WE AND THE OTHERS: GREECE'S IMAGE IN FYROM'S PRESS AND EDUCATION SYSTEM (1995–2002)

Vlasis Vlasidis

I. Introduction

History and international relations record the course of human affairs. We use these disciplines to determine the causal links and the effects of events at the individual and societal levels, and on society's institutions. These, however, are inadequate to describe the underlying currents within a society. They can not sufficiently explain the perpetuation of wariness, of a negative image, and even of a sense of hostility, among peoples; nor how a nation approves and abides by the decisions of its leaders against other states or nations; nor even how negative stereotypes of a people are handed down from generation to generation. These fall within the province of political communication. Political communication examines the messages addressed to general or specific audiences, the means used to disseminate them and their effect on the specific target group.

The object of this study is to explore the image of Greece held by the society of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, as this has been created by two very important channels of information: the media and the education system. The media address the entire social body and have acquired increasing

importance in the creation of social awareness; the education system, is the traditional vehicle through which ideologies and the social consciousness of the new generation are shaped.

It is only within the past couple of decades that the press has been gradually recognised as a legitimate and reliable source for academic research in European countries. One of the principal reservations put forward by scholars is that the press presents a certain interpretation of reality and not the reality itself and therefore cannot serve as the sole source for the writing of history. It is, however, mainly used as a source through which to determine trends and tendencies across different social strata and public opinion in general. This is particularly the case for countries that are in a process of re-organisation or transition. FYROM, like all the other Balkan countries with the exception of Greece, falls into this category.

From October 1996 to September 1998, the press monitoring system 'Balkan Neighbours' operating on a daily basis in seven Balkan countries concentrated on their image that was constructed in the media of their Balkan neighbours and of the minority groups within their borders. This programme published monthly reports that could be downloaded from the Internet (though these are no longer available).[1] Following the Ohrid agreement, International War and Peace Reporting also developed a programme for monitoring FYROM's Slav-Macedonian and Albanian newspapers and television stations in order to assess relations between the two ethnic communities and the mood of public opinion.[2]

At the same time, education, is a sector to which all the Balkan states attributed particular importance throughout the 1990s,

1. *Balkan Neighbours Monthly Reports* at http://www.access.online.bg/bn/reports/cover.htm, downloaded 1 November 2002.

2. See Media Monitoring at http://www.iwpr.net/index.pl?balkans_mac_project_monitoring.html, downloaded 18 November 2002.

since the Marxist approach that had predominated during the Cold War decades had to be expunged. In the case of the states formed following the dissolution of Yugoslavia, the changes in the education sector were fundamental. In addition to the ideological aspect that were altered, the actual content of many school subjects was equally transformed. Some of these countries, such as Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, experienced an immediate change-over. Others, including FYROM, experienced a transitional stage (1992–1996), during which both the old (i.e. Yugoslav tradition) and the new were simultaneously present in the education system.[3]

Across the Balkan region, the education systems are defined by their ethnocentric nature. Importance was traditionally given to the primary ethnic group and to the study and promotion of its values, principles and cultural characteristics, thereby forming the basis upon which each country modelled for the socialisation of its youth at school.[4] In this context, history as a school subject acquires a particular significance, since this is the main channel through which each nation shapes a new, or chooses a sovereign theory for its 'journey' across the centuries and defines its relations with its neighbours. The same holds true for FYROM. History became one of the core subjects in its education system, with two hours of weekly instruction in both primary (grades 5–8) and secondary school (all grades).[5]

3. Snezana Koren, "Yugoslavia: a Look in the Broken Mirror. Who is the Other?", in Christina Koulouri (ed.), *Clio in the Balkans. The Politics of History Education*, Thessaloniki, 2002, pp. 193–194.

4. Thalia Dragonas-Anna Frangoudaki, "The Persistence of Ethnocentric School History", in Christina Koulouri (ed.), *Teaching the History of Southeastern Europe*, Thessaloniki, 2001, p. 39.

5. Emilija Simoska, "Educational System and History Teaching – FYR Macedonia", in Christina Koulouri (ed.), *Clio in the Balkans. The Politics of History Education*, Thessaloniki, 2002, pp. 495–496.

2. The Press

2.1. A few words about the media in FYROM

According to FYROM's Secretariat of Information, in 1997 the country counted 5 daily, 40 weekly and 50 fortnightly newspapers, as well as approximately 134 monthly newspapers and periodicals. There were also 90 radio and 29 television stations and another 91 organisations which owned their own radio or television station.[6] Three years later the situation remained the same. In March 2000 there were 11 daily newspapers (9 of them political), 21 weekly and 10 fortnightly newspapers and periodicals. In addition, there were 333 monthly newspapers, most of which published at irregular intervals due to a lack of resources. In the field of electronic media, there were the state MRTV with three television channels and five radio programmes, 29 local public radio stations whose legal status is unclear and of which 12 also broadcast television programmes, and 111 private companies active on the regional or local level.[7] Most newspapers and radio and television stations focused primarily on matters of local interest.

From its independence until 1997, FYROM's media sector was monopolised by two state agencies, namely the Nova Makedonija publishing group and Macedonian Radio Television. Apart from its flagship *Nova Makedonija* newspaper, the group also published one in Slav-Macedonian (*Vecer*), one in Albanian (*Flaka e Valezarimit*), one in Turkish (*Birlik*) and a weekly magazine (*Puls*).[8]

---

6. Secretariat of Information, *Facts about Macedonia,* Skopje, 1997, pp. 46–47.

7. Vesna Sopar, Emilija Jovanova, "The Media System in the Republic of Macedonia: Broadcasting between the Normative and the Real", Skopje, 2001, pp. 6–9, at http://www.mediaonline.ba/mediaonline/attach_eng/666.pdf, downloaded 1 August 2001.

8. For more information on the newspapers in the Nova Makedonija group, see Blagoja Nineski, *Petsatnite I elektronskite mediymi vo Makedonija*, Skopje, 2000, pp. 11–12, 15–17.

