Modern Greeks living in Hydra and Spetsae have Albanian origins.

Constantinos Pappariopolous in “History of the Hellenic Nation” on page 73 says: “The concept of the ‘Hellenic’ state as elaborated in Western Europe presupposed that this was to be the heir of the Ancient Greek (Hellenic) world. Since it occupied the same territory and this territory has been liberated after the uprising of the Christian populations claiming to be their descendants, it should -it was assumed- share the same culture and the same language as its ancient ancestors. Indeed, the newly born ‘Hellenic’ state originally based its legitimacy on this heritage. However, it had to undertake a difficult struggle to convince European public opinion of the validity of its claims. Moreover, the German historian Jacob Philip Fallmerayer argued that the ancient Greeks had been annihilated during the Slavic invasions of the Greek lands and the creation of new settlements in the seventh century AD. By this account the so called Neo-Hellenes were nothing more than a mixture of Slavic and Albanian populations.”

Here again we have references that the Modern Greek or Neo-Hellenic population living in the region where the Peloponnesus is today was once a mixture of Slavs and Albanians.

Ironically and despite the 20<sup>th</sup> century adjustments of borders, Modern Greeks today do not hesitate to call their northern neighbours “Slavs” but adamantly reject Jacob Philip Fallmerayer’s arguments which imply that they too are the descendants of Slavs.

In the book “The Vlachs: The History of a Balkan People”, on pages 124 and 125, T. J. Winifrith says: “There are two other difficulties involved in the Turkish period. In tracing the movements of merchandise and men in the Balkan peninsula it is extremely difficult to differentiate the various races involved. Western travelers knew little, Turkish authorities cared less. Even the polyglot Vlachs themselves neither knew nor cared a great deal and until the rise of national consciousness at the end of the eighteenth century were probably happy with the label of Greek which was good enough for outside observers.”

In the book “The Vlachs: The History of a Balkan People”, on page 139, T. J. Winifrith says: “One of Greece’s first and best Prime Ministers was John Kolettis, a Vlach who dressed like a Turk and had been court physician to Ali Pasha.”

Speaking about 19<sup>th</sup> century migrations in the Balkans, in the book “The Vlachs: The History of a Balkan People”, on pages 119 and 120, T. J. Winifrith says: “Elsewhere there is a further source of confusion with massive immigration of Albanians into Greece.”

In telling the story of the Vlachs, T. J. Winifrith gives us important clues as to the true identity of Modern Greeks. In the days when Modern Greece was molded into a nation, Vlachs, a Latin speaking people, and Albanians were the primary sources of raw material for the “making” of the Modern Greeks.

In the “Popular Science Monthly” edited by J. McKeen Cattell, published in 1915 on pages 41 and 42 we read: “Most of the old Greek race has been swept away, and the country is now inhabited by persons of Slavonic descent. Indeed there is a strong ground for the statement that there was more of the heroic blood of Hellas in the Turkish army of Edhem Pasha than in the soldiers of King George.”

In the “Popular Science Monthly” edited by J. McKeen Cattell, published in 1915 on page 42 we also read: “The Modern Greek has been called a ‘Byzantine Slav.’ King George himself and Constantine his son are only aliens placed on the Grecian throne to

suit the convenience of outer powers, being in fact descendants of tribes which to the ancient Greeks were merely Barbarians.”

Here we are told by Popular Science Monthly that not only have the ancient so-called Greeks disappeared and been replaced by persons of Slavonic descent but that even the rulers of Modern Greece are aliens.

In the “Encyclopedia Britannica” published in 1910 on page 465 in the History of Greece section we read: “In 1715 the Ottomans with a large disciplined army set themselves to recover the Morea [later renamed the Peloponnesus], the Venetians were left without support from the Greeks. The peninsula was rapidly recaptured and by the Peace of Passarowitz (1718) again became a Turkish dependency. The gaps left about this time in the Greek population were largely made up by an immigration from Albania.”

I have been told by several Greeks to “read the encyclopedia” and educate myself on the true history of Greece. So following their advice I looked up the 1910 version of Encyclopedia Britannica and lo and behold it corroborates the story that the early 19<sup>th</sup> century Modern Greek population is Albanian. It also tells us that old Greece, more commonly known as Morea, a Slav word for “ocean”, was occupied by the Venetians.

In “Greece of the Hellenes” by Lucy M. J. Garnett on page 32 we read: “The Athenian women are neither beautiful nor well made; they have neither the physiognomy of French women, nor the full beauty of the Roman dames, nor the pale white delicacy of the Turkish women –one sees nothing in the town but ugly creatures with broad noses, flat feet and ill-formed waists. It is because Athens, twenty five years ago, was only an Albanian village. The Albanians formed and still form, almost the whole of the population of Attica; and within three leagues of the capital, villages are to be found where Greek is hardly understood. Athens has been rapidly peopled with men of all kinds and nations; that explains the ugliness of the Athenian type.”

Here Lucy M. J. Garnett comes out with it and spares us no details. Athens, at Modern Greece’s humble beginning, the seat of Modern

and Ancient Greek-Dom, the pinnacle of Greek pride and glory in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was nothing more than an “Albanian village”.

Albanians, Vlachs, Slavs? Where are the so-called Greeks, descendants of the ancient Greeks, inheritors of the ancient Greek and Macedonian heritage?

We don't need to look too far or scratch too deep from the surface to find irregularities with the Greek identity. Even with the scant evidence presented from only half a dozen sources we can see that the Modern Greek identity is not what it seems. So, how dare they [Modern Greeks] challenge our Macedonian identity when their [Modern Greek] identity is artificial at best?

One cannot pay attention to Modern Greek allegations because Modern Greeks are NOT really who they say they are. Modern Greeks are NOT the descendants of the so-called Ancient Greeks as they portray themselves to be. The so-called Ancient Greeks may have been who the world was told they were, which is yet to be proven, but they disappeared a long time ago. I can tell you with much certainty that the Modern Greeks are NOT their descendants. The Modern Greeks are nothing more than imposters and usurpers of the Ancient City State heritage. The only thing they have in common with the ancients is that they happened to live on the same lands.

When Greece established itself as a state and took control of the people who lived within its borders, it published demographic statistics. Before 1926 it published demographic statistics claiming that modern Greece was populated by 98% pure Greeks and 2% Muslim Greeks.

First, Muslim is not an ethnicity, it's a religion. So your first hint here is that the demographic was based on religion. But how can that be? Did they accidentally omit the word “Christian” in between the words “pure” and “Greeks”? They didn't exactly say “Greece was populated by 98% pure Christian Greeks and 2% Muslim Greeks”?

What are we to assume they meant by that, that Greece is populated by 100% pure Greeks of whom 98% are Christians and 2% are Muslims?

Or are we to assume Greece is populated by 98% pure “ethnic” Greeks and 2% “ethnic” Greeks who happen to be Muslims?

Why create such confusion?

I asked many people what they thought this meant, including my own parents. They all, without exception, said they thought it meant that Greece was populated by 98% ethnic Greeks.

“The total population in Greece rose between 1907 and 1928 from 2,600,000 to 6,200,000.” “After the Greek advances of 1912, for instance, the Greek elements in Greek Macedonia had constituted 43 percent of the population. By 1926, with the resettlement of the refugees, the Greek element has risen to 89 percent.” (Page 121, Richard Clogg, *A Short History of Modern Greece*)

According to this new demographic, 89% of Greece was still populated by pure Greeks. This trend continued through the 1920’s even though Greece brought over one million Turkish Christian colonists and settlers from Asia Minor and settled them on Greek soil. But we Macedonians knew that these people were not Greeks because many, about 600,000 of them, were settled in Macedonia. They became our neighbours and when we got to know them we found out that they were Christian Turks and not Greeks!

So the question now was where and who were the Greeks in Macedonia that Greece referred to as “pure” Greeks in the Greek demographic?

I decided to look into this a little deeper. I started with my own parents. I said Greece claims that 89% of the population living inside its borders is Greek. I know all the people in our village and no one claims to be Greek, so who are the Greeks in our village?

There were no Greeks in my village, none in neighbouring villages and none in the region where I lived in Greek occupied Macedonia.

In places where everyone seemed to know everyone, people pointed out the non-Macedonians who they thought might be Greeks. They pointed to the grocers, the shepherds, the bakers the handymen and so on; who they thought might be Greek.

But as it turned out, the grocers were Vlachs, the shepherds were Vlachs, the baker was a Jew and the construction crews were Albanians... and so far no Greeks.

The only other people that the villagers assumed were Greeks were the police chiefs, the politicians, some of the teachers, and the settlers and colonists... but all of them turned out to be newcomers to Macedonia who came from south of Olympus and from Asia Minor. In other words they all came from outside of Macedonia and we could not identify their ethnicity.

Therefore I had to conclude that there were no “Greeks” who were indigenous to Macedonia. And as I mentioned earlier, the newcomers, the Christian Turkish settlers and colonists from Asia Minor who were deposited in various Macedonian villages, were not Greeks either.

So one has to wonder, “What’s going on here?” Where are the Greeks? Well, there have to be some Greeks further south in Greece?!

To make a long story short, I decided to look deeper into the history of Greece but not through Greek sources and Greek propaganda.

After going through about 150 books written by such authors as David Holden, Fallmerayer, Edward Blaquiere, William St. Clair, T. J. Winifrith, J. McKeen Cattell, Lucy M. J. Garnett, James Bouchier, La Pougé, Schultz, Rennell Rodd, Michael Herzfeld, Clogg, Nigel Wilson, G. Droysen (the man who actually created Hellenism), Thomas Keightley, G. Bowersock, Nicholas G. L. Hammond \*, Keith R. Legg, Richard Gleason Greene, William Z. Ripley, Colin Wells, Alexandra Halkias, Charles Eliot, G. P. Gooch, Rennell Rodd, G. A. Henty, Balasz Trencsenyi, Michal Kopecek, F.W. Walbank, Peter Green, Neni Panourgia, Vamik Volkan,

Karakasidou, to name a few... I could find no “ethnic Greeks” in Greece.

\* [Surprisingly even Nicholas G. L. Hammond, the greatest Philhellene historian and author, has admitted that the Modern Greeks are not what they seem. Nicholas G. L. Hammond in his book “Migrations and Invasions in Greece and Adjacent Areas” on page 57 writes, “It was during this period [1206 to 1260] that the flow of immigrants from the western area began. It became a flood in the fourteenth century. They went as mercenaries, raiders and migrants. The great majority of them were speakers of Albanian, but others joined the movement. Whatever their language they were described by the Greek and Latin writers as ‘Albanoi’ or ‘Albanitai’ or ‘Albanenses’ and the reason of this collective term can only be that they entered the Byzantine world through the district which the Byzantines knew as ‘Albanon’. Thus the Vlach speaking Malakasii who invaded Thessaly in 1334 were described as ‘Albanoi’ by Cantacuzenus 1.474 no less than the evidently Albanian-speaking ‘Albanensium gens’ which raided Thessaly in 1325.]

All these authors said that Greece was a modern creation, created from the human raw materials that existed on the Ottoman lands that are now called Greece. There never was a Greece and there never were any Greeks... not until they were created as recently as the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. So how can there be “ethnic Greeks”?

Amazingly after all that has been said about the artificial identity of the Modern Greeks, there are still Greeks out there who accuse me of “lying” for pointing out the obvious. There are still Greeks out there who insist that all these authors from whom I take quotes for my chapters are “simply crackpots” who have something against Greece or perhaps are jealous of the “glorious Greek heritage”, as I am often accused of being!

Now I would like to present the reader with testimonies from twenty different authors, all westerners and all on a mission to HELP the Modern Greeks justify their artificiality who in telling their story have inadvertently confessed to the Modern Greek falsehood.

If you think telling the truth is wrong and an awful thing to do when exposing Greek falsehood then perhaps you can explain to me how you justify denying the Macedonians their identity generation after generation. Macedonians have been denied their ethnic identity, culture, language and heritage by Greeks since Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria acquired Macedonian lands by war in 1912, 1913. For my accusers, which is more wrong, to live a lie and deny others their true heritage or to tell the truth about you?

There is no denying that the Modern Greek nation is an artificial creation created by Western Philhellenes from the Slav, Vlach and Albanian immigrants who over the centuries came to live on those lands after the so-called “Ancient Greeks” disappeared.

To put an end to the notion that this is somehow a conspiracy to “rob” the Modern Greek nation of its heritage, I will present quotes from twenty different authors who basically say that; Modern Greeks are NOT the descendants of the so-called “Ancient Greeks” of 2,500 years ago but rather the descendants of the more recently arrived Slav, Vlach and Albanian immigrants.

(1) Now let us start with Edward Blaquiére, Esq. in his book “The Greek Revolution; its Origin and Progress”, on page 21 we read “Tyranny and want had driven some families, whose origin, like that of nearly all the peasants, who inhabit proper Greece, was Albanian, to take refuge on these desolate crags [the islands Hydra, Spezzia and Ipsara], where they built villages, and sought a precarious existence by fishing.”

(2) In the book “Greece and the Balkans Identities, Perceptions and Cultural Encounters since the Enlightenment” edited by Dimitris Tziouvas on page 5 we read “In southern Albania many Orthodox Albanians and Vlachs were Hellenized during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.” On page 6 we read “It should be stressed, however, that the Greeks as an ethnic community during this period included many Grecophone or Hellenized Vlachs, Serbs, or Orthodox Albanians.” And on page 75 we read “For Kodrikas, and many others, it was language that determined who was a ‘Greek’ for it constituted the ‘national existence’ of the nation. But for the

Phanariot Theodoros Negris, Serbs and Bulgarians were as true Greeks as any other Christian”.

(3) In J. P. Mahaffy’s book “Greek Pictures” on pages 20 and 21 we read “In the middle ages, these Albanian mountaineers have brought both war like spirit, bright costume, and beauty of person, to refresh the Hellenic race. There are still, even in Attica, districts where Albanian is the common language; there are Albanian names famous in Greek annals, especially in the great War of Independence (1821-31), and even among the sailors of Hydra, so famed for their commercial enterprise and their deeds of war, the chief families were Albanian in origin.”

(4) Surprisingly even Nicholas G. L. Hammond the greatest Philhellene historian and author has admitted that the Modern Greeks are not what they seem. Nicholas G. L. Hammond in his book “Migrations and Invasions in Greece and Adjacent Areas” on page 57 writes “It was during this period [1206 to 1260] that the flow of immigrants from the western area began. It became a flood in the fourteenth century. They went as mercenaries, raiders and migrants. The great majority of them were speakers of Albanian, but others joined the movement. Whatever their language they were described by the Greek and Latin writers as ‘Albanoi’ or ‘Albanitai’ or ‘Albanenses’ and the reason of this collective term can only be that they entered the Byzantine world through the district which the Byzantines knew as ‘Albanon’. Thus the Vlach speaking Malakasii who invaded Thessaly in 1334 were described as ‘Albanoi’ by Cantacuzenus 1.474 no less than the evidently Albanian-speaking ‘Albanensium gens’ which raided Thessaly in 1325.

The southern movement of the tribes was on a very large scale. It was also rapid because towns and cities were bypassed (Dyrrachium for instance being captured c. 1368). It had two main effects. It took possession of Epirus Nova, the area inland of the coastal strip from Dyrrachium to Valona; and it sent streams of migrants into most parts of the Greek peninsula and some of the Aegean islands”.

On page 59 of Hammond’s book we read “But the Albanian raids continued and Acarnea was laid to waste. In 1341 the Emperor attacked the offending Albanians ‘around Pogoniane and Libisda’

(Lidisda), i.e. in the central part of northern Epirus; and then in 1355 he campaigned from Thessaly as far as the Aetolia and Arcania and was killed in action (Cantacuzenus 3.319). These campaigns did not stop the flood. Albanians were serving as mercenaries in the Peloponnesus c. 1350, and they and their families were given land there to cultivate.

Other bands of Albanians and Vlachs invaded the Catalan principality of Boetia and Attica, and a great many Albanians settled there as peasant-farmers in 1368 and later years.

The penetration of the Greek mainland which we have described occurred during the hundreds or more years after 1325.”

Then on page 61 we read “Once in possession of northwestern Greece, the Albanians opened the way for other immigrants. Offshoots of Vlachs and Albanians entered Boetia, Attica and Euboea...”

(5) Keith R. Legg’s book “Politics in Modern Greece” on page 48 we read “As early as the 18<sup>th</sup> century, these areas were described as ‘hotbeds of chronic insurgency’. There were few Muslims here; the inhabitants, largely of Albanian stock, were only imperfectly assimilated into the Greek nation...”

Then on page 86 we read “At the time of independence, the range of local dialects was significant; a substantial portion of the population spoke Albanian”.

(6) In the “International Encyclopedia a Compendium of Human Knowledge” edited by Richard Gleason Greene on page 201 we read “Overrun by the Vandals and Goths it [Morea, today’s Peloponnesus] became a prey, in the second half of the 8<sup>th</sup> c. to bands of Slavic invaders, who found it wasted by war and pestilence. Gradually however these barbarians were subdued and Grecianized by the Byzantine emperors. Nevertheless, the numerous names of places, rivers, etc, in the More of Slavic origin prove how firmly they had rooted themselves, and that the Moreotes are anything but pure Greeks.”