It owned the only modern presses in the country, and controlled most newspaper distribution points. Other newspapers which began to publish after 1995 were charged high rates for the use of the company's presses.[9]

Many journalists chose to leave the state agencies and work for the new privately owned newspapers. In March 1996, the newspaper *Dnevnik* was launched, and it immediately gained a large readership. *Dnevnik* was financially supported by the Open Foundation, it was better organised, better presented and sold at a much lower price.[10] Given that it was the first newspaper to adopt a critical attitude towards the government and various state agencies, it was subjected to a series of controls during the course of that year and was obliged to find its own distribution channels.[11] In autumn 1998 another new newspaper, the *Makedonija Denes*, was launched, with Zlatko Ajanovski, formerly of the *Nova Makedonija*, as its editor.[12] The new newspaper also tried to maintain a line independent of party politics, but the result was that in 1999 its operating capital was frozen by order of the government.[13] The public responded eagerly to the new newspapers. The – formerly mighty – *Nova Makedonija* saw its

9. Zeljko Bajic, "Macedonia: Enough Blunders to Fill Up a Textbook", *Media in Transition: Examples of South-Eastern Europe*, at www.aimpress.ch/dyn/dos/archive/data/2001/200104-dose-01-05.htm, downloaded 12 December 2002. International Journalists' Network, *Macedonia: Press Overview*, at www.ijnet.org/profile/CEENIS/Macedonia/media.html, downloaded 11 September 2001.

10. For more information about *Dnevnik*, see Nineski, *op. cit.*, pp. 18–19.

11. International Press Institute, *1997 World Press Freedom Review, Macedonia (FYROM),* at www.freemedia.at/wpfr/macedoni.htm, downloaded 11 September 2001.

12. For *Makedonija Denes,* see Nineski, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

13. International Press Institute, *2000 World Press Freedom Review, Macedonia (FYROM),* at www.freemedia.at/wpfr/macedoni.htm, downloaded 11 September 2001.

circulation fall and, owing to a poor privatisation strategy, was not able to react.[14] The middle of 1999 saw the launch of another political daily, the *Utrinski Vestnik*, while in early 2000 *Vest,* a local version of a British tabloid with a similar style, format and content, began appearing on the news-stands.[15]

Neither the print nor the electronic media in FYROM can by any stretch of the imagination be called independent as the country's political forces exert both direct and indirect control over the press and the television. The two main parties (SDSM and VMRO-DPMNE) and their allies tried to - and when in power succeeded - influence editorial policy to their advantage.Given that the General Manager and Board of Directors of the state television channel and of *Nova Makedonija* were appointed by the government, government control of the media was absolute. Thus the policy line of the most important print and electronic media one-sidedly favoured the governing party, namely, the Social Democratic Union (SDSM). SDSM was the new edition of the former "League of Communists", and remained in power until 1998.[16]

SDSM's defeat in the 1998 elections was largely due to VMRO-DPMNE's promise to deregulate the media market and to refrain from interfering in editorial policy. Nonetheless, once elected, the VMRO-DPMNE placed its own people in all of the key positions of the state media. *Nova Makedonija's, Vecer*, *Flaka's* and MRTV's support towards the new government became

14. Zeljko Bajic, "The Rise and Fall of "Nova Makedonija", AIM, Skopje, 15.12.1998, www.aimpress.ch/dyn/trae/archive/data/199812/81220-001-trae-sko.htm, downloaded 14 September 2002.

15. Nineski, *op. cit.*, pp. 20–21.

16. Bajic, *Enough Blunders*. Milan Banov, "Empty Information Space", AIM, Skopje, 19.6.1997, at www.aimpress.ch/dyn/trae/archive/data/199706/70625-003-trae-sko.htm, downloaded 22 October 2002.

apparent both during the 1999 presidential elections and the 2002 general elections, when they almost openly supported the government candidates.[17] At the same time, *Dnevnik* was considered independent but pro-VMRO-DPMNE, and *Utrinski Vestnik* was viewed as openly pro-SDSM.

Most international organisations have, at one time or another, criticised the relations between the state and the press. The Council of Europe in 2001 blacklisted FYROM as one of seven countries in which state interference jeopardised the freedom of the media.[18] That same year the International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX) wrote that the

> "state media (including the Nova Makedonija group) was anything but independent and that they did not respond to the public's interests. While the private media may have greater independence, they are nonetheless to a considerable degree dependent on the business plans and political ties of their owners".[19]

17. Bajic, *ibid;* Zivko Andreevski, Media and Parliamentary Elections in Macedonia: Handy for Politicians' Use, Skopje, 2002, pp. 2–3 at http://www.mediaonline.ba/mediaonline/attach_eng/7102.pdf , downloaded 22 October 2002.

18. "Macedonia on Council of Europe black list of jeopardized media freedom", SAFAX, Skopje 25.4.2001.

19. International Research and Exchange Board (IREX), *Media Sustainability Index 2001. The Development of Sustainable Independent Media in Europe and Eurasia*, Washington DC, 2001, pp. 147–148. See also the observations of independent researchers, who agree with the international organisations. Andreevski, *op. cit.* Zivko Andeevski, Pluralism in Macedonian Broadcast Media: Who likes Whom, Skopje, 2002 at http://www.mediaonline.ba/mediaonline/attach_eng/6553.pdf, downloaded 22 October 2002.

2.2. The press's attitude towards Greece

Greece's portrayal in FYROM's media and press can be divided into 3 phases. These phases roughly correspond to those of relations between the two countries. The first stage spans from the signing of the Interim Accord to the summer of 1996. The second phase corresponds to the period between the summer of 1996 and the summer of 1998. This period was initially characterised by tension between the two countries and was primarily expressed in the press by a series of negative stories regarding the Greek administration in Greek Macedonia. The third phase, which began in the summer of 1998, is ongoing. In this period the image of Greece which is being portrayed has greatly improved thanks to the normalisation of relations between the two countries.

2.3. The first period

During the aforementioned first period, FYROM's press ran a series of articles regarding Greek Macedonia in general, and the improvement of bilateral relations in particular. This was a time characterised by both wariness and hope. Wariness with regard to the Interim Accord, and optimism about economic co-operation with Greece and entry into international organisations.

It was the *Nova Makedonija* group that first expressed the opinion that the signing of the Interim Accord "marked the end of the Treaty of Bucharest (1913)".[20] The most positive point of the Accord was that Greece recognised FYROM and its frontiers and respected its territorial integrity:

> "For the first time, and indeed officially and in writing, Greece has come to terms with the existence of the Macedonian state.

20. Zoran Antonovski, "Editorial", *Nova Makedonija* 16.9.1995.

> What is more [...] it renounces any territorial claims against the Republic of Macedonia. Finally, speaking in the name of his government, Papoulias writes in his letter that "Greece recognises the Party of the Second Part within its international frontiers".[21]

Regarding the issue of FYROM's name, it has been wrongly assumed that the Accord is a bilateral document and, therefore, binding only for the two signatories involved.[22] Hence, the issue of the name by which Greece shall refer to the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia "remains open, but on the bilateral level".[23]

> "This solution will not mean a change in the name of our country, nor oblige the international community to call our country by this "Greek" designation". On the contrary, they very correctly foresaw that "in any case public opinion would have to get used to the fact that the problem with Greece would last not just for the next few years but for decades",[24] since with the signature of the Interim Accord FYROM reached the "maximum of the concessions it could possibly make... Any concession beyond that line would impinge upon the national identity of the country, which no one has a right to do".[25]

Finally, the Nova Makedonjia group believed that the signing of the Interim Accord gave FYROM the green light to put pressure on Greece to adopt

21. Neveska Mitrevska, "What we have given and what Greece has taken", *Nova Makedonija* 11.10.1995.
22. Neveska Mitrevska, "Editorial", *Nova Nakedonija* 12.11.1995.
23. Antonovski, *op. cit.*
24. *Ibid*.
25. Manco Mitevski, "Editorial", *Vecer* 28.10.1995.

> "a new policy in the matter of the Macedonian minority in Greece and the Macedonian political refugees from that country".[26]

For six whole months after the signing of the Interim Accord Greece featured constantly in FYROM's press. Many articles about Greece in general and Thessaloniki in particular were published in the newspapers. Public opinion was again interested in learning about the neighbouring country which, for many years, had been a prime tourist and shopping destination. Journalists made trip after trip to Thessaloniki to describe the new situation and allay the fears of the people of FYROM.[27]

> "Although Thessaloniki used to have the most hot-blooded demonstrations, things are different now. We do not know what other people's experience may have been, but in our opinion you will have no problem, even as a Macedonian..."[28]

A few months later some other journalists from *Nova Makedonija* toured Greek Western Macedonia.[29]

At the time, great publicity was attributed to the problems regarding the special stickers that had to be affixed on vehicles,[30] the visas,[31] the green vehicle insurance cards,[32] the queues at

26. Georgi Ajanovski, "Editorial", *Nova Makedonija* 22.10.1995.

27. See many articles in *Nova Makedonija* and *Vecer* in the period 20–22.10.1995.

28. "Another Thessaloniki", *Puls* 27.10.1995.

29. "Easter meetings and talks with the Macedonians of Lerin and Kostur", *Vecer* 17–18.4.1996.

30. *Nova Makedonija,* 17.10.1995. *Nova Makedonija,* 19.10.1995.

31. "The old pressures again — arbitrary interpretation of the Memorandum", *Vecer* 21.10.1995.

32. *Nova Makedonija,* 28.10.1995. *Nova Makedonija,* 29.10.1995. *Nova Makedonija,* 31.10.1995.

border crossing points and the refusal of the Greek authorities to allow the entry of those Greeks whose place of birth was written in their passport with its Slavic name.[33] All these articles, however, were intended purely for the information of prospective travellers. Even on the last subject these first articles were cautious, and began to become critical only after letters of protest had been sent by the "Association of Macedonians from the Aegean Part of Macedonia".[34] With the disappearance of the practical problems of crossing the border, communications normalised and the volume of goods carried to and from the port of Thessaloniki began to increase.[35] Moreover, passenger and freight traffic crossing the border at Niki also shot up during the first months of 1996.[36]

The exploratory inquiries of Greek entrepreneurs were also given great publicity. Within a week of signing the Interim Accord an article had appeared announcing – though it was rather a case of wishful thinking – the increased interest of Greek entrepreneurs in developing co-operation with their colleagues in Skopje.[37] The reconnaissance missions were carried out on the level of chambers and commercial associations.[38] The first serious trade deal was the activation of fuel shipments from Thessaloniki to Skopje by the Mamidakis oil company.[39] This was followed by the first commercial advertisements placed by Greek corporations (HELEXPO-TIF, Tellidis & Son SA, Theodoros Athanasopoulos) in newspapers in Skopje.[40] However, these contacts were

34. "No entry into Greece for those born in the Aegean part of Macedonia", *Nova Makedonija* 27.11.1995.

35. "Cross-border goods traffic normalised", *Nova Makedonija* 25.11.1995.

36. *Vecer,* 29.4.1996.

37. *Nova Makedonija,* 19.9.1995.

38. *Nova Makedonija,* 24.9.1995. *Nova Makedonija,* 1.11.1995. *Nova Makedonija,* 18.12.1995.

39. "Interviews with Efthymiadis and Moutsakis", *Puls* 3.11.1995.

40. *Nova Makedonija,* 17.11.1995. *Vecer,* 1.3.1996. *Nova Makedonija,* 4.3.1996.

halted by legal difficulties and by the delay in the establishment of diplomatic missions. The same publicity, of course, was given to co-operation attempts in other sectors as well.[41]

Indeed, there was a good political climate between the two countries, which was also mirrored in the press. This positive climate was neither tarnished by reports on the action brought by the public prosecutor in Florina against the Rainbow Party "for disturbing the citizenry, breaching public order and the peace and causing dissension among the population",[42] nor with the impending trial of Christos Sidiropoulos[43] and the father Tsaknias.[44] Most newspaper reports during this period, however, were concerned with the talks between Greece and FYROM on the issue of the latter's name. All journalists, without exception, tried to prejudice the politicians to adopt the most inflexible line. Wrongly thinking that the name FYROM concerned only the two countries and was valid only in the framework of the United Nations, they competed among themselves as to who could formulate the most inflexible position and forecast the outcome of the dispute most pleasing to public opinion. The following excerpts of editorial commentaries are revealing:

41. See the meeting between the rectors of the universities of Ioannina and Skopje (*Vecer,* 29.9.1995), the attempt to normalise rail service between Greece and FYROM (*Nova Makedonija,* 30.9.1995), the meetings between representatives of the Red Cross (*Nova Makedonija,* 16.11.1995), of the two telecommunications organisations (*Vecer,* 25.11.1995), for the preservation of Lake Doirani (*Nova Makedonija,* 14–16.12.1995, *Nova Makedonija,* 17.4.1996) and the meeting of the mayors of Florina and Bitola (*Nova Makedonija,* 12.4.1996).

42. "The Rainbow Party and Greece accuse one another", *Vecer* 20.9.1995.

43. "We do not repudiate the struggle for respect for these rights", *Vecer* 26.9.1995.

44. *Nova Makedonija,* 4.12.1995.