(7) In the book “Races of Europe a Sociological Study” by William Z. Ripley Ph.D., published in 1910 on page 408 we read “Since the Christian era, as we have said, a successive downpour from the north into Greece has ensued. In the 6<sup>th</sup> century came the Avars and Slavs, bringing death and disaster. A more potent and lasting influence upon the country was probably produced by the slower and more peaceful infiltration of the Slavs into Thessaly and Epirus from the end of the seventh century onward. A result of this is that Slavic names to-day occur all over the Peloponnesus in the open country where settlements were readily to be made. The most important immigration of all is that of the Albanians, who, from the 13<sup>th</sup> century until the advent of the Turks, incessantly overrun the land.”

(8) In the book “Greece in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century” edited by Theodore A. Kouloumbis on page 24 we read “Primary school children were taught, in the 1880’s, that ‘Greeks [are] our kinsmen, of common descent, speaking the language we speak and professing the religion we profess’, but this definition, it seems, was reserved for small children who could not possibly understand the intricate arguments of their parents on the question of Greek identity. What was essential to understand at a tender age was that Modern Greeks descended from the Ancient Greeks. Grown up children, however, must have been no less confused than adults on the criteria for defining modern Greek identity. Did the Greeks constitute a race apart from the Albanians, the Slavs and the Vlachs? Yes and no. High school students were told that the ‘other races’, i.e. the Slavs, the Albanians and the Vlachs, ‘having being Hellenized with the years in terms of mores and customs, are now being assimilated into the Greeks”.

(9) In Alfred P. Schultz’s book “Race or Mongrel” on page 92 we read “From the foregoing it is evident that but very little Hellenic blood is left in Greece, and that little is so thoroughly vitiated that its disappearance is but a question of time. No race inhabits Greece. The ‘Greeks’ are descendants of races so different that their crossing can never produce anything else than human mongrels. Their ancestors were Greeks, Hellenized Asiatics and Byzantine Greeks (i.e. Hamitic-Semitic-Greek-Egyptian-Negroid mongrels), Slavs,

Sicilians, Spaniards, Huns, Bulgarians, Walloons, Franks and Albanians.”

(10) In the book “Sailing from Byzantium” by Colin Wells on page 183 we read “This revival also allowed the Byzantines to decolonize the Greek mainland. The success of that effort would prove crucial to the survival of Greek culture in future centuries, after the other lands had fallen away. Having overrun nearly all of the Greek mainland, the cities, and the islands, by the tenth century the Slavs in Greece had been converted to Orthodox Christianity and thoroughly Hellenized. Today the only evidence of the Slav’s arrival is the presence of Slavic place names, some five-hundred or so of them, scattered charmingly throughout the Greek countryside.”

(11) In Alexandra Halkias’s book “The Empty Cradle of Democracy” on page 59 we read “Through the end of the revolution in 1830, Greeks, including most of the 19<sup>th</sup> century nationalists, seemed to have had a vague but firm sense of continuity from ancient to modern Greece, though this was not articulated in racial terms, but on a basis of a common language, history and consciousness. In effect, at this time, whoever called themselves a Greek was a Greek. It is because of this that many Greek-speaking Albanians, Slavs, Rumanians and Vlachs were easily assimilated and indeed became important players in Greek patriotism at the time (Dakin 1972, 8).”

(12) In the book “Turkey in Europe” by Sir Charles Eliot on page 267 we read “Constantinople and all of continental Greece were for centuries ruled and occupied by the Romans, and during many subsequent centuries invaded and colonized by Slavs. The crusades and the Latin conquest brought a large influx of western Europeans, commonly called Franks; and, in later times, extensive Albanian settlements were made in Greek districts. Clearly, the modern Greek must be of very mixed blood.”

(13) In the book “History and Historians in the Nineteenth Century” by G. P. Gooch on pages 490 and 491 we read “General interest was first aroused by a controversy as to the racial derivation of the modern Greeks. The war of independence had won the sympathy of Europe; and it was a rude shock both to Greece and to

her champions when Fallmerayer announced that her inhabitants were virtually Slavs. The race of Hellenes, he declares in his 'History of Morea' was rooted out and Athens was unoccupied from the sixth to the tenth century. Only its literature and a few ruins survived to tell that the Greek people have ever existed. What the Slavs had begun the Albanians have completed. Scholars had been so busy with the Ancient Greeks that they had never inquired as to what happened to them. Leake had discovered a great number of Slavonic place names but he had drawn no conclusions. 'I now lay the foundation of a new view of Greek history and of the whole peninsula'. He recalls the invasions of the Huns, the Bulgars and the Slavs, and the second volume shows the Morea flooded by Albanian colonists and finally conquered by the Turks."

(14) In the "Phrenological Journal and Magazine of Moral Science for the Year 1843" Vol. XVI on page 246 we read "Next to them in this respect are the modern Greeks, who, for the most part, are of Scлавonian origin, and, where they are not purely Scлавonian, are a cross-breed in which the Scлавonian enters very largely."

(15) In Rennell Rodd's book "The Customs and Lore of Modern Greece" on page 17 we read "In the last year of the 15<sup>th</sup> century and the opening of the 16<sup>th</sup>, when the Morea was again the battle-field of Turks and Venetians, the occupants of the plains of Argos and of portions of Attica were practically exterminated, and Albanian colonists began to re-occupy the ruined lands."

(16) In the book "In Greek Waters a Story of the Grecian War of Independence (1821-1827)" by G. A. Henty published in 1893 on page 40 we read "With them [the modern Greeks] it would be a resurrection, accomplished, no doubt, after vast pains and many troubles, the more so since the Greeks are a composite people among who the descendants of the veritable Greeks of old are in a great minority. The majority are of Albanian and Suliot blood, races which even the Romans found untamable."

(17) In the "Popular Science Monthly" Volume LXXV, July to December 1919, edited by J. Mckeen Cattell on page 591 we read "The modern Greeks are largely of Slavic origin. They are not the descendants of the ancient Greeks. That noble race greatly mixed

with barbarian blood during the middle ages, was completely destroyed in the course of the frequent uprisings against Turkish rule. Slavic immigrants gradually peopled the country.”

(18) In William St. Clair’s book “That Greece Might Still be Free” on page 91 we read “The Albanians, some of whom were Christian and some Muslim, were torn by this dilemma, and when the need for decision became inescapable, they divided by religion and not by race. The Roman Catholic Greeks, who lived in the islands which had been under Venetian or Genoese rule, regarded themselves as a separate community. The Albanians of Hydra and Spetsae, many of whom could not even speak Greek, regarded themselves as Greek because their allegiance was to the Orthodox Church.”

(19) In the 1910 “The Encyclopedia Britannica”, eleventh edition, on page 465 we read “...in 1725 the Ottomans with a large and well disciplined army set themselves to recover the Morea, the Venetians were left without support from the Greeks. The peninsula was rapidly recaptured and by the peace of Passarowits (1718) again became a Turkish dependency. The gaps left about this time by the Greek population were largely made up by an immigration from Albania.”

(20) In the book “Discourses of Collective Identity in Central and Southeast Europe (1770-1945)”, Volume II, edited by Balasz Trencsenyi and Michal Kopecek, on page 141 we read “It is funny but also sad, to see a social gathering of different Greeks, but is to say Chiots, Cretans, Albanians, Byzantines, Orientals, Ionian islanders and others, where upon the one mixes in Turkish words, the other Italian ones, the other Albanian ones, and in the same gathering, while they are all Greek, they cannot understand each other without the use of a translation or an explanation of each word as it is uttered, with the gathering thus turning into a Babel.”

For those who are still not convinced that the Modern Greek identity is an artificial creation, please continue reading.

Being told that you are a “Greek” or pretending to be a Greek does not really make you a Greek, at least not the kind of Greek you think you are!

I have shown over and over again that “anyone” can become a Greek by accepting the “Greek indoctrination” and that is to learn to speak the Greek language, feel Greek and “pretend” to be a descendent of the so-called “Ancient Greeks”. You can learn to speak Greek and feel Greek as much as you want but you can’t “pretend” to be something you are not! People should not “pretend” to be something they are not if they want to be taken seriously! Acting like you are the descendants of the so-called “Ancient Greeks”, speaking their language and feeling like them does not make you the descendant of the Ancient Greeks! It would be to your advantage to not only learn “the truth” about yourselves but to either embrace it or accept to reject it. Modern Greeks are the descendants of the Slavs, Albanians and Vlachs that immigrated to Greece during the 11<sup>th</sup> to the 14<sup>th</sup> centuries AD and all other people that subsequently settled in that region ever since.

The ancient Greeks that you think of and speak of so fondly died off even before Rome conquered Achaëa (Greece proper) about two centuries before Christ. When the Romans walked into Athens they found a population made up mostly of slaves. These slaves became the new citizens of Achaëa after they were freed by Rome. Unfortunately they too perished over time and that is precisely why Byzantine Emperors and later Ottoman Sultans had to repopulate Achaëa first with Slav immigrants and later with Albanians and Vlachs.

Therefore the true ancestors of the Modern Greeks are the Slavs, Albanians and Vlachs and all others that landed in Greece since the disappearance of the so-called ancient Greeks.

Here is evidence from fifty different authors that proves my point that Modern Greeks today are NOT the descendants of the “Ancient Greeks” and are the descendants of the Slavs, Albanians and Vlachs.

1. “The [Greek] claim to southern Albania rests entirely on the assumption that the majority of the population is Greek. The Greeks

are stated to number 120,000 and Albanians 80,000. But who are the 'Greeks'? At least five sixths of them, if not more are Christian Albanians of the Orthodox faith, Albanians in sentiment and language, who because they acknowledge the Patriarch of Constantinople are declared to be Greek in point of 'national consciousness'." ("The Nineteenth Century and After XIX-XX a Monthly Review", founded by James Knowles, Vol. LXXXVI, July-December 1919, page 645.)

2. "Did the Greeks constitute a race apart from the Albanians the Slavs and the Vlachs? Yes and no. High school students were told that the 'other races', i.e. the Slavs the Albanians and the Vlachs 'having been Hellenized with the years in terms of mores and customs, are now being assimilated into the Greeks'." ("Greece in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century", Editors Theodore A. Couloumbis, Theodore Kariots, Fotini Bellou, page 24.)

3. "The Turkish village which formally clustered around the base of the Acropolis [old Athens] has not disappeared: it forms a whole quarter of the town.

An immense majority of the population in this quarter is composed of Albanians." ("Greece and the Greeks of the Present Day", by Edmund About, page 160.)

4. "Through the end of the revolution in 1830, Greeks, including most of the nineteenth-century nationalists, seemed to have had a vague but firm sense of continuity from ancient to modern Greece, though this was not articulated in racial terms but on the basis of a common language, history and consciousness. In effect at this time, whoever called themselves a Greek was a Greek. It is because of this that many Greek-speaking Albanians, Slavs, Rumanians and Vlachs were easily assimilated and indeed became important players in Greek patriotism at the time." ("The Empty Cradle of Democracy", by Alexandra Halkias, page 59.)

5. "The first Greek who had a plan for insurrection and for a liberated Greece was Rhigas of Valestino.

Rhigas was the author of poems, revolutionary proclamations and a constitution...

In this document he spoke of a sovereign people of the proposed state as including ‘without distinction of religion and language – Greeks, Albanians, Vlachs, Armenians, Turks and every other race’.

It seems that in their minds the distinction between ‘Greek’ and ‘Orthodox’ was still blurred.” (“Appleton’s Annual Cyclopaedia and register of important events 1901”, Third Series Volume VI, page 113.)

6. “There cannot be an Athenian alive today who can trace a direct line of descent from classical times to the present day without leaving Athens. Because of numerous and protracted foreign occupations, true Athenians were a relatively small minority even in the Age of Pericles. In a later period, the city was suffering from severe depopulation and was re-stocked with Albanians. At the time of Greek independence in 1834, Athens was a miserable village with a population of only 6,000.” (“Insight Guides Athens Greece Series”, page 42.)

7. “It is one of a group made famous in the Greek revolution of 1821 by the bravery of its Albanian settlers, in defense of a country which they had never adopted for their own till this moment of danger came.

They brought to it moreover, the hoarded wealth of many years. Albanian captains, Albanian ships and Albanian gold became the strength of the Greek and the dread of the Turk. The successful close of the revolution found them as firmly allied with the Greek nationality as they have been previously alien to it, and there are now no names more honoured and beloved in Athens, no families more influential in its polite circles, than those of the Albanian leaders in the war of 1821, the Tombazis, the Miaulis the Condouriottis.” (“The Atlantic Monthly: A magazine of literature, science, art and politics Vol. XLIX, January 1882, page 31.)

8. “Among the numerous islands of the Egian, arise several barren rocks, some of which are however gifted by nature with small

and commodious heavens. Of this number are Hydra, Spezzia and Ipsara, the first two close to the Eastern shore of the Peloponnesus, and the latter not far from Scio, on the Asiatic coast. Tyranny and want had driven some families, whose origin, like that of nearly all the peasants, who inhabited proper Greece, was Albanian, to take refuge on these desolate crags, where they built villages and sought a precarious existence by fishing.” (“The Greek Revolution; in origin and progress”, by Edward Blaquiere Esq., page 21.)

9. “In reality however, just before the Greek war of independence, most Greeks still referred to themselves as ‘Romans. Vlachavas, the priest rebel leader who rose against the Ottomans, declared, ‘A Romneos I was born a Romneos I will die.’” (“Bloodlines from the Ethnic Pride to Ethnic Terrorism”, by Vamik Volkan, page 121.

10. “Constantinople and all continental Greece were for centuries ruled and occupied by the Romans, and during many subsequent centuries invaded and colonized by Slavs. The Crusades and the Latin conquest brought a large influx of western Europeans, commonly called Franks, and, in later times, extensive Albanian settlements were made in Greek districts. Clearly, the modern Greek must be of very mixed blood.” (“Turkey in Europe” by Sir Charles Elliot, page 267.)

11. “But it has been argued that since the modern day Greeks are not the descendents of the ancient Greeks: ‘The Star of Vergina is not a Greek symbol, except in the sense that it happens to have been found in the territory of the present-day Greek state...’” (“Experimenting with Democracy Regime change in the Balkans”, edited by Geoffrey Pridham and Tom Gallagher, page 271.)

12. “Contemporary historians state the Emperor Basilius also was a Sclavonian; many cities bearing Sclavonian appellations still exist in Greece, as, for instance, Platza, Stratza, Lutzana,...” (“The Foreign Quarterly Review Vol. XXVI”, published in October M. DCCC. XL., 1841, page 73.)

13. “By the fourteenth century Orthodox Christian Arvanites had made their way into the Greek thema of the Byzantine Empire,

which largely comprised the land that now constitutes Greece. They first came to Attica as early as 1383...They did not complete their immigration until 1759, when Sultan Murat III offered them land in Athens...Thus the Arvanites were already inhabiting Athens when the city became the capital of Greece in 1834.” (“Fragments of Death Fables of Identity An Athenian Anthropography” by Nani Panourgia, page 27.)

14. “I have already said, and I will repeat it, that not one-fifth of the present population can with justice be called Greeks. The remainder are Slavonians, Albanians and Turks, with a slight infusion of Venetian blood.” (“Travels in Greece and Russia”, by Bayard Taylor, 1872, page 262.)

15. “It should be stressed, however, that the Greeks as an ethnic community during this period [1840’s] included many Grecophone or Hellenized Vlachs, Serbs or Orthodox Albanians.” (“Greece and the Balkans Identities, Perceptions and Cultural Encounters since the Enlightenment”, edited by Dimitris Tziouvas, page 6.)

16. “All Greek soldiers are required to be able to read and write, and if a conscript on joining has not acquired those rudiments of education, he is put to school. Notwithstanding, the educational efforts of the government, as many as 30 percent proven fifteen years or so ago to be completely illiterate, while not more than 25 per cent had advanced beyond the ‘three R’s’. This may be partly accounted for by the fact that these conscripts included both Albanians from the settlements in Attica and other parts of the Kingdom and pastoral Koutso-Vlachs, all of whom habitually speak their own dialects and learn Greek only as a foreign tongue.” (“Greece of the Hellenes”, by Lucy M. J. Garnett, 1914, pages 33 and 34.)

17. “I could speak Turkish, and the Macedonian dialect, besides my own Greek tongue, and as a curious boy in the holidays I had been here and there, wishing to know more of the world round me and the people who lived in other villages than mine.

Being neither Turkish nor Greek, we called them Bulgarian, but their language is not Bulgarian, but the Macedonian dialect, and I

found lovable people among them, honest, hospitable and kind.” (“When I was a Boy in Greece” by George Demetrios, pages 131 and 132.)

18. “The migration of the Albanians is the best attested and in many ways the most instructive of migrations into Greece....

We had difficulty staying because they were rather suspicious of us, but we stayed with a man who talked Greek as his main language, although he talked to his wife in Albanian...

The ancestors of these people probably came to the Epidaurus in the fourteenth or fifteenth century, but they were still talking Albanian as their mother tongue in 1930....