With the signing of the Interim Accord FYROM reached the

> "maximum of concessions it could possibly make... Any further concession would impinge upon the national identity of the country, which no one has the right to do".[45]
> "It must be made clear once and for all that a name is not a flag! If Greece has not yet understood this, then perhaps our diplomats should be taking that into consideration".[46]
> "Since Macedonia has no problem with its name, but the problem lies with Greece, in future talks should be looking for a solution to the Greek problem, that is, how Greece in co-operation with Macedonia can overcome this problem".[47]
> "... since the name "Macedonia" and "Macedonian" is an element of the above-mentioned Macedonian identity. For this reason alone we cannot even hypothetically consider a government discussing a compromise on the issue".[48]
> "... on the contrary, he should prolong them [the talks] as long as possible, and when he finally sits down to the negotiating table it is more than certain that the maximum that he can permit is that each retains the right to call it as he pleases, which shall in no way change the constitutional name of the country, that is, the Republic of Macedonia".[49]

The journalists, however, like the politicians and public opinion, began to realise that, contrary to their expectations, the name FYROM was becoming accepted by the international

45. Manco Mitevski, "There are limits to everything, even to compromise", *Vecer* 28.10.1995.
46. Zoran Antonovski, "A name is not a flag", *Nova Makedonija* 3.11.1995.
47. Neveska Mitrevska, "Editorial", *Nova Makedonija* 12.11.1995.
48. "All of history in two months", *Vecer* 2.12.1995.
49. P.Pavlovski, "Editorial", *Makedonsko Vreme* 11.11.1995.

community and that no one was going to quarrel with Greece for FYROM's sake. The studious refusal of the Parliamentary Committee of the European Union to call the country by any name at all during its visit there,[50] the refusal of the Premiers of the countries of the European Union to discuss the question of FYROM at the summit meeting and the delay in beginning discussions on relations between FYROM and the EU[51] were the first signs that Greece was far more strongly placed in the international community than they had calculated. It became clear that the international organisations - of which Greece was a member - were ready to accept the name FYROM. Even Greece's decision to nominate Thessaloniki instead of Nafplio as the Cultural Capital of Europe in 1997 was taken as one more measure — albeit indirect — against FYROM.

> "Instead of thousands of famous European artists descending at Athens International Airport, they will be arriving in Thessaloniki, at the recently re-named "Macedonia" airport. Instead of being shown the relics of the ancient civilisations, they will be taken, for example, to museums in Thessaloniki in an attempt to persuade them that the ancient Macedonians were Greeks...".[52]

Six months later the journalists in FYROM had realised that the political expectation that Athens would accept the name FYROM only for their bilateral relations and that Greece would undertake to usher FYROM towards the European Union and

50. "Abuse of hospitality", *Nova Makedonija* 2.11.1995.
51. Zoran Antonovski, "A name is not a flag", *Nova Makedonija* 3.11.1995.
52. Zoran Antonovski, "Thessaloniki – Cultural Capital of Europe 1997", *Nova Makedonija* 17.11.1995.

towards the other international organisations with no return other than the privilege of having all the European credits and profits to be earned by Greek companies channelled through it was wrong.[53] Zoran Antonovski put it most clearly:

> "Macedonia's honeymoon with the rest of the world is over. ... we have lost our privileged position in relation to the other states. Now they treat us as equals among equals, and in accordance with the country's objective strength. This confirms the views of those who said that with the end of the war interest in Macedonia would wane and its negotiating position with it".[54]

2.4. The second period

The initial optimism had thus given way to disappointment which, in turn, brought tension and hostility. Foreign Minister Ljubomir Frckovski tried to exert pressure on Greece by attending the 16th Pan-Macedonian Meeting organised by the Association of Aegean Macedonians in Tyrnovo on 28 July 1996, and adopting all their claims as the representative of the government. This obliged the Greek government to enter a protest, which was rejected by the Foreign Ministry in FYROM with the justification that

> "realisation of the rights of minorities cannot be construed as interference in the internal affairs of other states, since these are issues supported by European law".[55]

53. Zoran Antonovski, "The spirit of New York in a bottle!", *Nova Makedonija* 14.6.1996.

54. Zoran Antonovski, "The honeymoon's over", *Nova Makedonija* 29.6.1996.

55. "Press Release from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs", *Vecer* 31.7.1996.

In response, Greece cancelled the scheduled Foreign Ministers meeting in New York and thus froze bilateral relations.[56]

However, FYROM's leaders had prepared a communications campaign against the Greek authorities in Greek Macedonia rather than against Greece itself. This was achieved through its total control over the Nova Makedonija publishing group and with the support of the new newspaper *Dnevnik*. Between the summer of 1996 and until VMRO-DPMNE took over the reins of government at the end of 1998 several negative articles regarding the situation in Greek Macedonia, the Rainbow Party and the trials of its leaders appeared in the press.

This activity was not carried out directly by the government or the newspapers, but by the various associations of "Aegean Macedonians." These maintained extremely close relations with the ruling SDSM party and many were financed by the state budget. Some of the most active were the "Association of Macedonians from the Aegean Part of Macedonia" (President, Aleksandar Popovski), the Association "Dignity" (President, Kole Mangov), the "Association of Child Refugees from the Aegean Part of Macedonia" (President, Georgi Donevski) and the "Association of Exiled Aegean Macedonians" (President, Aleksandar Donski). The great activity of these organisations may be attributed to either an increase in the sums allocated to them from FYROM's state budget, or to their own initiative.[57]

56. Trajko Mircevski, "Frckovski-Pangalos New York meeting cancelled", *Nova Makedonija* 14.8.1996.

57. See "Republic of Macedonia", "Funds in the amount of 21,500,000 dinars from the 1997 [*state*] budget and earmarked for civilian organisations were apportioned as follows", *Government Gazette,* Skopje 19/25.4.1997 by which the "Union of Associations of the Aegean Part of Macedonia" is granted 800,000 dinars. See also "Republic of Macedonia", Decision to amend and supplement the decision by which the Republic participates in the financing of social organisations, associations and societies for 1997, Decision no. 23-2555/1, Skopje,

Considerable assistance in documenting these reports was provided by the Greek Helsinki Monitor. In its reports to the International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights and with continuous interviews in FYROM's press, the Greek Helsinki Monitor provided documentation for the accusations against Greece and lent them its validity.[58]

This press campaign snowballed throughout 1997 and in the early part of 1998 cultivated a wholly negative image of the Greek presence in Macedonia. One striking feature of this campaign was a whole series of articles published in FYROM's newspapers, attempting to refute any relation between Macedonia and Greece from antiquity to the present, and to discover as many signs as possible of the history and culture of the "Macedonians". Any gaps were attributed to the organised policy of the Greek state throughout the 20th century to remove all traces of the "Macedonian people" and their culture.[59] Slav-Macedonian archaeologists visited finds at Vergina, and the brief period of their visit was enough to convince them that the tomb was not that

3 November 1997, increasing the amount of the grant to Mr Popovski's association, and allowing an initial grant of 50,000 dinars to the Association of Refugees from the Aegean Part of Macedonia.

58. See Panagiotis Dimitras, Nafsika Papanikolaou, "The non-governmental organisations forced the government to toe the line!", *Fokus* 12.2.1998.