Albanian was the language they talked among themselves, but they could also talk Greek. This was their second language although they lived in Greece....

The one in Epirus which was still Albanian in its customs and its language had probably been there since about 1400...

A group of 10,000 Albanians with their families and their flocks appeared there, and asked if they could be admitted to the Peloponnesus. They were accepted by Theodore, who was the principle ruler of the Peloponnesus...” (“Greece Old and New”, by Nicholas Hammond, edited by Tom Winniffrith and Penelope Murray, Pages 39 to 44.)

19. “...so, in the Middle Ages, these Albanian mountaineers have brought both war like spirit, bright costume, and beauty of person, to refresh the Hellenic race. There are still, even in Attica, districts where Albanian is the common language; there are Albanian names famous in Greek annals, especially in the great war of independence (1821-1831) and even among the sailors of Hydra, so famed for their commercial enterprise and their deeds of war, the chief families were Albanian in origin.” (“Greek Pictures drawn with pen and pencil” by J. P. Mahaffy, M.A. D.D., 1890, pages 20 and 21.)

20. “Groups of men in stately Albanian costume, with their grand walk and graceful air, stalk up and down with eastern impassibility, price an article, call for a ‘fotia’ (brazier of coals for lighting cigarettes) , at the cafés, or converse in the strange patois of Greece about the last conclusion of the ‘vouli’ or house of delegates.” (“Greek Vignettes a sail in the Greek Seas, Summer of 1877”, by James Albert Herrison, page 148.)

21. “In the 1770’s a fiery Orthodox preacher, the monk Kosmas of Aetolia, tried to stem the tide of mass conversions to Islam in the Northern Greek lands by founding Greek schools in a score of villages in Thessaly, Epirus and Macedonia, where the language had long been abandoned for Albanian, Vlach or Slav, and obliged peasants to speak only Greek.” (“Greece the Modern Sequel from 1821 to the Present”, by John S. Koliopoulos and Thanos M. Veremis, page 159.)

22. “...following the alleged discovery of Slavic buildings by the German excavator at Olympia. The claims were answered by Paparrigopoulos himself, by reinstating his 1843 position that there was indeed a Slavic presence in the Peloponnesus in the Middle Ages, but that the Greeks need not worry because the Slavs were culturally absorbed...” (“The Nation and its Ruins”, by Yannis Hamilakis, page 115.)

23. “In 1358 the Albanians overran Epirus, Acarnania and Anatolia and established two principalities under their leaders...

Naupactas fell into their control in 1378...

Other Albanians and Vlachs invaded the Catalan principality of Boeotia and Attica, and a great many Albanians settled there as peasant-farmers in 1368 and later...

The penetration of the Greek mainland which we have described occurred during the hundred or more years after 1325.” (“Migrations and Invasions in Greece and Adjacent Areas”, by Nicholas G. L. Hammond, page 59.)

24. “When arriving by airplane at Athens, one lands at the new airport at Spata. Spata is a town situated in the Messogia region that bears an Arvanite name that means ‘axe’ or ‘sword’ (in Greek ‘spaps’, spaya from which derives the Albanian Spata). The term ‘Arvanite’ is the medieval equivalent of ‘Albanian’. It is retained today for the descendants of the Albanian tribes that migrated to the Greek lands during the period covering two centuries, from the thirteenth to the fifteenth.” (“Hellenism Culture, Identity, and Ethnicity from Antiquity to Modernity”, edited by Katerina Zacharia, page 230.)

25. “With them it would be a resurrection, accomplished, no doubt, after vast pains and many troubles, the more so since the Greeks are a composite people among whom the descendants of the veritable Greeks of old are in great minority. The majority are of Albanian and Suliote blood, races which even the Romans found untamable.” (“In Greek Waters: a story of the Grecian War of Independence (1821-1827), by G. A. Henty, 1893, page 40.)

26. “Where are we to look for the descendants of the Greeks of old? Travelers tell us that, as late as the sixteenth century, Athens was but a castle with a small village; and that Sparta, divided by two tribes of the Slavi, the Ezeriti and the Milingi, had not only lost her ancient name, but it was impossible to recognize the site in which she had stood of old.” (“History of the Island of Corfu” by Henry Jervis-White Jervis ESQ., page 250.)

27. “General interest was first aroused by a controversy as to the racial derivation of modern Greeks. The war of Independence had won the sympathy of Europe; and it was a rude shock both to Greece and to her champions when Fallmerayer announced that her inhabitants were virtually Slavs. The race of the Hellenes he declared in his ‘History of the Morea’ was routed out, and Athens was unoccupied from the sixth to the tenth century. Only its literature and a few ruins survived to tell that the Greek people had ever existed. What the Slavs had begun the Albanians completed.” (“History and Historians in the Nineteenth Century”, by G. P. Gooch, 1918, page 491.)

28. “There were few Muslims here; the inhabitants largely of Albanian stock, were only imperfectly assimilated into the Greek nation...” (“Politics in Modern Greece”, by Keith R. Legg, page 48.)

“The term ‘Greek’ differentiates the language spoken by inhabitants of modern Greece from the languages of the surrounding countries; but there is disagreement on what the Greek language was, is, or should be. At the time of independence, the range of local dialects was significant; substantial portions of the population spoke Albanian.” (“Politics in Modern Greece”, by Keith R. Legg, page 86.)

29. “...followed by violence, recourse was had to arms, and the two elder brothers united against Vely, the offspring of a slave; who being forced to expatriate himself, embraced the perilous profession of those Albanian knights errant, more commonly known by the appellation of kleftes or brigands.” (“The Life of Ali Pasha of Jannina, 1823, page 26.)

30. “There is the case of Karamanlides, a predominantly Turkish-speaking Christian Orthodox people, who were forced to go to Greece although they did not necessarily identify ‘ethnically’ with the Greeks. At the time of the exchange they numbered as many as 400,000.” (“Mediating the Nation News, Audiences and the Politics of Identity”, Mirca Madianou, page 31.)

31. “Morea... as Fallmerayer traces it back to the Slavic word ‘more’, the sea which nearly encircles the Morea. The Morea forms the most southern part of the Kingdom of Greece and is divided into the monarchies of Argolis, Corinth, Lakonis, Messenia, Archadia, Achaea and Elis.

Overrun by the Goths and Vandals, it became prey, in the second half of the 8<sup>th</sup> c. to bands of Slavic invaders who found it wasted by war and pestilence.” (“International Cyclopedia a Compendium of Human Knowledge”, American Editor-in-Chief Richard Gleason Green, 1890, page 204.)

32. “This point is made in almost all publications on Albanian nationalism (e.g. Skendi 1967 and 1980). In the nineteenth century,

the Greek historian Constantinos Paparrigopoulos considered the Albanians a ‘race’ that could be acculturated into Hellenism. His viewpoint was greatly influenced by the considerable Albanian contribution to the Greek war of independence (1821-1828).” (“Nationalism Globalization and Orthodoxy” by Victor Roudometof, page 156.)

33. “Rhigas of Valentino....author of poems, revolutionary proclamations and a constitution...

In this document he spoke of a sovereign people of the proposed state as including ‘without distinction of religion and language – Greeks, Albanians, Vlachs, Armenians, Turks and every other race’.” (“Nations and States”, by Hugh Seton-Watson, page 113.)

34. “As of 2002 more than 98,000 foreign pupils were enrolled in Greek schools, accounting for almost 9 percent of the overall school population. As regards nationality, 72 percent are from Albania.

Clearly, Albanians are not unknown to Greeks and the new relationships emerging from the contemporary migratory context can be seen as superimposing themselves into a pre-existing trans-Balkan context.” (“The New Albanian Migration”, edited by Russell King, Nicola Mai and Stephanie Schwandner-Sievers, page 155.)

35 “Next to them in this respect are the modern Greeks, who, for the most part, are of Sclavonian origin, and, where they are not purely Sclavonian, are a cross-breed in which Sclavonian enters very largely.” (“The Phrenological Journal and Magazine of Moral Science for the year 1843”, Vol. XIV, page 246.)

36. “The modern Greeks are largely of Slavic origin. They are not the descendents of the ancient Greeks. That noble race, greatly mixed with barbarian blood during the middle ages, was almost completely destroyed in the course of the frequent uprisings against Turkish rule. Slavic immigrants gradually repopulated the country.” (“The Popular Science Monthly”, edited by J. McKeen Cattell”, Volume LXXV, July to December 1909, page 591.)

37. "There was little interest as to the nationality of the rayahs while Turkish rule was strong. They were nearly all Christians of the Byzantine type, those in Europe at least, and were hence regarded as one people, for oriental theocracy cannot conceive of nationality apart from religion. They themselves knew the differences in their origins and in such traditions as they had: some were Slavs, some Vlachs and some Albanians..." ("Political Science Quarterly" edited by the faculty of science of Columbia University, Volume twenty-third, 1908, page 307.)

38. "Since the Christian era, as we have said, a successive downpour of foreigners from the north into Greece has ensued. In the sixth century came the Avars and the Slavs, bringing death and disaster. A more potent and lasting influence upon the country was probably produced by the slower and more peaceful infiltration of the Slavs into Thessaly and Epirus from the end of the seventh century onward.

The most important immigration of all is probably that of the Albanians, who, from the thirteenth century until the advent of the Turks incessantly overran the land." ("The Races of Europe a Sociological Study", by William Z. Ripley PhD, 1910, page 408.)

39. "When the Macedonians became rulers of Greece, Athens had twenty-one thousand citizens, ten thousand resident aliens and four-hundred thousand slaves." ("Race or Mongrel", by Alfred P. Schultz, page 86.)

"The resident aliens were mainly Aryan-Hemitic-Semetic-Egyptian-Negroid mongrels." ("Race or Mongrel", by Alfred P. Schultz, page 87.)

"In the course of time the Hellenic blood was corrupted to a still greater extent. In 146 BC the Romans conquered Greece... When Mummius took Corinth... All the men were killed, the women and children were sold into slavery. Later the Goths invaded Greece... laid waste the land, and expelled or exterminated the inhabitants." ("Race or Mongrel", by Alfred P. Schultz, pages 88 and 89.)

“The only difference between modern Greeks and the other Balkanacs lies in the fact that the environment of the modern Greeks is the environment of the Hellenes. The environment, however, has no power whatsoever to change the mongrel into a race, and the Greeks have not been changed by it.” (“Race or Mongrel”, by Alfred P. Schultz, page 93.)

40. “The ethnographic record certainly shows that Rhigas could have identified as both Vlach and Greek, and even preferred one over another in different circumstances. The Koutsovlach contribution to Greek independence is well attested.” (“Modern Greece a Cultural Poetics”, by Vangelis Calotychos, page 44.)

“He consequently never traveled to Greece to implement the second part of his plan. Like many Philhellenes and Diaspora figures Rhigas never did set foot in Greece, which was fitting for one whose image of the place bore many characteristics of a European discourse located and produced outside of the Greek mainland.” (“Modern Greece a Cultural Poetics”, by Vangelis Calotychos, page 47.)

41. “In the last year of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, and the opening years of the 16<sup>th</sup>, when the Morea was again the battlefield of the Turks and Venetians, the occupants of the plain of Argos and portions of Attica were practically exterminated, and Albanian colonists began to reoccupy the lands.” (“The Customs and Lore of Modern Greece”, by Rennell Rodd, 1892, page 17.)

42. “Modern Greece is so flimsy and fragile, that it goes to pieces entirely when confronted with the roughest fragment of the old. But there is very little of it, and if you choose you may see exactly what the Greeks of the 5<sup>th</sup> century saw, and, the people of Athens are, of course, no more Athenian than I am.” (“In Byron’s Shadow Modern Greece in the English and American Imagination”, by David Roessel, page 163.)

43. “This revival also allowed the Byzantines to re-colonize the Greek mainland. The success of that effort would prove crucial to the survival of Greek culture in future centuries, after the other lands had fallen away. Having overrun nearly all the Greek mainland, the cities, and the islands by the tenth century the Slavs in Greece have

been converted to Orthodox Christianity and thoroughly Hellenized.” (“Sailing from Byzantium How a Lost Empire Shaped the World”, by Colin Wells, page 184.)

44. “The Vlachs, on the contrary, descendants of the Romanized people of the Balkan peninsula, live in considerable numbers in the mountains of northern and central Greece.” (“The Scottish Geographical Magazine”, volume XIII, 1897, page 370.)

45. “Europe’s affinity with ancient Greece left the newborn nation of Greece in an awkward double bind. Identifying ancient Greece as the ‘childhood of Europe’ Winkelmann gave the patrimony of Greece to western Europe, leaving only more modern sights of heritage to the modern Greeks. Michael Herzfeld suggests that ‘the west supported the Greeks on their implicit assumption that the Greeks would reciprocally accept the role of living ancestors of European civilization’.” (“Possessors and Possessed”, by Wendy M. K. Shaw, page 66.)

46. “It is simply not plausible to suggest that the bulk of Greek speaking Roman citizens in the Middle Ages, let alone the former Turkish subjects of 19<sup>th</sup> century Greece, ‘lived like, ancient Greeks.’” (“Macedonia and Greece the Struggle to Define a New Balkan Nation”, by John Shea, page 95.)

47. “Not less remarkable than the small size of Hellas was the small size of the Hellenes themselves. But it is much more easy to trace the boundaries of the one upon the modern map than it is to trace the blood of the other in the bodies of the modern inhabitants.

We have no accurate record of the proportions of free citizens who alone constituted the true Hellenes, but they were at most a small minority among the large population of helots and slaves.” (“The Nineteenth Century a Monthly Review”, edited by James Knowles, Vol. VI, July-December 1879, page 932.)

48. “The Albanians of Hydra and Spatsae, many of whom could not even speak Greek, regarded themselves as Greek because their allegiance was with the Orthodox Church.” (“That Greece Might Still be Free”, by William St. Clair, page 9.)

49. “Here is the ultimate Greek tragedy: that of a country forced to treat everything familiar at the time of the nation-state’s foundation as ‘foreign’ while importing a culture largely invented – or at least – redesigned by German classicists of the late eighteenth early nineteenth centuries. For many decades, and almost without interruption, Greeks were forced to put aside music, art and language that were deemed too tainted by the ‘oriental’ influences of Ottoman, Arab, Slavic and Albanian culture; to forget the partially Albanian roots of Athens and its environs...” (“The Body Impolitic” by Michael Herzfeld, page 9.)

50. “The philhellenes – the word means ‘the admirers of the Greeks’ – who began to lobby for Greek freedom were struck by the contrast between the idea of ancient Greek freedom and the servitude of the modern Greeks, who were usually assumed to be direct descendants of Pericles and company. Philhellenes generally moved at a distance from reality: they were concerned only with the myth of Athens and were capable of ignoring anything which tended to tarnish the glamour.” (“Athens from Ancient Ideal to Modern City”, by Robin Waterfield, page 296.)

Given that the Modern Greeks are NOT the descendants of any “ancient people” as they pretend to be, then how do they justify the invasion, occupation, partition and annexation of Macedonian territories? How do they justify telling the Macedonians what they can and can’t call themselves? Why are these imposters and charlatans still being taken seriously? But, as long as we pay attention to them and argue with them, they will continue to argue back and “pretend” that they are the descendants of the so-called Ancient Greeks.

Even if God himself came to earth and spoke to the Greeks and said “these people here are Macedonians” some Greeks would still have problems accepting his word.

Well there are people who identify as “Greeks”, unfortunately, ethnically speaking they are not “ethnic Greeks”; they are “politically” Greeks. Did I just say “politically Greeks”? Yes politically Greeks. They identify as Greeks not because “they are”

ethnic Greeks but because they “want to be” Greeks! It’s a matter of choice. How else can one explain how Slavs, Albanians, Vlachs, Macedonians, Christian Turks, Armenians, Russians and a whole group of other ethnicities ALL identify as “Greeks”?

In other words, anyone can be Greek provided they agree with the “Philhellenic indoctrination” of what a Greek is. Anyone who speaks Greek, claims to be a descendant of the so-called Ancient Greeks, pretends to be superior to other people, claims minorities don’t exist in Greece, is arrogant and insensitive to non-Greeks and hurls slogans like “Macedonia is Greek” can be a Greek. Can an Asia Minor Christian Turk settler who was deposited in Macedonia in the 1920’s be a Greek? Yes they can! They can even be a Macedonian, descendent of the Ancient Macedonians! Can a Macedonian whose family identified as Macedonian before Greece annexed Macedonia in 1913 identify as a Greek? Yes they can, provided they accept and swear by the “Philhellene Indoctrination”. Can any of my relatives, like myself who were born in Greece, with whom I share great grandparents be Greeks even though I identify as a Macedonian? Yes they can! They can in fact also be “full-fledged” Macedonians, direct descendants of the Ancient Macedonians! Can I be a Greek, and I did ask this question, on account of some of my family members identifying as Greeks? The answer was a flat NO! And according to the same “Greek authorities” who said I could never be a Greek, I don’t even qualify to call myself Macedonian. According to them I am a “Slav” and a “Skopjan” from some “other” country called “Skopje”, which I have yet to find on any “world” map except on maps made in Greece!

If you are still not convinced that the Greek identity is a 19<sup>th</sup> century Philhellene fabrication; an identity “created” purely for political purposes, then you had best read the following twenty-five excerpts;

1. “There were, however, several magnificent specimens of Greek palicars, who added to the advantage of soldier like, but rather swaggering carriage, all the accessories of their picturesque costume. Nine or ten of them performed the Albanian national dance, to the sound of a bad fiddle and a jingling guitar played with a quill for the amusement of her majesty, who did not seem enchanted with this exhibition.

And these men, who were exposing themselves in this absurd manner, were the far-famed Colocotroni, Nikitas, surnamed the Turkofagos, or Turk eater, Makryani, Vasso of Montenegro, Nota Botsaris, and other equally celebrated.” (“Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine”, Vol. XLIII, January – June 1838)

2. “When Athens was chosen as the site for the modern capital of the new nation, and its (re)construction was planned along lines of Hellenic purity, the unsettling evidence of Greece’s Ottoman heritage along with local vernacular forms had to be confronted, all the more so when situated in the immediate vicinity of remains of classical antiquity. Early nineteenth-century Athens was viewed as a ‘disgraceful site’ (Boyer 1996: 163) full of imperfections, ranging from the city’s physical aspect to the spoken language that called for, ‘filtering-out’ interventions.” (“Contested Landscapes Movement, Exile and Place”, Edited by Barbara Bender and Margot Winer, page 23)

3. “In 1851, at the time of her enfranchisement, Greece possessed about one million inhabitants, of whom a quarter were Albanians or Walachians. The population was a residue of invaders of all peoples, and notable of Slavs. For centuries the Greeks properly so called had disappeared from Greece. From the time of the Roman conquest, Greece was regarded by every adventurer as a nursery of slaves, which everyone might have recourse to with impunity.” (“The Psychology of Socialism”, by Gustav Lo Bon, page 206)

4. “The Greek influence which has partially Hellenized the Vlachs of Macedonia to-day can hardly date from before the Turkish conquest. It is the work not of the Byzantine Empire but of the modern Church, and seems to have reached its height during the eighteenth century.” (“Macedonia its races and the future”, by H. N. Brailsford , page 181)

5. “Greek statesman said Albanian was not a language – it had no literature, not even an alphabet - it is a mere patois, and would die out in a generation, and the children of the Albanian soldiers and sailors would all be good Greeks.” (“The Catholic Presbyterian an

International Journal Ecclesiastical and Religious”, vol. II, July – December 1879, edited by Professor W. G. Blaikie D.D., L.L.D., F.R.S.E., page 319).

6. “ We have many instances of the daring of these Greek robbers, one of which I shall here relate, as received from their chief, no less a personage than Colocotroni, who was in our service, and has since, as may be remembered, made himself conspicuous in Greece. He is an Albanian, and, as he acknowledges, a kleftis (robber).” (“Selections from my Journal during a residence in the Mediterranean”, pages 110 and 111)

7. “...the historical absurdity of declaring Hellenic civilization the expression of a culture uncontaminated by foreign elements can be explained by a simple fact that tends to be disregarded – namely, that Hellenic civilization that we know it was in effect the invention of the ‘Science of Antiquity’, of Classics. As such, it could have been (and was) endowed with whatever signification the discipline found useful.” (“Dream Nation Enlightenment, Colonization and the Institution of Modern Greece”, by Stathis Gourgouris, page 134)

8. “After successive treaties, (London 1913, Bucharest 1913), Greece acquired much of Macedonia, Epirus, Crete and the north-eastern islands of the Aegean. Greek land increased by 70 percent and the population almost doubled from 2,800,000 to 4,800,000 some of whom were Slavs and Turks.” (“Entangled Identities Nations and Europe”, Edited by Atsuko Ichijo and Willfried Sohn, page 112)

9. “Yet so much of the Slavonian element had been infused into the latter that the modern Greeks are found to differ widely from their remote ancestors.” (“Foreign Quarterly Review”, Vol. XXVI, 1841, page 73)

10. “...the question of Greece’s political and ethnic status generated a considerable amount of debate in western Europe. As Michael Herzfeld argues in ‘Ours once more: Folklore, Ideology and the Making of Modern Greece’: ‘to be a European, was in ideological terms, to be a Hellene’ (1982: 15). Many Europeans of the time, however, believed the contemporary Greeks to be an

adulterated version of the Classical Greeks – ‘Byzantine Slavs...’ (“Grafting Helen The Abduction of the Classical Past”, Matthew Gumpert, pages 239 and 240)

11. “...since the Greeks are a composite people among whom the descendents of the veritable Greek of old are in a great minority. The majority are of Albanian and Solute blood, races which even the Romans found untamable.” (“In Greek Waters: a Story of the Grecian War of Independence (1821-1827)”, By G.A. Henty, 1893, page 40)

12. “General interest was first aroused by a controversy as to the racial derivation of modern Greeks. The War of Independence had won the sympathy of Europe; and it was a rude shock both to Greece and her champions when Fallmerayer announced that her inhabitants were virtually Slavs. The race of the Hellenes, he declared in his ‘History of Morea’, was routed out and Athens was unoccupied from the sixth to the tenth century. Only its literature and a few ruins survived to tell that the Greek people ever existed. What the Slavs had begun the Albanians had completed.” (“History and Historians in the Nineteenth Century”, by G.P. Gooch, pages 490 and 491)

13. “Old Corinth passed through its various stages, Greek, Roman, Byzantine, Turkish. After the War of Independence it was again Greek, and, being a considerable town, was suggested as the capital of the new Kingdom of Greece. The earthquake of 1858 leveled it to the ground with the exception of about a dozen houses. A mere handful of the old inhabitants remained on the site. But fertile fields and running water made it attractive; and outsiders gradually came in. At present, it is an untidy poverty-stricken village of about 1,000 inhabitants, mostly of Albanian Blood.” (“The Encyclopedia Britannica” Eleventh edition, Vol. VII, 1910, page 148)

14. “The modern Greeks possess none of the qualities which make nations great. Their existence is due to the battle of Navarino, for in the autumn of 1827 Greece was unquestionably conquered by the arms of the Grand Vizier Reshid Mehmed and by Ibrahim Pasha of Egypt, and again the ‘untoward event’ of Navarino could only occur at a time when Phil-Hellenism was a sort of social disease,

caused by hallucinations and by the illusion of finding in the present a mongrel inhabitants of the Morea and Attica the descendents of the ancient Hellenes.” (“The Syrian War and the decline of the Ottoman Empire (1840-1848)”, by Byron Augustus Jochmus, page 100)

15. “The notion of a ‘Greek’ identity in the modern sense is itself in large part the creation of the movement towards statehood. It was not until the nineteenth century that the term came to describe a homogenous ethnic group in the modern sense. Instead, the people of the Peloponnesos, including Argolida, made up an intricate mosaic of ethnicities and languages. In Argolida dialects of Albanian, Greek, Turkish and other local languages were spoken (Andromedas 1976).” (“Blood and Oranges Immigrant Labour and European Markets in Rural Greece”, by Christopher M. Lawrence, page 12)

16. “...Greek national feeling was already quite strong at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Even the Albanian-speaking Orthodox did not regard themselves only as Rum (members of the religious community or Orthodox Christian millet) but also as real Greeks.” (“From Geopolitics to Global Politics”, editor Jacques Levy, page 174)

17. “...he devoted his personal attention exclusively to the latter, assigning Joannina to his son-in-law, Thomas Preliubovich, in 1367, and Aetolia and Akarnania to two Albanian chiefs, belonging to the clan Boua and Liosa – a name still to be found in the plains of Attica. Thus, about 1362, all north-west Greece was Albanian...” (“The Latins in the Lavant a History of Frankish Greece (1204-1566), by William Miller M.A., 1908, page 294)

18. “Overrun by the Goths and Vandals, it became a prey, by the second half of the 8<sup>th</sup> c., to bands of Slavic invaders, who found it wasted by war and pestilence. Gradually however, these barbarians were subdued and Grecianized by the Byzantine Emperors. Nevertheless the numerous names of places, Rivers, etc., in the Morea of Slavic origin, prove how firmly they had routed themselves, and that the Moreotes are anything but pure Greeks.” (“The International Encyclopedia a Compendium of Human Knowledge”, edited by Richard Gleeson Green, 1890, page 204)

19. "...between a cheer and a whine, and presently their Imperial Majesties of Greece, cantered up the hill attended by four dignitaries, and as many equerries. The queen was dressed in a dark green riding-habit, black beaver with drooping feather, and veil. King Otho wore the Albanian costume of crimson, gold embroidered jacket and legs, white fustanela, with a richly chased saber belted over his shoulder." ("Scampavians from Gibil Tarek to Stamboul", by Harry Gringo, 1857)

20. "There was little interest as to the nationality of the Rayahs while Turkish rule was strong. They were nearly all Christians of the Byzantine type, those in Europe at least, and were hence regarded as one people, for oriental theocracy cannot conceive nationality apart from religion. They themselves know the difference in their origins and in such traditions as they had: some were Slavs, some Vlachs and some Albanians...; they were all non-Muslims, all Rayahs, and in a sense all Greeks." ("Political Science Quarterly", Columbia University, 1908, page 307)

21. "The revolution of 1821 has restored the ancient appellation 'Elines', but as it is used chiefly by the inhabitants of Bavarian Greece, who perhaps don't constitute more than one fourth of the Greek nation, it may safely be said that the mass of the people still call themselves 'Romaii' and their language 'Romaiki'." ("A Romaik Grammar", by E.A. Sophocles, 1842, page iv)

22. "From their manners, their features and their names of many of their neighbouring places, I should be tempted to regard them [Mainiotes] proceeding of Sclavonian blood: many travelers pretend, however, to have discovered in these barbarous hordes traces of a Spartan origin." ("Recollections of a Classical Tour through various parts of Greece, Turkey and Italy made in the years 1818 and 1819", by Peter Edmund Laurent, 1821, page 182)

23. "The Greeks have not taken much interest in their past until Europeans became enthusiastic discoverers and diggers of their ruins. And why should they have cared? The Greeks were not Greek but rather the illiterate descendants of Slavs and Albanian fishermen who spoke a debased Greek dialect and had little interest in the

broken columns and temples except as places to graze their sheep. The true philhellenists were the English – of whom Byron was the epitome – and the French, who were passionate to link themselves to the Greek ideal.” (“The Pillars of Hercules” by Paul Thereoux, page 316)

24. “...Neohellenic Enlightenment sanctioned a selective tradition, with particular emphasis upon an imaginary classical antiquity, and sought to suppress what was deemed to be a ‘non-significant tradition’, mainly the Byzantine and Ottoman legacy. Through this ideological management of the past, it achieved the displacement of a substance part of the history, memory and experience of those it sought to shape into modern Greeks.” (“Tormented by History Nationalism in Greece and Turkey”, by Umut Oskirimu and Spiros A. Sofos, page 24)

25. “There are two other difficulties involved in the history of the Turkish period. In tracing the movements of merchandise and men in the Balkan peninsula it is extremely difficult to differentiate the various races involved. Western travelers knew little, Turkish authorities cared less. Even the polyglot Vlachs themselves knew nor cared a great deal and until the rise of national consciousness at the end of the eighteenth century were probably quite happy with the label of Greek, which was good enough for outside observers.” (“The Vlachs the History of a Balkan People”, by T.J. Winnifrith, pages 124 and 125)

So, what have we learned from the comments made by all the authors I have presented so far?

Well, we have learned that the Greek identity is not an “ethnic identity” at all but rather a “politically motivated artificial identity” created by the 19<sup>th</sup> century Philhellenes to serve some greater political purpose. We have learned that the 19<sup>th</sup> century Greeks, recent ancestors to today’s Greeks, were not “ethnic Greeks” at all. The majority belonged to the Slav, Albanian, Vlach and later Macedonian ethnic groups. In other words they became “Greek” either by force or by choice. This cannot be disputed!

What can be disputed, however, is the ownership of a heritage that does not belong to the Modern Greeks. For example Modern Greeks cannot claim the heritage of the so-called “ancient Greeks” as their own just because they call themselves “Greeks” and learned to behave like the Ancient Greeks. This is like saying that I can claim my neighbour’s father’s house if I changed my last name to match his and pretend to be my neighbour’s brother. Can I legally do that? Can I one day show up at my neighbour’s house and say “I am your brother and this house is mine”?

Wouldn’t I have to prove my descent from the man I claim to be my father?

Well this is exactly what the Greeks are doing! With the help of a bunch of Westerners they usurped the Ancient Greek heritage, or I should say was given to them by the European monarchies, which does not belong to them, and now they think they are the owners of Greece. Ah, but that’s not all! Since they annexed a large chunk of Macedonian land in 1913 by war, they also usurped the Macedonian heritage, that is, until they were challenged by the real Macedonians. They usurped the Macedonian heritage the same way they usurped the Greek heritage by “pretending” to be Macedonians, descendants of the Ancient Macedonians and by pushing the real Macedonians out into extinction. How clever is that?

I don’t think any Macedonian cares what the Greeks call themselves, who they are and who they “pretend” to be but the Macedonians sure care when these “pretenders” try to lay claim to the Macedonian heritage especially at the expense of the real Macedonians! Sharing the ancient heritage is one thing but claiming it to be exclusively theirs, especially since it can be proven that they are imposters, is another.

We are faced with two problems when dealing with this issue. First, the Modern Greeks are not Greeks at all. They call themselves Greeks not because they are Greeks but because they want to be Greeks. There are benefits to being Greek. There is a country “Greece” to call their own, which should never have been created in the first place because such a country never existed before. Then there is that illustrious past with all its glory which should never

have been “assigned” to a people who had nothing to do with it. Second, these same people were not only allowed to annex 51% of Macedonia but were given full rights to “assimilate” the Macedonian people, turning them into Greeks, and usurping the Macedonian heritage as their own. Hence the slogan “the Ancient Macedonians were Greek” therefore “the Modern Macedonians must also be Greek”.

But wanting to be Greeks is not the same as “being” Greeks. Just because one “wants to be a Greek” does not mean one has the right to lay claim to the Ancient Greek heritage just as I have no right to lay claim to my neighbour’s house just because I “want” to be his brother!

This leads to the very important legal question; if these people are Greek because they want to be Greek and they are Macedonian because they want to be Macedonian, then legally what right do they have to either the Ancient Greek heritage or the Ancient Macedonian heritage? Given that we have proven that the Modern Greeks are “not Greek at all” what moral and legal right do they have to interfere in the affairs of the Macedonian people? More importantly, as Macedonians and rightful heirs to the Macedonian heritage, why are we allowing these imposters to interfere in our affairs? Isn’t it about time to tell them to “hit the road and mind their own business”?

But as I have repeatedly stated in this book, Greece is not alone in its interference in Macedonian affairs. There are also the Great Powers who today are led by the United States, and as I said before, they not only do not want a Macedonian state to exist but are trying their best to erase everything Macedonian, as if Macedonia and the Macedonian people never existed.

(For more information about the origin of the modern Greeks please read my book “Who are the Modern Greeks?” published in 2016.)

## **Revival of the Macedonian state and nation**

In April 1941 Germany invaded Yugoslavia and opened the door for fascist ally Bulgaria to occupy almost all of geographic Macedonia.

On October 11, 1941 the Macedonian people launched a war of liberation against the Bulgarian occupation and by 1943 anti-fascist sentiments gave support to a growing communist movement, which later established the Communist Party of Macedonia (CPM). During the same year a number of governing and liberation movements as well as the first Macedonian military units were established over the entire geographical region of Macedonia. The Headquarters of the National Liberation Army published a manifesto of its goals for the liberation of Macedonia. The first session of the Anti-Fascist Assembly for the National Liberation of Macedonia (ASNOM) was held on August 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1944 at the St. Prohor Pchinski Monastery. Forty-one years after the 1903 Ilinden Uprising representatives from all parts of Macedonia gathered together for this occasion and decided on a constitution for the modern Macedonian State which they named "People's Republic of Macedonia". The ASNOM presidium was formed with Metodija Andonov Chento as its first President and a decision was made to constitute a modern Macedonian State that would become part of the new Federal Yugoslavia. In April 1945 the first Macedonian government was established with Lazar Kolarovski as its first President. In 1958 the Ohrid Archbishopric was restored and in 1967 its autocephaly was declared. The Macedonian people, at least in one part of Macedonia, were finally free to govern themselves but not without great difficulties and opposition from both inside and outside of Yugoslavia.

One example of those "great" difficulties experienced was how Macedonian patriots like Metodija Andonov-Chento, president of the ASNOM presidium, were treated after the People's Republic of Macedonia was established.

Metodija Andonov-Chento was a man who always demanded rights, freedom and happiness for the Macedonian people. He was truly a man who fought for Macedonia and the Macedonian people. Unfortunately he was deprived of his freedom for 11 years. He was

sentenced to hard labour and, except for his parental rights, lost all his political and individual civil rights, and that was five years after serving his sentence... He was tried at the People's District Court in Skopje by President Panta Marina, members Lazar Moisov and Kole Chashule, and by assistant public prosecutor Blagoia Popovski. The verdict was pronounced in accordance with the Law on Crimes Against the People and the State, and was read after the main and public hearing took place on November 19, 20 and 21, 1946.