59. See pre-release of extracts from the study by Professor Vladimir Ortakovski, "The international position of the minorities", in which the author refers to the measures of the Greek government against the "Macedonian minority" in the 20th century can be compared to the genocides of the Armenians and the Kurds at certain periods. ("The minority in Greece", *Dnevnik,* 7.2.1997) and article supporting the negative stance of the Greek state towards the "Aegean Macedonians "are due to the ignorance of public opinion in Greece about the crimes perpetrated by the state against the "Macedonians" and the state's inability to tell the truth to the Greek people. (Dimitar Culev, "How to tell the truth to Greek public opinion", *Nova Makedonija* 9.2.1997).

of Philip II and that all the finds were an artifice of the Greek authorities.[60] Moreover, according to Blagoj Spirovski-Miki, who at the age of 60 met the Manakis family and was a frequent guest of theirs the Manakis brothers were not Greeks but Vlachs, nor was Greek ever spoken in their house.[61] Such articles, however, were of doubtful effectiveness since even President Gligorov stated in an interview that

> "that we did not come into an empty country, that we intermingled with the people who were living there before: this is not correct. But to identify ourselves with the ancient Macedonians and forget that we are incomers is historically inaccurate."[62]

Much more serious, however, were the accusations levelled against Greece for

- suppression of human rights, due to the refusal of repatriation and property rights to exiles who had repudiated their Greek nationality,[63] and the refusal to accept the constitution of the "House of Macedonian Culture" association.[64]
- refusal to recognise the "Macedonian" minority in Greece and persecution of its members. Specifically, Greece was accused of practising a policy of assimilation towards them through the education of their children who, from kindergarten, were

60. Robert Mitevski, "Royal tombs with many question marks", *Dnevnik* 21.12.1996.

61. Katerina Spasovska, "Glances at History", *Dnevnik* 15.2.1997.

62. "How can the past be a stable foundation for the future of the state?", *Forum* 24.4.1998.

63. P.D., "The tabus head for Europe", *Vecer* 13.5.1997.

64. Toni Glamcevski, "Greece has lost the battle with the Macedonians", *Nova Makedonija* 15.7.1998.

schooled only in Greek.[65] Greece was also accused of destroying inscriptions and icons with Cyrillic lettering in churches in the villages of Greek Macedonia,[66] and for its lawsuits brought against members of the "Rainbow Party",[67]

- violation of the provisions of the Interim Accord on free movement of goods and persons. Specifically, it is an instance of extreme exploitation that the authorities of the two states should refuse entry in Greece to citizens born in that country whose passports indicate their place of birth with its Slavic name.[68] Aleksandar Popovski, however takes an entirely different view:

> "We will never agree to have our passports say that we were born in Greece. That is simply a humiliating negation of the identity of the Macedonians who were born in the Aegean part of Macedonia".[69]

---

65. Gordana Icevska, "International standards have to be respected", *Dnevnik* 12.2.1997.

66. "Programmes for the protection of the Macedonians who come from Greece", *Dnevnik* 18.7.1997. ""Macedonian" graveyards destroyed in Greece", *Dnevnik,* 9.6.1998.

67. Trajko Mircevski, "Greece continues to violate minority rights", *Nova Makedonija* 11.10.1997. "Who will remind her?" (editorial), *Dnevnik* 14.10.1997. K. Janisliev-B.Minevski, "Mother tongue in the dock", *Nova Makedonija* 16.10.1997.

68. See the Gligorov interview in *Nova Makedonija*: "It was agreed that any citizen born in Aegean Macedonia who wants a new passport should agree to have it show only the country of birth and not the place of birth, as indeed is customary in other countries, so that such a passport can be issued. With this passport he can freely cross the Greek border. I have learned that in practice there have been a number of such cases and that there have been no problems with the Greek authorities". *(*"Interview with President Kiro Gligorov", *Nova Makedonija* 30.9.1996).

69. Darka Jankovska, "The "new" passport crosses the Greek border", *Dnevnik* 6.12.1996.

This was to be the banner of Aleksandar Popovski's organisation for the next two years, during which time he sent off letters to the UN, the Council of Europe, the OSCE, the EU and other organisations.[70] He even demanded that the EU

> "ban [Greece] from the Union because it does not recognise the existence of minorities in its territory, thereby stating that they do not respect human rights and freedoms".[71]

Indeed, these various organisations did not restrict themselves to constantly trotting out such accusations in the media. They acquired the freedom to express them in Europe's collective bodies[72] and in all the international fora, asking that Greece be condemned. Actions which could be construed by Greece as hostile were organised solely for the purpose of additional publicity and the further blackening of Greece's image in the international arena.[73]

As an indication, the Union of Associations of Macedonians from the Aegean Part of Macedonia sent Juan Antonio Samaranch a letter in which they expressed their opposition to Greece's hosting of the Olympic Games because "Greece was suppressing the human rights of the Macedonians".[74]

The stereotypical perceptions that had been peddled for several years by, principally, *Nova Makedonija* and the other

70. "Association of Macedonians from Aegean Macedonia", *Dnevnik* 24.2.1997.

71. Aleksandar Popovski (president of the Association of Macedonians from Aegean Macedonia), *Dnevnik* 24.2.1997.

72. F.S. "Unconditional return to the ancestral lands", *Nova Makedonija* 29.11.1996. V.K. Stojkovska, "I shall sue Greece", *Nova Makedonija* 13.3.1998.

73. "Dostoinstvo: How far to my father's home?", *Dnevnik* 24.9.1996.

74. "Union of Associations of Macedonians from the Aegean Part of Macedonia", *Nova Makedonija* 4.9.1997.

newspapers in the group were hard hit in the summer of 1998 with the organisation of the 2nd World Congress of Child Refugees in Skopje and their famous visit to Edessa. The decision of the Greek authorities to allow the members of the association free entry into Greece for one day disarmed those who accused Greece of violating international treaties.