Skopje, November 23, 1946

This was the ruling of the People's Court against Metodija Andonov-Chento, the first president of the Republic of Macedonia. This is how he was judged and this is how everything ended for him. His appeal, addressed to the Supreme Court of Macedonia and to the Skopje District Court, was rejected and his new arguments never appeared in the courtroom to face justice or in public. He never got a chance to defend himself and possibly affect his 11 year harsh sentence of hard labour, which became his fateful destiny and, a little later, his end.

Was this a fair sentence for the mistakes and for the acts committed? Perhaps this was a tax for the unrepentant repentance of a never-ending plea for forgiveness?

Was this a tax that had to be paid?

And what were Chento's "big sins" which earned him the wretched and infamous titles "traitor", "spy", "sinner", "collaborator" working with the enemy and with foreign forces...? What earned him this series of orderly, difficult, dangerous, accusatory qualifications that at that time, or at any other time, cut a man down, wiped him out and removed him from the public and from history forever?

For more information regarding what happened to Metodija Andonov-Chento please read Fidanka Tanaskova's book "Metodija Andonov-Chento".

Then, in 1991, the “Peoples’ Republic of Macedonia”, the part of Macedonia that was originally occupied by Serbia during the 1912, 1913 Balkan Wars, which was part of Federal Yugoslavia declared its independence from the Yugoslav federation by referendum and became a free and sovereign state called the Republic of Macedonia. But not without facing many obstacles...

Although still restricted from speaking their language and practicing their culture, ethnic Macedonians living in Greece and Bulgaria, as a result, began to assert their rights as people first by speaking Macedonian in public and then by singing Macedonian songs at weddings and festivals. Initially, from fear of persecution, they only sang and played melodies without lyrics but in time and as the numbers grew they began to add lyrics and even record songs in Macedonian.

With the imminent breakup of Yugoslavia looming over the horizon, Macedonians worldwide began to see the possibility of at last having their own State. Even the oppressed Macedonians in Greece began to feel the fervor and started to form their own movements.

It was in 1982 that, for the first time since the 1940s, Macedonian songs and dances began to be openly and publicly expressed.

In their fight for human rights as national minorities in Greece, Bulgaria and Albania organizations such as Vinozhito, OMO Ilinden, OMO Ilinden-Pirin, Bratstvo, MIR, Prespa, MED and others began to form. To help their compatriots in the occupied Macedonian territories, human rights and other organizations began to form in the Diaspora. These organizations became the voice of the Macedonian people in the occupied territories. Initially the most active were the Detsa Begaltsi (Refugee children from the Greek Civil War) who organized worldwide and brought world attention to their plight, unfortunately without much success. Greece refused to hear their pleas and would not budge on their issues. International institutions were silent on this matter.

As federal Yugoslavia began to disintegrate in the late 1980’s the Macedonians in the Peoples’ Republic of Macedonia sought their chance to finally create their own state. On September 8, 1991, in a

referendum, 95% of eligible voters approved of a sovereign and independent Republic of Macedonia with Kiro Gligorov as its President.

The will of the people was confirmed on September 18, 1991 at the Macedonian Parliament with the declaration for acceptance of the results from the referendum.

The next important step in strengthening the state was the adoption of the Constitution on November 17, 1991.

The internationally legal subjectivity of the state was recognized on April 8, 1993 with an acclamation of the UN General Assembly. Macedonia was admitted as the 181<sup>st</sup> full-fledged member but not without conditions.

Fearing that it might lose its Macedonian occupied territories, Greece was first to object to the Republic of Macedonia's independence.

Although the European Community acknowledged that Macedonia had fulfilled the requirements for official recognition, due to the opposition of Greece which was already a member of the community, the EC decided to postpone the recognition. Greece, afraid that Macedonia might put forward a historical, cultural and linguistic claim over Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia, insisted that the new nation had no right to use the name "Macedonia" and use the emblem of ancient Macedonia on its flag. In July 1992 there were massive demonstrations by Macedonians in the capital Skopje over the failure to receive recognition. But despite Greek objections, Macedonia in 1993 was admitted to the United Nations under the temporary reference (not an official name) "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia". Full diplomatic relations with a number of EC nations followed, while Russia, China, Turkey, Bulgaria and most nations ignored Greece's objections and recognized Macedonia under its constitutional name "Republic of Macedonia". The United States of America, Britain and France did not.

Greece, dissatisfied with the results, in February 1994 imposed a trade embargo on Macedonia in an attempt to force President

Gligorov to make changes to his country's name, nation and language and amend the Constitution to remove Article 47 which stipulated that "the Republic of Macedonia cares for the statue and rights of those persons belonging to the Macedonian people in neighboring countries, as well as Macedonian ex-parties, assists their cultural development and promotes links with them." Ironically, Greece also has a similar article in its own Constitution, as is normal for any country in the world to care for its minorities in other countries.

Faced with an economic collapse and left without any support from the international community, Macedonia had no choice but to change its flag and constitution, after which Greece lifted the embargo.

In 1995 Human Rights Watch - Helsinki condemned Greece for the oppression of its ethnic Macedonian minority, which Greece denies exists. Both Amnesty International and the European Parliament urged Greece to recognize the Macedonian language and stop oppressing ethnic Macedonians living within its borders. Like many time before, here again we see international institutions paying lip service to the Macedonian people and actually doing nothing to help them.

Still reeling from the Greek embargo, from the internationally imposed embargo on Serbia, its traditional trading partner, and from unresolved issues with Greece, the Republic of Macedonia was faced with a new set of problems, a war at home.

Due to the conflict north of Macedonia and as a result of the NATO bombing of Serbia, an influx of war refugees numbering in the three hundred thousand entered Macedonia. This created economic as well as political strain on impoverished Macedonia, which on one hand had to cope with an overnight population increase of 15% and on the other with criticism from various human rights groups for the ways it handled the refugees.

No sooner was that crisis over when armed bands of Albanian fighters spilled over from the Serbian conflict began to infiltrate and stir up trouble in Macedonia.

It is noteworthy at this point to mention that the United States and its western allies were very much involved in the 2001 war on both sides, on the side of the Albanian armed bands and on the side of the Macedonian military. While these Albanian armed bands were armed and trained in Kosovo by an American/NATO organization the Macedonian military was also reorganized by the same American/NATO organization. In other words, the Americans and NATO were secretly managing and controlling both sides of the war.

Here is what Pande Petrovski, the Macedonian general who led the Macedonian military during the 2001 war had to say:

On December 26, 1999, after Boris Traikovski the new President of the Republic of Macedonia was elected, the Minister of Defense, Academic N. Kliusev, organized an orientation for introducing the supreme commander with the situation in the former Army and the plan of reorganization for the next 5 years.

A report regarding the current ARM situation was filed by the then Army Chief of Staff General Traiche Krstevski, and I (Pande Petrovski) filed a report on what ARM should look like in five years, after the reorganization.

Among other things, in this report I stressed: “We have disagreements with the MPRI team (the American/NATO organization) about the reorganization, but that was superseded because the plan was twice fully accepted in Brussels by all NATO member states without any reservations.”

Shortly after that, in January 2000, about 500 officers, including all generals, were retired i.e. for being “obstacles” to the reform.

After that, after the officers were retired, the plan prepared by the MPRI team was accepted - and in 2000 the ARM reorganization was started under MPRI control. The Republic of Slovenia refused the MPRI team’s offer to reorganize the Slovenian Army. Croatia accepted the MPRI but then expelled them after a while. Here, in Macedonia, we kept the MPRI active until May 2001.

Before the crisis, at the beginning of 2001, ARM was in the final stages of reformation or “dismantling” (3. Army Corps disbanded, 2. Army Corps - Bitola disbanded, tank and artillery units disbanded, aviation dissolved), the border brigade was under reformation and each guard house had 10-12 soldiers, etc.

First of all in 2000: a newly formed unit was promoted. It consisted of a light infantry brigade with two battalions officially launched by President Boris Traikovski which, in their composition, had one professional battalion and one battalion with conscripts.

The MPRI team proposal signed by H.J. Haen, accompanied with a letter, was sent to the NATO ambassador in the Republic of Macedonia which included, among other things, the following:

In reference to the ARM structure or what kind of army the Republic of Macedonia should have, it said: “The hardest question is the necessity of helicopters. The current budget cannot support a force that will be compatible with NATO and with pilots trained by NATO standards; this should remain an inspiration for the future...”

For more information on American and NATO involvement in the 2001 war in Macedonia please read Pande Petrovski’s book “Testimonials 2001”.

In 2001 these illegal bands, first branded by the international community as terrorists and later as “freedom fighters” began to occupy camps and later villages in the western part of the Republic of Macedonia. Initially these bands were seen as benign but as they started to assert themselves by restricting travel, kidnappings, torturing civilians and cutting off electricity and water supplies to various communities, the Macedonian police and military began to pursue them. There was an immediate backlash from the western media which, in spite of their violent acts, the Albanian band were viewed as human right fighters and the Macedonian government and its people as aggressors.

As the war raged on in western Macedonia, rumors were flying, some substantiated, that certain elements in the Macedonian

government were involved in sparking the conflict in order to partition the Republic of Macedonia perhaps between Albania and Serbia, Greece or Bulgaria.

Here is what correspondent Sasha Uzunov had to say about the volatile situation in the Republic of Macedonia: “In 1992 I came across a high-ranking NATO source in Brussels, Belgium. He revealed to me the secret plan to partition Macedonia along ethnic lines after a short war: the west would be incorporated into a Greater Albania and the left over parts would be incorporated either by Serbia or Bulgaria. I found the plan to be far-fetched when I first heard it. I thought this person was pulling my leg. But later events showed that it wasn’t far-fetched.

The NATO source invited me out for drinks a number of times. He was a big vodka drinker. He must have had 5 or six when he let rip with the revelation that Macedonia’s days as an independent nation were numbered. I laughed and said, ‘I agree with you unless the problem of corruption and the economy are fixed.’

‘No it’s not just a matter of money,’ he said. ‘There are greater outside forces at work that you don’t know about.’ He would not elaborate. He had another 5 vodkas and left. This cat and mouse game kept going for a month or two, until he let it all hang out.

He revealed in great detail how war would start in Macedonia; he named names; told me how weapons were being smuggled by ethnic Albanian insurgents into Macedonia through Kosovo and from Albania. He said a favourite supply route was through the western town of Debar, which sits on the Macedonian-Albanian border. He mentioned there were a number of mountain caves near Debar being used to hide weapons. Donkeys were being used to ferry ammunition.

But he would not tell me who was pushing for war in Macedonia. By 1993 UN peacekeepers from the UNPROFOR mission were deployed to protect Macedonia’s borders. This mission later became UNPREDEP. Years later, for some crazy reason the Macedonian government recognized Taiwan and China in retaliation used its seat in the UN Security Council to stop the mission. With UN

peacekeepers out of the way, the 2001 war in Macedonia began as a spill over from the Kosovo conflict of 1999.

The whole thing was mind-boggling. I remember talking to Mira, an elderly Serbian woman who was teaching the Macedonian language to Belgian children. She asked me what I was interested in writing about Macedonia. I said to her I would like to investigate the claims made by the NATO source and look into past Yugoslav communist crimes in Macedonia such as the infamous Chento show trial of 1946.

Her response was ‘You don’t need to dig up the past nor worry about the future.’ I found her lack of curiosity surprising considering her ex-husband was famous Macedonian writer Meto Jovanovski, and both her children are journalists. Son Borian Jovanovski was a former Presidential media spokesman whilst daughter Svetlana Jovanovska is the Brussels correspondent for major newspaper Dnevnik.

One day walked into our Brussels office a fit looking man in his late 30s or early 40s. He had very short blonde hair and had a military bearing. He introduced himself as Andreas Renatus Hartmann, a Member of the European Parliament for the German political party, The Christian Democratic Union (CDU).

Mr. Hartmann invited Dr. Naumovski and myself to dinner at a swanky Moroccan restaurant. The dinner went well. We talked about a wide variety of subjects but the attention inevitably turned to the Balkans. I was enjoying eating the couscous and almost choked when Mr. Hartmann said matter of fact that German Intelligence was about to open its first ‘station’ in Tirana, Albania since World War II, and the British were pissed off at being beaten to the punch.

I thought to myself why is this guy telling me this? He dropped more bombshells when he said that Europe, in particular Germany and France did not want an Islamic state in the Balkans namely Bosnia-Herzegovina or a Greater Albania. The German and French right wing parties wanted to strengthen Macedonia to act as a buffer state against possible Islamic fundamentalist terrorism.

I found this at odds with the NATO source's revelations. Was Macedonia caught in the cross-fire of a power play between competing European nations? What could it possibly all mean? And why was I told this?

I could only speculate and say maybe they saw me as a young and enthusiastic journalist wanting to make a name for myself who would float the information in my articles. But what they didn't count on was unbelieving newspaper editors!" (Sasha Uzunov)

A month later it was confirmed, when a force of 400 KLA (Kosovo Liberation Army) fighters was surrounded in the Village Arachinovo near the capital, Skopje. As Macedonian security forces moved in, they were halted on NATO orders. U.S. army buses from Camp Bondsteel in Kosovo arrived to remove all the heavily armed terrorists to a safer area of Macedonia.

It is important at this point to mention that I believe seventeen Americans were also among the so-called Kosovo Liberation Army fighters in Arachinovo. It was later revealed that they were assisting the Kosovo fighters. There were also unconfirmed reports that when the Americans/NATO ordered the Macedonia president to halt the assault they threatened him and told him they would "turn Skopje into ashes" if he did not immediately halt the assault. In other words, President Traikovski was told that if he did not immediately stop the assault on Arachinovo NATO was going to bomb Skopje.

Here, in part, is what General Pande Petrovski said about the Arachinovo incident:

Everyone was in good spirits that day because we were all expecting to completely destroy the terrorists. A while later, Liube Boshkovski received a telephone call on his mobile telephone. At the time he was sitting beside Liubco Georgievski. The call made him very nervous so he got up and, with a high pitched tone of voice, shouted back abusive words. Colonel Stoian Petrovski happened to be in the near vicinity so I gave him a look and signaled him to get out of the room and not listen to what Liube Boshkovski was saying. I looked at the Prime Minister but he did not react, he kept watching the battle taking place in Arachinovo. When Boskovski was finished

talking on the phone, he nervously said: “He wants the actions stopped right now!” I then immediately realized that he must have been talking to the President about what the President had told me at 09:00 hours, so I imagine he had not communicated this to Boshkovski until now. After he calmed down Boshkovski said to me: “Traikovski told me to tell you to terminate all military actions and for me to terminate all police actions!” The Prime Minister did not say a word but got up and the two left for Skopje. After they left I went to the Choilia command post where, around 12:45 hours, I received a call from the President who told me: “General, I want you to terminate all action in Arachinovo at 13:00 hours. Now go back to ‘Belvi’ hotel and meet with the NATO officials!” I said: “I understand but I will need at least an hour to end the offensive; for the orders to trickle down. On top of that I have the aviation ready for a final blow.” He then said: “No, no, under no circumstances are you to deploy the aviation. I want you to call me at 13:30 hours and tell me that you have ended all actions!” He then added: “Don’t you try to employ the aircraft, no, this is not a game, and I explained to you this morning what is going on!” I then reassured him that I would do as he ordered.

After receiving the call from Traikovski, Brigadier General Zvonko Stoianovski, commander of air defense, called me and informed me that: “The helicopter pilots were reporting seeing white sheets displayed on top of the houses in Arachinovo. What should we do?” he then asked. I gave him a short reply. I said: “Okay Zvonko, at 13:00 hours you are to terminate all actions. Those are the Supreme Commander’s orders! Also, after all the helicopters have returned, call me, in the meantime you will be receiving a written order for this termination!”

Because General Metodi Stamboliski and General Miroslav Stoianovski were standing beside me while I was talking to the President, and because they were in command of the units on the ground, I immediately ordered them to cease all military actions and take necessary measures to defend our current positions. In the end I told them: “I am going to a meeting now so please stay in contact in case of further developments. Please keep the units on alert and be ready to attack on short notice, only if so ordered. They are only

allowed to open fire on the terrorists if attacked, for security purposes and to protect themselves!”

I arrived at “Belvi” hotel around 14:00 hours and noticed many journalists, TV crews, various diplomatic vehicles, etc., standing in front of the hotel. I entered the hotel through the restaurant hall and there I saw the entire diplomatic corps accredited to the Republic of Macedonia. Amongst them, from our side were Vlado Buchkovski, Liube Boshkovski, Nikola Dimitrov, Todor Pendarovski and many others.

Immediately after entering the hall I asked Vlado Buchkovski: “What is that going on?” He said to me: “You will soon find out, there will be a meeting; Javier Solana is due to arrive at 16:00 hours.” Then Air force commander Brigadier General Zvonko Stoianovski informed me that our radar had picked up six planes, fighter-bombers coming out of Italy, flying through Albania and heading towards the Republic of Macedonia. I told him to keep an eye on them, follow them and watch where they are going. In the meantime, prepare our helicopters to be moved to the village Lozovo to the reserve airport!”