> "Look, an unprecedented event has taken place: child refugees visited their birthplaces for the first time since their Exodus during the Civil War. If you ignore the disagreeable situation faced by the organisers of the event at the Greek border and the acidic comments in the Greek press about the meeting and the "return", the fact remains that Athens has these days officially allowed a very significant event to take place, one that even last weekend was barely conceivable ..."[75]
> Optimists did not believe that Greece would adopt a civilised approach to the Macedonians, or that the meeting in Edessa would be regarded in the light of European democracy. However, we must stress that this is exactly what happened, and the result was a significant step forward in relation to the problems of the Macedonians from the Aegean part of Macedonia – whose rights the Greek state had not protected – and in relation to the issues of concern to those Macedonians who live in the Republic of Greece..."[76]

Barring the articles on Macedonia, however, there was a spectacular improvement in Greece's image. In the political sector, the country's image was positive across the board. Greece's willingness to co-operate with its neighbour was greeted with

75. "The messages from the "exiles'" weekend (editorial), *Dnevnik* 21.7.1998.
76. Miroslav Spiroski, "A step forward", *Nova Makedonija* 21.7.1998.

enthusiasm, as were — and to an even greater degree — the invitations extended to FYROM for co-operation on the regional level with the other Balkan countries.[77] Meanwhile, local authority initiatives were received with pleasure and widely publicised.[78]

Every time the subject of the name surfaced, however, the atmosphere changed. There appeared a nervousness and a wariness with regard to the political leaders of both countries. As a result, journalists feared that a sudden resolution of the dispute would leave them press exposed, since they had overtly expressed their support for retaining the name "Republic of Macedonia".[79] Naturally the nervousness and disappointment came to the forefront every time that Greece prevailed in an international organisation or imposed its position on other states. Greece was proving itself to be a strong country, with the power to essentially regulate FYROM's relations with the international community.[80] FYROM's withdrawal from the UN became, at least, a possibility.[81]

---

77. Zoran Antonovski, "A chance to get away from the Balkan pattern", *Nova Makedonija* 6.11.1997. Atanas Kirovski, "Editorial", *Denes* 7.11.1997. T.Micevski, "Development of co-operation in all sectors", *Nova Makedonija* 6.3.1998. Mirce Tomovski, "Diplomatic speed", *Puls* 25.6.1998.

78. Kire Janislev, "Common annual co-operation programme", *Nova* Makedonija 9.1.1997. F.S., "The local authorities as agents of peace", *Nova Makedonija* 10.6.1997.

79. "The double name is no better than the single" (editorial), *Dnevnik* 2.10.1996. Neveska Mitrevska, "Acceleration of the talks without cause", *Nova* Makedonija 14.12.1996. Gordana Icevska, "One more lost battle for the name", *Dnevnik* 9.4.1997. Gordana Icevska, "For the rest of the world "Republic of Macedonia" and for Greece after the Accord?", *Dnevnik* 6.6.1997. "How long is this nonsense with the name going to continue?" (editorial), *Dnevnik* 27.6.1997.

80. Slobodanka Jovanovska, "Greece is blocking Euro-Macedonian co-operation", *Nova Makedonija* 11.12.1996. Neveska Mitrevska, "All the Greek vetoes", *Nova Makedonija* 30.1.1997. "The quondam FYROM has become a Host Country" (editorial), *Dnevnik* 10.4.1997.

81. "Withdrawal from the UN? Empty talk", *Nova Makedonija* 30.7.1997. "Will someone please clue public opinion in?" (editorial), *Dnevnik* 30.7.1997.

One issue that the press in FYROM made much of was the avoidance of the name "Republic of Macedonia" on behalf of international organisations, states, politicians, diplomats, etc., both at home and abroad. This was particularly the case in the first few months following the signing of the Interim Accord, when it was generally thought that the term FYROM was to be used only within that framework.[82] It would take several letters to the press from foreign diplomats to make journalists understand the position of other states, namely that they recognised and respected the acquis communautaire and aligned themselves with the stronger party for reasons of friendship and community of interest.[83] Reactions to this ranged from rage to disappointment, to self-mockery, to irony. Such reactions, however, largely depended very largely on the prestige of the other party. For instance, in the case of an international organisation or a powerful state and its representatives, the "strictures" were reserved for the government of FYROM; otherwise, the "arrows" were aimed the other way.

On the diplomatic / political level, any problems with Greece's image appeared in relation to cultural affairs. Greece, which retains a disproportionately large (in relation to its size) influence in matters of culture on the global level and is seen as one of the very few countries with a great cultural past and present and as one of the strongest bulwarks against the flood tide of Anglo-Saxon culture, cannot help but project its cultural superiority vis-a-vis FYROM. Of course it was very difficult for the media in FYROM not to present in their true dimensions — or perhaps even slightly enhanced — the cultural offerings that appeared in

82. See the disaffection against the delegation from the European Parliament that visited Skopje late in 1995. ("Abuse of hospitality", *Nova Makedonija* 2.11.1995).

83. See interview with the British diplomat in *Puls*, 26.3.1998.

their cities. The highlight was the Mikis Theodorakis "Zorba the Greek" concert in Skopje in April 1997; this came after a performance of the ballet "The Sound of Myth" by the "Roes" Dance Theatre Company at the Strumica Theatre Festival in September 1996, which was enthusiastically acclaimed by the public and the media[84] and which sparked the publication of volumes of Greek poetry in translation.[85]

The concert was considered the event of the year, both artistically[86] and politically, since it was attended by FYROM's entire political and intellectual leadership. Tickets were not sold, but it was broadcasted live by the state television channel and a Greek delegation of 200 representatives of political parties, members of parliament, university professors, businessmen and artists, travelled to Skopje *en bloc*.[87]

As the first investments by Greek companies began to take shape, Greece was portrayed in the media as a powerful economic

---

84. A. Manimski, "Impressive performance by the Greek Roes Dance Theatre", *Nova Makedonija* 14.9.1996. M.Andonovska, "Open window for co-operation", *Vecer* 18.9.1996. Ivan Ivanovski, "Long-awaited guest", *Puls* 20.9.1996.

85. "Greek poets in the Macedonian language", *Nova Makedonija* 20.5.1997.

86. "E pur si muove" (editorial), *Dnevnik* 14.4.1997, Gligor Stojkovski, "Amateurs and professionals", *Nova Makedonija* 11.4.1997.

87. B. D. "My concert is an act of good will", *Nova Makedonija* 9.4.1997. Trajko Mircevski, "The largest Greek mission arrives in Skopje today", *Nova Makedonija* 12.4.1997. Violeta Dimitrovska, "Performance of the symphony "Zorba the Greek", *Vecer* 13.4.1997. Violeta Dimitrovska, "Applause and hopes for closer rapprochement", *Nova Makedonija* 14.4.1997. Initially, however, certain circles had expressed criticisms of Mikis Theodorakis, that *"Among connoisseurs of music, Mikis Theodorakis is synonymous with amateurism and is treated accordingly"*. The objections to his presence in Skopje were probably largely owing to the fact that "*Mikis Theodorakis is the man who just a few years ago sided with Melina Mercouri and with all the power of his voice declared himself against the Macedonian nation, arguing that it does not exist and is an artificial construct*". ("Mikis Theodorakis has no connection with truly serious music", *Dnevnik* 10.4.1997.)

partner and serious investor : "Mytilinaios", for example, took over the operations of "Sasa" mines, the "Mihailidis" tobacco company bought out "Strumica Tabak", and "Polaris", re-opened the "Bekon" textile plant. Although none of these investments was worth more than 4,000,000 DM, they were given a totally different dimension in light of the investment stagnation by both domestic and foreign investors in FYROM. While certain commentators saw these investments as penetration or invasion, on the whole they were welcome.[88] There was a restrained optimism that, after the first exploratory investments, many of the thousands of Greek and German-Greek companies would relocate part of their operations to FYROM.[89] Moreover, it was hoped that FYROM would be included in the European PHARE programme for cross-border co-operation with Greece.[90] Greek industrialists were, therefore, frequently asked for interviews, although they were somewhat niggardly in this respect.[91]

2.5. The third period

The third – and present – phase began in the summer of 1998, that is, shortly before VMRO-DPMNE came to power. Reflecting the improvement in bilateral relations, it is characterised by a global improvement in Greece's image in the press. This image was created with the drastic reduction of negative reporting on Greece, accompanied by public criticism of

88. Maja Mancevska, "Greek economic invasion", *Vecer* 7.10.1996. V.C.-A.M., "First Greek investment", *Nova Makedonija* 9.10.1996. Lj.K., "Bekon re-opened by the Greek company Polaris", *Nova Makedonija* 26.1.1997.

89. Nevenka Mitrevska, "Vance isn't losing his patience", *Nova Makedonija* 20.9.1996. Kire Janisliev, "Joint annual co-operation programme", *Nova Makedonija* 9.1.1997.

90. "With Kilkis in the European Union", *Dnevnik* 7.2.1997.

91. See further the interview with Ioannis Boutaris in *Puls,* 18.10.1996.

the former leaders of the anti-Greek campaign, and a rise in reporting on political and economic co-operation between the two countries. The only publication that continued to talk about Greek Macedonia and maintain an anti-Greek stance was *Makedonsko Sonce*.

This was the result of VMRO-DPMNE's having chosen to see Athens not merely as a reliable interlocutor but as a strategic partner in coping with domestic and foreign problems. Co-operation between the two states on the government level (exchanges of visits, etc.) were increased, and bilateral relations were unshackled from the constraints of the name dispute. The press in FYROM, , credited the change in policy to Costas Simitis, who activated Greek diplomacy during the period of destabilisation on Greece's northern borders. This change, however, was to create no illusions with regard to the name:

> "The man responsible for the change in Greek policy towards FYROM is Mr Simitis, who saw that recognition of FYROM was part of the progressive process in Europe and the Balkans, and even heretically met with President Gligorov in Crete. Meanwhile, the indefatigable Mr Pangalos was making a series of diplomatic moves, entirely in keeping with his personality, not only on the bilateral or regional but on the international level. This being the case, the Athens meeting was the logical sequel." [92]

The first contact between Foreign Ministers Theodoros Pangalos and Aleksandar Dimitrov, however, was also nearly the last. Mr Pangalos' emotionally charged statements to the press on the Slav-Macedonians in Greece and Mr Dimitrov's position on the matter ended the visit and produced a storm of reaction from

92. Commentary by Mirce Tomovski, "Diplomatic haste", *Puls* 25.6.1998.

politicians and social institutions.[93] Even the Holy Synod of the Church felt obliged to make a statement expressing its criticism.[94]

This, however, did not change the image of Greece as a country. On the contrary, the image continued to improve with the strengthening of bilateral co-operation on all levels: political, diplomatic and economic. Greece's initiative for the convening of Balkan summits and the meetings of the premiers of Greece, FYROM and Albania at Prespes significantly upgraded FYROM's diplomatic position. It equated the country to that of others on the level of the highest political representation, a time when NATO had already begun its intervention in Kosovo and more and more articles criticising FYROM and its attitude towards its Albanian population were appearing in the foreign press. The VMRO-DPMNE saw Greece as a strategic partner in its endeavour to survive in a period of turmoil in the Balkans and tried to improve Greece's image in the media in any way it could. The number of articles praising Greece and extolling bilateral relations increased significantly,[95] while negative ones were

93. Gordana Icevska, "Pangalos has opened Pandora's box", *Dnevnik* 23.12.1998. Atanas Kirovski, "According to Pangalos, there are no Macedonians in Greece!", *Makedonija Denes* 23.12.1998. "Pangalos insulted the ethnic sentiments of the Macedonians", *Nova Makedonija* 24.12.1998. Predrag Dimitrovski, "The Greek bear in the Macedonian courtyard", *Vecer* 30.12.1998.

94. "Statement of the Holy Synod of the Macedonian Orthodox Church" *Nova Makedonija*, 30.12.1998 "Statement of the Macedonian Orthodox Church", *Vecer* 30.12.1998.

95. "New prospects for Greece-FYROM relations", *Nova Makedonija* 24.6.1999. "Changes in the Balkans, but not in frontiers", *Dnevnik* 29.8.1999. "Historic Balkan Summit Meeting", *Nova Makedonija* 23.10.2000. "New age in Greece-FYROM relations", *Nova Makedonija* 13.12.2000. "Ministers exchange compliments – the name issue at the United Nations", *Utrinski Vestnik* 13.12.2000. "Greece in favour of a unitary state in FYROM", *Utrinski Vestnik* 10.7.2002. "Crvenkovski and Simitis discuss the future of Greek investments", *Dnevnik* 10.7.2002.

severely limited and confined to matters of secondary importance.[96]

Greek premier Costas Simitis and, to a lesser degree, his cabinet enjoyed a very positive media image. He was considered a moderniser, serious, capable and a positive factor in regional security and bilateral relations. FYROM's press praised his success in taking Greece into the European Monetary Union, and he was considered the principal architect of the change in Greece's attitude towards FYROM.[97] This was expressed initially with the Foreign Minister's visits to FYROM and later with the Conference of Heads of State and Government of the Balkan Countries in Crete, 3–4 November 1997, to which Kiro Gligorov was invited and where he had substantial talks with Mr Simitis.[98] The President of FYROM was apparently very impressed with the Greek Premier, for he described him as a "realistic and modern politician"[99] and has since then lost no opportunity of showing his esteem for him.[100]

---

96. See the displeasure in the selection of Thessaloniki as the headquarter of the Organisation for the Reconstruction of the Balkans. ("Diplomacy by blackmail", *Nova Makedonija* 20.7.1999. "Once again our country has been overlooked", *Vecer* 20.7.1999.

97. *"...Since Costas Simitis took over in Greece, there has been a change in the country's position on FYROM. The customary protest marches have given way to a period of progress in bilateral relations"* ("Silent revolutionary and reformer", *Nova Makedonija* 12.4.2000).