I thought to myself: - it’s no joke; NATO is prepared to use force if we continue with our actions. The President of the Republic of Macedonia was certainly aware of this meeting this morning when I was at his office, but he did not say anything to me, I do not understand why. I asked Liube Boskovski what was going on. He said: “We will both soon find out brother, I don’t know anything. I have no idea what these NATO people are planning?!”

National Security Advisor to the President, Nikola Dimitrov, representing the President on this occasion, introduced me to a civilian. He said: “This is Mr. Peter Faith, envoy to the NATO Secretary-General; he will be leading the meeting today and present the plan for extracting the terrorists out of Arachinovo.” So I asked him: “Does the President know about all this?” Dimitrov then said: “Yes, and I will inform him about everything that transpires.”

The meeting started around 14:30 hours. Without any introduction, Peter Faith indicated that he was going to come into contact with the

terrorists and offer them passage out through his organization. In other words NATO was prepared to extract the terrorists out of Arachinovo and transfer them to Kosovo. Liube Boshkovski strongly objected to Peter Faith's proposal and said that he would not allow the terrorists to be extracted without being punished. I interrupted Minister Boshkovski, took him to the side and said: "Wait, let him finish talking and then we will talk. The terrorists are surrounded and going nowhere." After Boshkovski calmed down he went back to his place and the meeting continued.

We all, for one thing or another, reacted, we did not want the terrorists to be taken to Kosovo. In the end it was agreed that: "The terrorists to be extracted by NATO with their own buses and taken to the village Nikushtak. We were to take our tanks out of Arachinovo and out of the road Arachinovo - Nikushtak."

Basically NATO and OSCE had three variants of the extraction plan, which in fact were two plans:

"A" - to extract the terrorist with vehicles owned by civilian companies - from Tetovo,

"B" - to extract the terrorists with NATO/KFOR buses, or

"C" - to extract the terrorists in their own vehicles.

From the three variants available we accepted a combination of variants "A" and "B" - (i.e.: First round to be completed with 4 buses from Tetovo and the second round with 7 NATO buses, 5 combat hummers, 5 medical hummers and 2 trucks).

We certainly were not going to accept variant "C" - the terrorists extracting themselves in their own vehicles. The meeting lasted only briefly. I was surprised to see that 10 to 15 minutes after our meeting ended, NATO troops were rushed in, in front of the hotel with all the agreed upon vehicles ready to do the extraction. This, for me at least, confirms that the plan was already in motion before we even had our meeting. All we did at the meeting was confirm it!"

For more information on American and NATO involvement in the 2001 war in Macedonia please read Pande Petrovski's book "Testimonials 2001".

The fighting in western Macedonia began as isolated attacks in the early spring of 2001 by armed and uniform wearing Albanian insurgents who claimed that their quarrel was with the government and its forces in Macedonia.

They also claimed that their goal was to achieve more equal rights for the Albanian minority population of Macedonia. However, in July of 2001 after achieving a sufficient mobilization of the local Albanian population, they began the conquest of territory where the Albanian population formed the majority.

Western journalists have continued to portray this insurgency as some kind of armed civil rights movement, but the reality on the ground is quite different. The insurgents, in fact, achieved a semi-permanent occupation of territory through an on-going campaign of ethnic cleansing. It is now clear that in July of 2001 there was a sudden shift in the focus of their movement from conflict with police and army units to systematic terrorization of the civilian ethnic Macedonian population in the NLA occupied territories.

One of the first documented cases of such terrorization in occupied western Macedonia occurred on July 8, 2001 in the village of Neproshteno, about 7 miles north of the city of Tetovo. Thirty year old Darko Boshkovski was alone, unarmed and in civilian clothes when he was abducted from his car at a road block near his home that day. He reported that it was about 6:30 in the evening when a group of about 150 men in Albanian National Liberation Army NLA uniforms stopped his car and forced him at gun point to accompany them first to the nearby village of Poroi, and then to Drenovec 2, and finally to the village of Giermo.

There, he was locked in a horse stall with two horses. He was blindfolded and questioned about his father, a retired policeman who had worked on drug-related crimes, and his possible family connection to Interior Minister Liube Boshkovski. Then his arms were stretched and bound behind him with a rope that also bent his back to the point where breathing was made difficult. He was then repeatedly beaten over the course of the evening by a series of men, some with fists, others with clubs or shovels. He was also tied to a

horse and dragged around the barn and later force fed horse urine and dung.

About 1:30 in the morning NLA commander Avzi came and told him that they were releasing him. They then took him by car to the city of Tetovo and delivered him to his waiting family, his wife and parents, who had paid a ransom for his release. He was warned not to reveal what had happened to him under the threat of further violence. He was later treated for numerous wounds, including serious internal injuries, at the local hospital and later at a sanatorium in Serbia. When his family was finally able to return to their home in the village months later they discovered that their house, shop and outbuildings had all been looted and burned. Darko's automobile, a tractor and all of the goods from their building supply business had been stolen.

A year later the family remained homeless and destitute. All that they had slowly built up or acquired over the years was gone. And visits to the village or nearby town are made all the more painful by the open presence, after the public amnesty of the rebels, of those who tortured him and destroyed his family's home and livelihood in western Macedonia. It wasn't just the Macedonian authorities and press who were reporting such incidents either. According to a report issued on July 26 by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, their mission human rights specialists found evidence of numerous human rights violations by the rebel NLA forces. The report on their meeting with three young Macedonian men who were being treated for injuries at the hospital in Tetovo on Friday, July 20, 2001 is typical of what they found during their investigation.

Although the young men refused to participate in a formal interview, the Mission report states that they were able to learn the following: "These persons appeared extremely fearful of Mission's presence, but ultimately consented to showing their injuries to the investigator. There were chafing marks on their wrists that appeared consistent with their hands being bound. By observing the pattern of the bruises and abrasions, it appeared they had been beaten whilst their hands were bound behind their backs. From the appearance of their injuries, it appeared they had been struck with rifle butts and

wooden or metal rods, objects typically associated with the kinds of deep bruising observed on the subjects.

One person stated briefly that a particular pattern of injuries had been caused by being struck with a wooden broom handle and a police baton. All had been beaten on the soles of their feet as well as on the back of the legs. One had reduced kidney function upon admission, but was improving. These impressions were later confirmed in conversations with the attending doctor. It was also discovered that the three young men had attended an engagement party and were standing outside the house of one of them when a car with three armed NLA members drove up and accosted them. They were roughed up, blindfolded, and driven to a location where the beating was administered.”

These two incidents were among the first of what soon proved to be a series of abductions and beatings of unarmed individuals or small groups of Macedonian civilians in the western part of the country. By July 23, the OSCE Mission had received credible information that at least 25 people had been abducted at gunpoint in the Tetovo region.

The ethnic cultural basis for these attacks can be seen in the case of Macedonian Orthodox Christian priest Perica Bojkovski. He was first threatened by an Albanian armed group on July 14, 2001. At that time he was pulled out of his car by an armed group that blocked the road at the village of Odri. At that time men dressed in the black uniforms and wearing the insignia of the Albanian NLA beat the priest and told him not to come back to his parish.

Three weeks later on August 9 Father Bojkovski was stopped again during a visit to one of the mountain villages that were his responsibility. At the time he was riding in a car with Pero Marcheviski on the way to the village of Dobroshte. They were both dragged from the car by armed men wearing NLA uniforms. They were taken by car to the village of Djepchishte, where they were put in a barn. There they were questioned about the names of reserve policemen and the location of army and police units in the villages they visited. When their interrogators didn't receive the answers they sought, they began to beat the two men with guns and fists.

They also put a gun barrel in the priest's mouth during the interrogation.

Their captors then drove them to another location in the village where about fifteen young men in civilian clothes locked them in a cellar. This new group continued the beating, which included demands that the priest sing Albanian nationalist songs and the call of the Moslems to worship.

Eventually the priest lost consciousness and was revived with cold water. When it was discovered that he was coughing up blood, he and his companion were driven back to the village of Dobroshte, where they were again beaten and then released at their car. Father Bojkovski was later treated at the Military Hospital in Skopje, where doctors found injuries over the entire length of the priest's body.

This maltreatment of a cleric who carried no weapons and traveled openly in his religious dress on his priestly duties was clearly intended to intimidate the Christian Macedonians in that parish. It was meant to teach the lesson that no one from their ethnic religious cultural community was safe there any longer. Ethnic cleansing in western Macedonia by organized Albanian armed groups took on a truly mass character on the July 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2001. At that time the NLA launched a series of attacks on the mixed Macedonian-Albanian villages of Tearce and Neproshteno and the all-Macedonian village of Leshok in direct violation of a cease fire that their leadership had signed onto the preceding week. Poorly armed policemen and a few local reservists tried to defend the villages, but they were overwhelmed by the sudden onslaught of hundreds of heavily armed NLA fighters.

The NLA soldiers went door to door in the middle of the night dragging people from their homes, from the smallest child to the oldest grandmother. Several thousand people were driven out with little or no time to gather any possessions and with little hope that there would be anything to return to later. Long lines of people, many hundreds, were forced to make their way on foot to the nearby Macedonian hamlets of Ratae and Zhilche. Some did resist. Men who had invested years of their lives in the creation of a home, and those who could not bring themselves to abandon homesteads and

communities with over a thousand years of family history in them. Some defended their homes with guns. Many resisted the invaders until it was clear that they could not win, and then they retreated along with their families. Others resisted until they were wounded or killed by the NLA. About a dozen men of Leshok and Neproshteno were wounded that day and one, Gjoko Lazarevski, died from his wounds. He was 30 years old. He had just completed construction of a new home and he soon to be married.

The NLA aggression and ethnic cleansing of Leshok, Gjoko Lazarevski's home village, was among the most indefensible acts of the recent conflict. The aggression took place in direct violation of a cease-fire agreement signed by the NLA with NATO mediation. It involved the occupation of a village that had never had a single Albanian inhabitant in its several thousand year history. It resulted in the criminal looting and destruction of the lifelong personal possessions and property of all of the residents.

The NLA would later, completely outside the military conflict, set explosive charges under the foundation of a Macedonian and world cultural monument in Leshok, a beautiful Orthodox church, first built in the 14th century and expanded into a grand cathedral in the 20th century, reducing the Church of St. Atanasij to a pile of rubble. One young man who tried to resist this ethnic cleansing was made the ultimate example of what resistance would bring, when he paid with his life.

The campaign of ethnic cleansing that day also included one of the worst crimes of terror imaginable, the abduction that ends in the disappearance of individuals from a community. It was on that day, July 23, 2001, that the terrible crime had occurred. It was on that day that NLA gunmen abducted 52 year old Cvetko Mihajlovski from a field near his home in the village of Neproshteno. At the same time they took his 37 year old son Vasko, whose wedding had taken place the night before, and an elderly neighbour, 69 year old Krsto Gogovski, from their homes in the same village. They were led at gunpoint in some unknown direction and have never been reliably heard from since.

That same day 62 year old Dimo Dimoski, who was visiting his wheat field in the neighbouring settlement of Djepchishte, was also taken by NLA gunmen. And the next day 60 year old Sime Jakimovski was literally taken off the street of a suburb of Tetovo called Drenovec One. The day after that, July 26, 2001, in that same northern suburb of Tetovo, where some of the most heated fighting between NLA and government troops would occur, 47 year old Gjoko Sinadinovski and 28 year old Bobi Jeftimovski were taken. Elsewhere on that same day the NLA apparently also took 48 year old Ilko Trajchevski and his 25 year old son Vasko Trajchevski. Two weeks later, also in the vicinity of Drenovec, two brothers, 59 year old Slavko and 42 year old Boshko Dimitrievski were taken by the NLA.

The families and friends of these 12 men have endured a number of years now of agony-filled uncertainty concerning the fate of their loved ones. NLA commanders claim no knowledge of these men.

Swedish Ambassador to Macedonia Lars Wahlund recently headed an international commission to determine the facts of some 20 cases of unsolved abductions during the time of the conflict last year. His commission concluded that NLA commanders probably know the fate of the Macedonians abducted, and Macedonian officials may know the fate of several missing Albanians and a Bulgarian, but no one will reveal what they know.

Angelina Mihajlovska waited for over a year for news of her husband Vasko. The day after their wedding she and her husband and most of the guests at their wedding were kidnapped by the NLA. She and some others were released after three days. But there is a rumour that she received her husband's ear and a hand later from local NLA commander Leka. This was said to be in retaliation for Vasko having pulled a gun on Leka when he and his men appeared at their wedding. The commission concluded that it was likely that Leka, in particular, does know the fate of eight of the Macedonian men seized in his district of operations in July of 2001. Several bodies exhumed from a site near Neproshteno, according to the commission report, may yet prove to be some of the missing. But people like Angelina Mihajlovska have no choice but to continue a campaign of public protest before the public, government and

international community in Macedonia until the fate of her loved ones are resolved. And to this day they must occasionally pass amnestied NLA leaders such as commander Leka on the streets, men who probably know of their missing men even if they are not directly responsible for their fate.

During the six months of open conflict 15 civilians from the Tetovo region are known to have been killed and many others injured. The dead included Natsa and Petar Petrovski, a mother and son whose car hit a land mine set by Albanian rebels on the road between Leshok and Zhilche in mid-July of 2001. It also included the particularly gruesome murder of two night custodians at the Hotel Brioni in the village Chelopek. One night late in August Albanian gunmen appeared at this Macedonian-owned business. They took the two hotel employees present at the time prisoner, named Svetislav Trpkovski and Bogoslav Ilievski. They then mined the premises with explosive charges and blew up the hotel, at the same time killing the two workmen, who they had tied up and left inside the building to die.

Other grisly crimes committed against Macedonian civilians by armed Albanian groups during this period included the abduction and torture on August 8, 2001 of four construction workers from a site on the Tetovo-Skopje highway. These four men, who were later released, reported to authorities that in addition to beatings, they were subjected to sexual abuse by their Albanian captors, and in a final act of barbarism before letting them go, they carved the initials of the rebel group into the living flesh of the backs of their captives with knives.

Abductions, robberies and brutal beatings of unarmed civilians in the Tetovo region have continued since the open conflict ended in the fall of 2001. On the 3rd of November 2001, for example, 32 year old Cane Trpevski was returning to his home in the village of Ratae from Tetovo, where he had gone to pick up his monthly wages, when he was captured by an armed Albanian group. They robbed him and then held him for two days. During that time they beat him over the entire length of his body, while keeping his hands tied and with a feed sack placed over his head. He reported that the worst

part of his ordeal had been the fact that during that entire time they had refused to give him a single drop of water to drink.

Reserve policeman Dushko Simoski received similar treatment on April 14, 2002, when he was taken prisoner by an armed Albanian group in the village of Shemshevo. They also held him bound and blindfolded in a livestock stall while brutally beating him for over two days, before he was finally released.

Of course, active policemen and soldiers of the Macedonian army have suffered their share as well at the hands of Albanian armed groups, but at least their suffering came in the course of their sworn service, for which they are honoured today for their sacrifices.

The continued campaign of terror, death and destruction included the looting and burning of over thirty churches in the Tetovo region since hostilities began in the spring of 2001 and many hundreds of houses. The looting and destruction of Macedonian homes continued in outlying villages such as Otunje or Varvara, and even certain Tetovo neighbourhoods continue to lose residents who find life unbearable there.

It also included the destruction of many Macedonian-owned businesses, thus denying the people their livelihoods. These have included destruction of a textile factory and bakery in the village of Tearce, small shops, restaurants and gas stations in Tetovo, and the infamous destruction of the Brioni Hotel in the village of Chelopek. Of course, many thousands of people were denied their livelihood simply because they did not dare to go to work for extended periods. Farmers couldn't reach their fields and other workers couldn't drive the roads to various workplaces. And the Popova Shapka major ski centre on the picturesque mountain above Tetovo had no tourist season.

The Republic of Macedonia was forced to concede defeat and was obliged to accept all the terrorist demands. When the peace treaty was signed, Lord Robertson proclaimed, "This day marks the entry of Macedonia into modern, mainstream Europe ... a very proud day for their country." (James Bisset).

This war placed great strains on Macedonia's economy and created a long-lasting divide between the Macedonian and Albanian communities in Macedonia, communities that coexisted peacefully for centuries.

American and French negotiators helped craft the Ohrid Accord of 2001 that ended the military conflict by granting Albanians in Macedonia rights and privileges that no minority in the Balkans has ever enjoyed to this day. It also altered the Macedonian Constitution so that it no longer refers to the Republic as the state of the Macedonian people, but as the state of all citizens of the Macedonian Republic, making it the first and only Balkan state to "denationalize" itself. The Accord was a source of terrible humiliation to the Macedonian people, but it put an end to the violent struggle that was tearing the country apart at a time when "only" hundreds had died in the fighting rather than the thousands who have been killed in the other wars that have accompanied the breakup of Yugoslavia.

Since 1991 all governments in the Macedonian parliament have been coalition governments comprised of allied ethnic Macedonian and Albanian parties. In fact, Albanian militants who only a few years before had led armed paramilitary units now sit in parliament as elected representatives of their people. Obviously, this is not a country where citizens are denied their democratic right to free association. This, however, cannot be said for their neighbours, Greece and Bulgaria and to some extent Albania. Macedonians who merely demand the right to self-identity as Macedonians and free association in organizations of their minority group are routinely harassed and intimidated by governmental authorities there.

Both the Macedonian minority organizations OMO Ilinden in Bulgaria and Vinozhito in Greece have well-documented cases of violations of their rights. Human rights groups worldwide have come to their defense and issued reports on many of these violations. Human rights courts have also ruled in their favour in suits. Nothing, however, has been done to improve their situation.

The western media vilified Macedonia, quickly forgetting that Macedonia was the only republic to peacefully break away from Yugoslavia. I wonder why?

“The West has always insisted on the just principle that violence, terror, and ethnic cleansing should not pay. This principle was enforced - sometimes militarily - in Bosnia and Croatia. Yet, for tactical and political reasons, the West has made two exceptions: Kosovo, and Macedonia. In Kosovo, it rewarded a crime organization turned liberation movement (the KLA or UCK). It armed it, trained it, and transformed it into a respectable (respected by the west) political player and partner in shaping the future and nature of Kosovo. In Macedonia, it has leaned on the democratically elected government of a sovereign country to accommodate the demands of armed terrorists, even as these terrorists continued to intimidate, murder, occupy land, and ethnically cleanse its Macedonian inhabitants. Thus, Macedonia is made to pay for the mistakes of the West in creating a monster (the KLA) that is now well out of their control (in the form of the NLA and ANA) and threatens to transform KFOR into 50,000 hostages in Kosovo.”  
(Sam Vaknin)

The war lasted approximately six months and officially ended with the signing of the Ohrid agreement on August 13, 2001.

“According to the Ohrid Peace Agreement, the international community was invited to support the challenging road of Macedonia from the brink of civil war in August 2001 to peace, stability and integration into Euro-Atlantic structures.

In response to a request for NATO assistance made by the Macedonian President Boris Trajkovski on June 20, 2001, this military organization drew up the operational plan that was dedicated to the peace and stability of the Republic of Macedonia. However, NATO had imposed three conditions for its help in resolving the crisis: conclusion of political agreement between the various parties in the Republic of Macedonia, armistice linked with amnesty for the members of the NLA and finally pledge of full demilitarization from the NLA. Once the Macedonian political parties signed the Ohrid Peace Agreement, the way was opened for

NATO's first mission in the Republic of Macedonia. The NATO military support to the Republic of Macedonia effectively commenced on August 27, 2001, with Operation Essential Harvest / Task Force Harvest (TFH). This UK-lead mission involved the rapid deployment of 4,600 Allied troops that were initiated to fulfill NATO's promise to assist the Macedonian people by collecting and destroying arms and ammunition on a voluntary basis from ethnic-Albanian extremists.

By September 14, 2001, the successful disarmament of the armed Albanians was achieved and in so doing, established the conditions for the peaceful resolution of the crisis that could well have engulfed this country. Essential Harvest succeeded in collecting and destroying 3,875 weapons over 30 days. Included were four tanks and armored personnel carriers that the NLA have captured from the Macedonian security forces, 17 Strela-2M (NATO: SA-7b Grail) man-portable low-altitude air defense weapons systems, 161 anti-tank systems, 483 machine guns, 3,210 assault rifles and nearly 400,000 mines, explosives and ammunition. Because the armed insurgency was a manifestation of "discontent" among the ethnic Albanian community in the Republic of Macedonia, in accordance with the Ohrid Peace Agreement, constitutional changes have been made that are granting more rights to the ethnic Albanian minority that is 22.7 percent of the country's population of just over 2 million.

In order to prevent a rise in ethnic conflicts after the termination of the NATO Operation Essential Harvest, the Macedonian government, the EU, and the OSCE agreed that international observers should supervise the orderly return of Macedonian security forces to the areas formerly held by ethnic Albanian extremists. In order to provide additional security to the international observers, while authorities of the Republic of Macedonia had primary responsibility for their security, on September 26, 2001, NATO began restructuring Task Force Harvest (TFH) and the next day Operation Essential Harvest was replaced by Operation Amber Fox / Task Force Fox (TFF). Further democratization and improvement in human rights through the process of dialogue and reconciliation progressed significantly and

Operation Amber Fox was extended for a period of three months in March 2002 and again in July 2002.

As a result of the greatly improved security in the country, authorities of the Republic of Macedonia and NATO finally decided to bring the mission to an end on December 15, 2002. The Operation Amber Fox was of great importance for Germany because for the first time in this country's history the German Federal Armed Forces assumed leadership and logistics of a NATO military operation that was consisting of some 700 German and other NATO nation's troops." ([http://www.airserbia.com/magazin/bozinovski/eu-nato/eu-nato\\_in\\_macedonia.htm](http://www.airserbia.com/magazin/bozinovski/eu-nato/eu-nato_in_macedonia.htm)).

In regards to developments with the Macedonians in Greece, on September 8, 1995, members of the ethnic Macedonian political party in Greece, the RAINBOW PARTY, also known as the "VINOZHITO PARTY" in Macedonian, opened an office in Lerin.

On January 19, 1997 a Second Conference of the "RAINBOW" party was held in Lerin and was attended by 76 delegates of all local units. A Political Manifesto and Organizational Principles were adopted and a Central Council comprised of 19 members was elected.

The Central Council held its first session in Voden on January 26, 1997, and elected a five-member Political Secretariat, an Economic Commission, an Editors' Council, etc.

In its Political Manifesto "RAINBOW" has aired its wish to cooperate with all democratic and anti-nationalist forces in the country in its struggle for peace and European integration.

The RAINBOW PARTY is a member of the European Free Alliance which has been standing up for the rights of stateless nations, peoples and regions for decades.

Other development with regards to the Macedonians in Greece includes the opening of the Greek branch of the European Bureau for Lesser Used Languages (EBLUL), an organization dedicated to the preservation of lesser used languages in Europe.

Across the European Union, no fewer than forty million people speak languages in their everyday lives, which are different from the official language of the state in which they are living. At present this figure represents 10% of the total European population, but shortly, with the expansion of the Union, the number of people speaking a different language from the official language of their state will be much, much greater. Greece, too, is no exception; however vigorously the state may deny it, the facts tell their own story. A by no means negligible section of the Greek population is bilingual. It is not possible to provide precise figures, since none of the censuses carried out to date has included a question on language. The one exception was the census of 1920, yet the figures it yielded for the northern regions of the country were never published.

Moreover, the long-standing policy of marginalization and suppression has succeeded, naturally enough, in reducing the actual number of those speaking the non-official languages. This hostile treatment of heteroglossy in Greece had its beginnings in the early days of the modern Greek state, 170 years ago. In those areas of the country where Arvanitika was prevalent, every effort was made to discourage its use. There was perhaps some justification for this in the desperate efforts being made to unite the regional populations into a single Greek state, using as a means to this end a policy of homogenization of the various populations.

Macedonians, such as Nase Parisi who was President of the Greek branch of EBLUL, are striving to introduce the Macedonian language into the Greek educational system.

In regards to development with the Macedonians in Bulgaria, OMO Ilinden PIRIN was a political party of the Macedonian minority in Bulgaria. It was registered as a political party in 1999 and participated in municipal elections in October 1999, where it elected five local officials.

However, on February 29, 2000, the Constitutional Court in Bulgaria declared OMO "Ilinden" - PIRIN unconstitutional. This was in direct violation of the right to freedom of association and the right to freedom from discrimination.

The Bulgarian government refuses to acknowledge the existence of the large Macedonian minority in Pirin Macedonia and continues to violate its basic human rights. Members and supporters of OMO Ilinden PIRIN (political party and human rights organization) and OMO Ilinden (human and minority rights organization) have been videotaped, harassed, beaten, fined, and even imprisoned simply for asserting their ethnic Macedonian identity.

In regards to current developments with the Macedonians in Albania, at the local elections held on February 18, 2007, a Macedonian from the party Macedonian Alliance for European Integration (MAEI) was, for the first time, elected as mayor. Edmond Temelko, a 36-year-old veterinarian turned politician won the mayoral position in Prespa municipality, making him the first Macedonian elected in Albania.

Macedonians in Albania are still unable to fully exercise their basic human rights such as obtain schooling in their mother tongue, using Macedonian national symbols and participation in state institutions. Macedonians fought hard to register their political party, the Macedonian Alliance for European Integration with success which is a major accomplishment for Macedonians, because they demonstrated maturity and voted for themselves. By doing so they showed the Albanian society that they are part of it and will take an active role in dealing with issues in the country.

The Prespa municipality has nine towns, inhabited mostly by ethnic Macedonians who speak their own language and foster their own cultural heritage. The Macedonian language will become the second official language and all Macedonian landmarks will be given their original names which were changed during Enver Hodza's regime.

All in all activities to revive the Macedonian culture in the various parts of Macedonia, especially in Greek and Bulgarian occupied Macedonia, have subsided mainly because of opposition from Macedonia's occupiers as well as from the Internationals whose preference is to stifle Macedonian progress rather than see it move forward.

This, without a doubt, confirms that the “powers” in this world to this day still do not want a Macedonian state or a Macedonian nation...

And now I will leave you with a few stories involving Great Power meddling in Macedonian affairs, carried by <http://www.minareport.com/> in October 2018 after the failed September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2018 referendum to change Macedonia’s name:

### **US State Department and British “PR firms” coined illegal Macedonian Referendum Question**

By Marija Nikolovska - October 4, 2018

More and more officials are spilling the beans after the Referendum Fiasco. Same goes for both local and foreign media who are exposing the dirty work of their Governments.

In Macedonia, we found out that the clueless Government junta was not just not involved in the “negotiations” with Greece, they were told the new name must be North Macedonia within a week after they were installed in power by an Anglo-American coup.

For those born after 2002, Bill Clinton’s CIA “offered” North Macedonia in 2001. This blackmail from Washington is ongoing for 17 years and during the past decade and a half worked on installing a complete imbecile as Prime Minister to do their dirty work.

The alleged negotiation between Macedonia and Greece was a complete charade, a smoke screen from day one. There never was any negotiation. The travesty of a document dubbed “Prespa Agreement” was written by the US State Department Nazis with effective assistance from their colleagues in the UK at Gabara Strategies and Stratagem International (both affiliated with MI6).

Macedonia and Greece had zero involvement in the document. Greece however did request that ASNOM be removed from the Constitution which the Nazis at the State Department were happy to oblige – they had removed everything else: identity, language, history, future, why not the foundation itself, ASNOM.

London-based ‘PR firm’ Gabara Strategies out of the goodness of their hearts offered to help the Macedonian government junta win the Referendum. The proposal, whose authenticity was later confirmed by Gabara’s founder and president, Ivo Gabara, included a raft of conventional measures such as making sure the two (UK & Macedonian) governments made a joint statement. One is leaving the EU, the other wants to join, so a joint statement to the idiots made perfect sense.

Part of Gabara’s contract included a section on setting up supposedly opposition social media groups which would actually be under the company’s control to “channel, infiltrate and divide the opposition”. In June, Mr Gabara told the Guardian that the Macedonian prime minister had agreed to the proposal.

The Brits were essentially funding fake “opposition” groups in Macedonia who are actually Soros & SDSM activists. This is nothing new, fake opposition groups have been created by the US and British Governments in dozens of countries where the main goal is either destabilization or taking over.

While the US State Department Nazis were writing up their Prespa Agreement, a British Foreign Office spokesperson said for the Guardian: “The UK is funding a small number of independent experts to offer technical advice in support of the referendum. They are a resource for the referendum task-force”. The impression given by the UK was that this was just impartial ‘help’ in setting up the referendum. That of course was not the case – the company said the FCO had completely funded “its work” on Macedonia, saying “Stratagem International is a resource for the referendum Taskforce (Yes Campaign).” ← Not sure about you, but we’re very tired of Russians meddling in Macedonia’s internal affairs!

The British “PR firms” created Macedonia’s Referendum question. If the author of the illegal Prespa Agreement was the State Department, it was the British who coined the Referendum question. Once again, zero involvement by Macedonia even for their own referendum question. The clueless criminal Government junta in Macedonia has taken puppetry to a whole new level.

The British cretins' tactic was to ensure that the referendum question in no shape or form mentioned the fact that the country is being renamed to North Macedonia. Instead, to deceive the public all focus was put on "European" Macedonia, EU and NATO and then as a side note the Prespa Agreement. The State Department was pleased with how deceptive and in their mind 'clever' the Referendum question was and approved it. Apparently both the American and British players in this fiasco have the same IQ as Zaev, which makes sense why they get along so well.

As to the control the US State Department Nazis, aka the Deep State, has over European broilers and vassals is the fact that nearly all Western European GMO products were forced either to visit Macedonia (Merkel, Kurz, May, Tusk, Hahn, Stoltenberg, Mattis...) or in the case of Macron issue a dedicated speech to the Macedonian people. Only the Italian PM told the State Department to fuck off. And they certainly couldn't ask Erdogan or Orban.

In the end, this stupidity, this illegal Referendum and charade of course backfired terribly.

If Macedonians can recognize one thing, it's fascists and Nazis.

Here is another article, again published by Mina Report about what is happening to the Macedonian people today:

### **Spanish Professor: Prespa Agreement, worst document I've ever seen, contrary to International Law**

By Gorazd Velkovski - October 3, 2018

In all my years of studying and teaching law, I've never come across such travesty, this document called the "Prespa Agreement". First, it is treason to the most basic standards in international law, and second, it's packed with nonsense, empty promises with zero guarantees – says famed Spanish law professor Carlos Flores Juberias.

It appears Mr Juberias was not briefed that this "agreement" was not worked out between Macedonia and Greece, instead it was put

together by the Nazis at the US State Department who apart from not mentioning Macedonia in the document (thus nullifying the ‘agreement’), inserted clauses to ensure the document bypasses the UN and the UN Security Council who would clearly block this nonsense. They know it’s illegal.

Professor Juberias is stunned by the document itself. First, he says, how can one country (Macedonia), give the right to another (Greece) to be involved in Macedonia’s internal affairs, thus allowing Athens to decide what it wants to do with the name of the country, the people’s identity, even the language, something that no country on Earth can ever allow – someone from the outside changing people’s names, language and identity!

If this isn’t terrible enough, and it really is, continues Mr Juberias – Greece has a clear advantage of being a member of an economic and military union that Macedonia wishes to join.

Second, these ludicrous demands are asked of Macedonia, yet nothing, absolutely nothing is being requested of Greece where a vague unexplained promise is made for negotiations with the EU or NATO, negotiations that may go somewhere or go absolutely nowhere, negotiations that can take decades!? And the best part is, Greece has nothing to do with these negotiations. – says prof. Juberias.

Considering the facts stated above, continued prof. Juberias – is it really a surprise that Macedonians with an overwhelming majority boycotted this insanity called the “Prespa Agreement” – it is completely illegal under international law. Is it surprising that Macedonians listened to their president and not their prime minister and did not vote in a Referendum that had easily the most illegal and confusing question(s) recorded in all of the world’s Referendums throughout history.

Everything in Macedonia thus far has been illegal. The Prespa Agreement, the Referendum, the questions in the Referendum, the only legal aspect of it was the boycott – concluded professor Juberias.

Editor Note: Greece had 60 legal experts review the document, not for legality, to ensure not a trace is left of Macedonia's culture, identity, language and the very foundations. Macedonia had Zaev, an intellect rivaled only by garden tools. Sekerinska was given the duty by Baily to lie to the public about what the document allegedly entailed. Macedonians never heard the propaganda, everyone immediately changes the channel when Sekerinska appears on TV. The opposition, the president, legal experts... nobody ever saw or was consulted about the document. Only later when legal experts got their hands on the document did they explain that even nations who have lost major wars wouldn't dare sign such insanity. Zaev and Dimitrov did.

When Fascists have an identity crisis, they describe themselves as Democrats. When they want to get creative, it's Social Democrats.

And this:

**Stefan Vlahov Micov: "United Macedonia" political party created and financed by US Embassy**

By Mark Abramoff - October 5, 2018

The Vice President of "United Macedonia" Stefan Vlahov Micov has just poured gasoline and lit a match on his own political party. The alleged patriotic party was founded, and is financed by the US Embassy using Zaev and his junta as its intermediary, confessed Micov today.

All political parties in Macedonia – large and small – are under the control of the Western services and their Macedonian puppets. Some of them: SDSM, VMRO-DPMNE, DUI and others, were even created by secret foreign services. Is it normal to you that all political parties in Macedonia would sell their soul to the West and NATO even though the entire population is Christian Orthodox? Not one political party wants friendly ties with Russia.

Really?

That's the level of control the West has over Macedonian political parties, says Stefan Vlahov Micov.

In a post on his personal FB page, Micov says:

It is abnormal in a Christian Orthodox state like Macedonia, for all existing parties, and I mean all of them, to be oriented towards the West, although much of the population wants closer friendship with Russia. That is why I accepted to be deputy chairman of the rebranded party under a firm condition: to have a major say in the strategy of the party. I wrote the party program (the section for the Eurasian Union was prepared by another colleague), of which thousands of copies were distributed throughout Macedonia – writes Micov.

The president of United Macedonia, Janko Bachev, surprised me when he suggested that our party logo should resemble that of Putin's political party "United Russia". I saw no reason for it. In the end we settled for our Macedonian 16 ray sun, the lion and the red color.

In a very short amount of time, we ended up bringing in influential Russians such as Savin and Dugin to Macedonia. In April we went to Moscow. In Macedonia we created 62 offices. What brought my attention and a few red flags is our rapid development and the fact that none of the SDSM-run newspapers, or CIA run Voice of America, DW... wrote anything negative about us, but the papers that I didn't think would write anything negative about us, wrote a lot of negative things – not realizing that they knew who is behind this political party – says Micov.

**BEHIND THE SCENES – Whole Project Run by the US Embassy**

In essence, the idea of creating a "pro-Russian" party in Macedonia was 100% initiated and run by the US Embassy while Zaev's junta were the intermediary, the point of contact between them and Bachev. The sole purpose and goal was to portray Russian influence in the country and thereby increase Western pressure for the country to be swallowed by NATO as well as speed up the genocide against the Macedonian people and the demolition of the Macedonian state.

Editor Note: Just yesterday we wrote of the UK doing the same thing in Macedonia, creating fake opposition run by them.

I applaud Mickoski who very early stated that Janko Bachev works for Zaev. Now of course, we all know that Bachev and Zaev are in constant communication – continued Micov.

Other red flags kept popping up after Janko Bachev stated “United Macedonia” is an extended hand of the Russian Government. What the hell!? Now, we all know that his statements were ordered from someone else, think of a flag with stripes and stars – says Micov.

The Russians very quickly saw through Janko Bachev, describing him as first and foremost “Anti Macedonian” and certainly not a “Russophile” – says Micov.

In the end, Micov says that Bachev is yet another traitor in the long list of traitors to Macedonia.

Today Micov announced he is quitting the party and wants nothing to do with a US Embassy run political party/project.

Has anyone noticed the speed with which American activities in the country are crumbling left and right?

## **The Macedonians in the Diaspora**

The Macedonians today living in Canada, the USA, Australia and the world over did not end up where they are just by accident. Almost every Macedonian found outside of Macedonia today is either a political or economic refugee who was driven out of his or her homeland by oppression, violence and economic strife.

The turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century was a milestone in the history of the Macedonian people. Hopelessly outnumbered, many fought for their freedom and independence in the great and stubborn National Ilinden Uprising in 1903 but lost to the Ottomans. This too was by no accident. It was the will of the European monarchies and the Great Powers to have the Macedonians engaged in a struggle against the Ottomans so that both entities would weaken and become prey to western ambitions. As I have shown in this book, the 1903 Ilinden Uprising was instigated by the Great Powers for exactly that purpose. After both the Ottoman Empire and the Macedonian people were weakened, Macedonia was invaded, occupied, partitioned and annexed by the Great Power vassal states, Greece, Serbia, Bulgaria and Albania.

Canada, Australia and the United States were rarely visited and were virtually unknown to the Macedonians prior to 1903. Those who had ventured to these distant lands were mostly migrant workers looking to make some money and return home to invest it. No one at that time entertained the slightest notion of settling permanently in these lands. Unfortunately the failed 1903 rebellion brought catastrophic consequences to the Macedonian people and drove them to flee abroad to save themselves. And thus began the disintegration of the Macedonian nation.

The Macedonian situation did not improve over the years and more and more Macedonians were driven out of Macedonia mostly during the Balkans Wars when Macedonia was invaded, occupied and partitioned by Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria and later during the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> World Wars as well as during the so-called Greek Civil War.

Having fled their homeland as war refugees the vast majority of Macedonians immigrated to Canada, the USA and Australia where

they made their new homes. Even though they now live abroad most Macedonians keep interests in their former fatherland, always hoping for the situation in Macedonia, particularly in the Greek and Bulgarian occupied part, to improve so that they can one day return and reclaim what once was theirs. This was particularly true with the Macedonian refugees from the Greek Civil War, especially the 28,000 Child Refugees who were driven out of Greece at the height of the Greek Civil War in 1948. Unfortunately their wishes to this day have not been fulfilled and if my assessment is correct that there are powers out there that want to destroy the Macedonian identity, their wishes will never be fulfilled. And the longer they remain outside their homeland the easier they will disappear.

My father, like many other fathers, left Greek occupied Macedonia and went to live in Canada with hopes that we could finally find the kind of freedom to be Macedonians that we lacked at home. We found that freedom, I am an example of that, but I am not sure how long we will last as Macedonians. My guess is three generations...

Even though we left our homeland we never abandoned it. We feel that we have a right to be attached to our birthplace and to have a say in what happens to our homes and properties but as time passes and with each generation that interest diminishes. I am sure this was all foreseen by the architects who planned our demise. Canada may be great for some things but it is terrible for preserving our Macedonian identity. This equally applies to every place outside of Macedonia.

## Conclusion

Even though Macedonians are indigenous to Macedonia and are its original landowners and caretakers, Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria by act of war in 1912, 1913 invaded Macedonia and occupied, partitioned and annexed Macedonian territories for themselves. Albania was later given a small piece of Macedonia. Besides losing their lands, these Macedonians, especially those living in Greece and Bulgaria, since then have been economically deprived and culturally oppressed. They have been stripped of the right to call themselves Macedonian, to practice their Macedonian culture and speak their Macedonian language. Since 1912 many have also been evicted from their homes, stripped from their lands, forcibly assimilated into foreign nations, tortured, jailed, murdered and denied their ethnic identity, language and culture simply because they are Macedonian.

As I have shown throughout this book, through the enactment of discriminatory laws and through a climate of dislike for Macedonians in general, the Macedonian people have been denied economic opportunities like well paid jobs, positions of authority in government, positions in educational institutions, high positions in the military, etc. The reasons for this are obvious. By denying the Macedonian people their ethnic identity Greece, Serbia, Bulgaria and now some Albanian people and their patrons the Great Powers have created a climate of hatred and dislike for Macedonians putting pressure on them to abandon their identity, language and culture and even leave their ancestral homes. This has been happening since 1878 and is happening to this day, even in the Republic of Macedonia, an independent and sovereign Macedonian state. Many, particularly the Greeks, claim that Macedonians don't exist and therefore have no rights. This unfair practice unfortunately has driven many Macedonians out of their ancestral homes and lands and forced them to seek life elsewhere, mostly in western countries.

Beyond that and besides occupying Macedonian territories, both Bulgaria and Greece have usurped parts of the Macedonian historic heritage and have claimed Macedonia's history as their own.

Yet, in spite of all this, the Macedonian people fought against Fascism and Nazism in World War II on behalf of these occupiers

and helped them preserve their sovereignty, especially Greece. Macedonians did this because they wanted to live in peace as equals, a concept these occupiers and their patrons the Great Powers cannot accept to this day.

As I have shown in this book, one of the reasons the second armed struggle was started in Greece, later termed the “Greek Civil War”, was to rid Greek occupied Macedonia of its Macedonian people. It was planned by England and executed by the Greek government and by the Communist Party of Greece with assistance from England and the United States. And as we know today, it annihilated a great part of the Macedonian population that was living in Greek occupied Macedonia.

Given that the Communist Party of Greece (CPG) was responsible for leading and guiding the struggle and given how its top leadership treated the Macedonians, we can safely say that the Greek communists did not have the Macedonian people’s best interests at heart. The CPG was responsible for the safety and security of the Macedonian people and it let them down... on purpose. In fact, given how Zahariadis and his cronies tried to blame the loss of the struggle on the Macedonian fighters is indicative of the CPG’s attitude towards the Macedonian people. The CPG was neither a good leader nor cared for the Macedonians. But this should not be a surprise to anyone given how Greeks behave towards Macedonians in general. The fact that no power or authority stepped in to end the genocidal Greek Civil War and stop the carnage of the Macedonian people, is a good indication that either no one in the world cared or the carnage was carried out with the blessing of someone very powerful. And today we know, with much certainty, that England and the United States supported those who committed the carnage.

When the CPG and its partners needed the Macedonians to spill their blood they offered them equality and human rights but as soon as that need passed the offer was slowly withdrawn. The moment the Macedonian people showed unity and strength the CPG and its partners took action to dissolve it. Every time Macedonians showed strong leadership the CPG and its partners made sure that that leadership was removed and the people behind it were vilified. This is how the CPG and its partners controlled the so called Greek Civil

War making sure the Macedonians did not win. The CPG was nothing more than another pawn in the game the Great Powers played with the lives of the Macedonian people. For that matter so was the Greek government, the CPG's main opponent.

The CPG top leadership and its partners, for unknown reasons at that time, sold out to the Greek government at Varkiza. In other words, the CPG voluntarily capitulated to the Greek government and England, its backer. After that, knowing full well that it would be impossible for the communists to win, especially since the Greek government was backed by Great Powers England and the USA, and knowing full well that it would not be supported by the Soviet Union, the CPG initiated the Greek Civil War.

In retrospect, by initiating the Greek Civil War the CPG achieved two objectives; (1) it led the communist movement in Greece to its destruction and (2) it cleansed Greek occupied Macedonia of its Macedonian population, which had been a Greek and English aim since Greece acquired Macedonian territories and people in 1912, 1913.

So what exactly did the CPG and its partners achieve in Greece that can be considered positive for the Macedonian people? Absolutely nothing! The way the CPG top leadership and its partners handled the Greek Civil War would lead one to believe that they were either completely incompetent or were working for the English and Americans. The English and Americans wanted to root out the communists from Greece and the Greek government and England wanted to eradicate the Macedonian people in Greek occupied Macedonia. Apparently the top CPG leadership and its partners succeeded in doing both.

In spite of all the promises made to reward the Macedonian people for their effort, including those for fulfilling the Atlantic Charter, the Macedonians in Greece received nothing. Ironically, for their vast sacrifices to free Greece and make it a better place to live, the Macedonians were "reduced" in numbers like never before. Entire villages were wiped out and reduced to rubble and even those that were not bombed were robbed of their population.

First it was the 28,000 refugee children ages 2 to 14, all removed from the villages supposedly for their own safety. They were removed under the premise that they would be returned as soon as the war was over, after the communists won. No mention was ever made of what would happen if the communists did not win. Anyone questioning the wisdom of the CPG was labeled a coward and a traitor. There was no “plan B”, in this CPG led war, not even guarantees for the survival of the Macedonian civilian population. After the Macedonian children were evacuated the villagers went next, the pregnant women, the very young and the very old. They were all told to flee to Albania to save themselves from the Greek bombs. But once they crossed the border they were no longer allowed to return. And finally it was the fighters who fought in the Greek Civil War who were driven out. Many were veterans of WW II who had spilled blood to free Greece from the German, Italian and Bulgarian fascists. Once they crossed the border they too were not allowed to return. Those who remained in Greece were hunted down and killed. More than half a century later these Macedonians are still not welcome in Greece, not even their children. Eradicating the Macedonian population was always Greece’s plan but no one would have guessed that it would be the communists who would succeed in doing it. I can’t say with certainty that this was a “Greek communist plan” but the results speak for themselves.

It is usually customary for a country to account for its people, even if it considers them to be criminals, but not Greece. Greece has not published any statistics to show how many people it exiled or how many it killed during the dreaded Greek Civil War. Greece did not even have the decency to bury its dead citizens, some of whose bones to this day litter the mountainside. Most societies honour their fallen, especially those who fought for change and to better their lives and those of their countrymen, but not Greece. Thousands of Macedonian partisans, young men and women cut down in their prime, rest in unmarked mass graves waiting to be forgotten. How do the Greeks honour the Macedonian fighters who gave their lives to better Greece? They honoured them by burning their villages, exiling their living relatives and by denying them their most basic human rights. There is no justice for the Macedonians in Greece, not even for the dead whose bones and skulls to this day litter the countryside waiting to be buried and not for the living who were

ejected from their homeland and are now roaming the world still unwelcome to return.

I want to mention at this point that the so-called “Greek Civil War” was a different war to different people. In the beginning the Macedonian people were told that they were fighting to reunite all of divided Macedonia. Once engaged in the war they were told they were fighting for human and social rights as equals with the Greeks. Then as the war became very hot, they were told they were fighting for their lives. The Greek people on the other hand were told that the war was about carving out Greek territories and handing them over to the “Slavs” in the north. They were told that the Macedonian people fighting alongside the Greek communists were actually foreign bandits whom the communists were helping carve out Greek territories. The rest of the world, however, was led to believe that the war in Greece was actually a “civil war” where communist Greeks were fighting against capitalist Greeks attempting to take control of the Greek state. And since, according to the Yalta Agreement, England and the west were granted influence over Greece, the communists were violating this Agreement and needed to be removed. And thus England and the United States were there for exactly that purpose, exercising their legal rights.

As much as I want to agree with the Greeks and say that the Macedonians indeed fought for an independent and united Macedonia, because that would have been my wish, the facts however tell a different story. There were no battles ever registered of Macedonians fighting against the Greeks between 1939 and 1949. Outside of a number of small armed groups instigated by the Italian and Bulgarian Fascists there were no Macedonians openly calling for an uprising against the Greeks. It has always been the wish of the Macedonian people to live free and independent but never have they ever risen against any of their occupiers be it Greece, Serbia, Bulgaria, or Albania. The Macedonians in Greece would have been content, as the Macedonians in Yugoslavia were, if they were granted human and national rights and the right to form a Macedonian republic as part of a Greek federation. Unfortunately that did not happen. The Greeks as well as the English did not trust the Macedonians and acted on their worst fear, fear that they may lose their precious Macedonia which by the way they acquired by

force of arms in 1912, 1913 and against the wishes of the Macedonian people. And, above all, what is wrong with wanting to be free? If the Greeks and the English were less oppressive and a little less paranoid and gave the Macedonians a bit of freedom then perhaps there would have been less anxiety and worry about losing Macedonia. The Macedonians would not have a reason to want to separate. Unfortunately with time the “Greek shackle”, with Great Power blessing has only tightened.

What did the Greek Civil War mean for the Macedonian people? Outside of losing most of the Macedonian civilian population to exile, more than 13,000 Macedonian fighters lost their lives and thousands more were executed by the military courts in Enidzhe-Vardar, Lerin, Ber, Kozheni and Solun. Thousands more were maimed in the government sponsored torture chambers and jails in Edi-Kule, in Solun, in Corfu, Aistrati, Gavdos, Folegandros and other places. Hundreds more contracted tuberculosis and died in the Makronisos and Giura concentration camps. Many more went mad from physical and physiological torture and those who did survive were further humiliated by being forced to take a “pledge of loyalty” to the very state that tortured them. This is what the Macedonians gained by helping Greece free itself from its occupiers.

Those 45,000 or so civilian Macedonians who fled Greece only to save themselves from the Greek bombs are now permanent refugees and political emigrants. The properties and homes which their families owned for centuries were confiscated and given to “Greeks with proven national feelings”.

And after all that has happened and is happening to this day, Greece still calls itself a democracy!

All that the Macedonian people wanted since 1913, since they found themselves under Greek control, was to be recognized as equal citizens of the country to which they paid their taxes and served as soldiers.

What danger will Greece face if it recognizes its minorities and awards them their ethnic and national rights as prescribed by international law? What danger will Greece face if Macedonians are

allowed to speak their mother tongue without fear of repercussion, to have their own Macedonian schools, churches and cultural organizations? Absolutely none! In fact quite the opposite may happen. By recognizing its ethnic minorities Greece will surely receive their sympathies and support. Its recognition will reassure the minorities that they are valuable citizens and that their sacrifices were not in vain and Greece will finally earn the right to call itself a democracy.

Before closing this story there are a few remaining questions that need to be asked. Did the West, particularly the USA, Canada and Australia, participate in the removal of communists from Greece after the Greek Civil War?

It is well-known that many “known communists” were expelled from the USA and Canada during the 1950’s. I have also been informed that at the same time supposed communists from Greece, who wanted to immigrate to Canada, the USA and Australia, were allowed to leave Greece. When they left they were given sealed envelopes to take with them. These sealed envelopes were to be presented to the various customs officials where these people landed. It is alleged that the envelopes contained personal information on these individuals, parts of which alleged them to be communists.

After landing in the destination country many of these individuals were required to report to their local police stations and those who inquired why were told because Greece had classified them as communists.

Some of these so-called communists, however, were not communists at all but simply Macedonians. So the questions that need to be asked here are (1) “Did Greece continue to exile Macedonians from Greece under the pretense that they were communists?” And (2) “Were the USA, Canada and Australia aware that these Macedonians were not communists at all and were exiled simply because they felt Macedonian?” Of course they knew! The plan to eradicate the Macedonians in Greek occupied Macedonia did not end with the conclusion of the Greek Civil War but continued and is still ongoing to this day. In fact the plan to eradicate

everything Macedonian has been expanded to include the Macedonian people living in the free and independent Republic of Macedonia. Non-recognition of the Republic of Macedonia's name is a symptom of that eradication process.

And so the war that was started against the Macedonian people in 1878 continues... The English gave Macedonia back to the Ottomans without a single guarantee for the Macedonian people then and since then we have been at the mercy of the Great Powers... The only thing that has changed since then is the passage of time.

“The first step in liquidating a people is to erase its memory”.  
(Milan Kundera)