98. Zoran Antonovski, "A chance to get away from the Balkan pattern", *Nova Makedonija,* 6.11.1997. See also articles by Mirka Velinovska and Atanas Kirovski in *Puls* (6.11.1997) and *Denes* (7.11.1997).

99. Sl. Jovanovska, "Dialogue is possible in the Balkans without intermediaries", *Nova Makedonija* 6.11.1997.

100. *"Costas Simitis is a modern politician who knows that differences are not resolved by violence. He is not pro-American, like his predecessor Papandreou, but pro-European, and he wants Greece to play a serious role in the Balkans, given that his country is the only one in the region that is a member of both the European*

That Simitis enjoyed the confidence of all FYROM's politicians is seen in the fact that he was asked, as Greek premier, to broker FYROM's admission to NATO and the EU. At the same time, Greece's guarantees of FYROM's territorial integrity and national unity were accepted with great satisfaction.[101]

By contrast, the image of Greece's President, Mr Kostis Stefanopoulos, was not all it could have been. He had been criticised several times for statements relating either to the liberation and Greekness of Macedonia[102] or to FYROM and the Slav-Macedonians.[103] Most of these articles, however, have been framed as "reminders" or "history lessons" addressed to President Stefanopoulos who, whether on account of his position or on account of the esteem in which he held on the international political scene, has not been heavily attacked.

Greece's ambassadors to Skopje Alexandros Mallias and Georgios Kaklikis and Foreign Minister Theodoros Pangalos also figured prominently in the FYROM press. Minister Pangalos occupied a front-page position in which the focus was centred on a sense of enthusiasm over the thaw in bilateral relations and hopes

---

Union and NATO... Mr Simitis does not enter into confrontation with the government in Skopje, but buys out the country's most important enterprises", he stressed, citing by way of example Greece's acquisition of the "Stopanska Banka". See the interview with President Gligorov in the Belgrade daily *Glas Javnosti*, which was reprinted by the press in FYROM. "The Greeks are taking over FYROM's economy", *Utrinski Vestnik* 22.4.2002.

101. "Greece in favour of a unitary state in FYROM", *Utrinski Vestnik* 10.7.2002.

102. "Greece would have a hard time without Macedonia", *Makedonija Denes* 27.10.1998.

103. Jovan Pavlovski, "Both intelligent and diplomatic", *Puls* 24.5.1996. "The identity of Macedonia is self-existing and unaltered" (editorial), *Dnevnik* 10.9.1997.

for their improvement and for a better tomorrow.[104] He attracted both the respect due to the position he held in a strong neighbouring state[105] and a host of — spontaneous and studied — reactions to the positions he had adopted on the non-existence of a "Macedonian minority" in Greek Macedonia,[106] his characterization of the Rainbow Party[107] and the undiplomatic expressions he used in relation to diplomats, politicians and journalists.[108] However, his departure from the Foreign Ministry did not elicit either negative qualifications or hopes for a better future. It is fair to say that his image in the FYROM press was, on the whole, similar to his image in the Greek and international press. The head of the Liaison Office frequently gave press conferences promoting the good-neighbour policy Greece desired with FYROM.[109]

Even the intercession of Archbishop Christodoulos of Athens and All Greece for resolution of the problems between the

---

104. Gordanka Icevska, "Heralding a new chapter in relations between Athens and Skopje", *Dnevnik* 20.3.1997. Zoran Antonovski, *Nova Makedonija,* 16.9.1997. Letter from Ljubisa Georgievski, "To your very good health, Mr Pangalos!", *Dnevnik* 13.4.1998. Dimitar Culev, "The meeting in Athens", *Nova Makedonija* 23.6.1998.

105. Zoran Antonovski, "Baggage full of hope", *Puls* 23.10.1997.

106. "Who are the minority? One, two, or maybe 1700 all over Greece, given that that is the number of votes the Rainbow Party won in the elections" (Atanas Kirovski, "According to Pangalos, there are no Macedonians in Greece!", *Makedonija Denes* 23.12.1998). Letter from Kole Mangov, "Mr Pangalos, we are not deranged!", *Dnevnik* 13.4.1998.

107. "...The Rainbow is an alliance of Stalinists, Slav-Macedonians and homosexuals that received an insignificant number of votes, and for that reason there is no need to create a special legal and institutional framework for it." (Gordana Icevska, "Pangalos has opened Pandora's box", *Dnevnik* 23.12.1998).

108. Jovan Pavlovski, "Both intelligent and diplomatic", *Puls* 24.5.1996. Gordana Icevska, "Pangalos has opened Pandora's box", *Dnevnik* 23.12.1998.

109. "Interview with Ambassador Georgios Kaklikis", *Nova Makedonija* 25.5.1999.

Patriarchate of Serbia and the "Macedonian" Orthodox Church was treated positively, whereas if it had occurred a year before there would have been accusations of unwarranted meddling in FYROM's internal affairs.

> "By accepting the role of intermediary in the resolution of the Serbo-Macedonian ecclesiastical and ethnic conflict, Archbishop Christodoulos has made an historic move. The courage required of the new leader of the Greek Orthodox Church in accepting this mission may be judged by the fact that several other Orthodox Churches had already refused to have anything to do with it".[110] "Indeed, impressions of the meeting were very positive, which was only to be expected, since the Greek Archbishop is an enlightened and very talented man. For this reason, it is entirely natural that His Beatitude should have displayed such breadth of knowledge within such genuine ecclesiology in order to address the problems of everyday existence as well as knowledge und understanding of our problem."[111]

The large-scale Greek investments in FYROM with the construction of the Thessaloniki-Skopje oil pipeline and the purchase of the OKTA refinery received great publicity. With these investments Greece acquired the image of a strong neighbour who was making an effort to integrate FYROM's energy infrastructure into its own economic strategy.[112]

---

110. Slobodan Sodic, ''Skopje and Belgrade maintain silence over the Greek mission of intercession'', *Dnevnik* 4.11.1998.

111. G. Basilevska, ''Intercession for the unity of the Orthodox Church'', *Vecer* 4.11.1998.

112. Articles commending the purchase of OKTA were published in all the newspapers in FYROM on 9.5.1999. See for example "Pipeline construction begun", *Utrinski Vestnik* 11.11.1999.

Greece's image also improved with the acquittal of the members of the Rainbow Party by the Greek courts on 16 September 1998. The press saw in the court's decision an improvement in the human rights situation in Greece and also an improvement in bilateral relations:

> "The Greek state [...] has shown that it can respect the principle of Democracy. [...] The good news from Florina will further contribute to the improvement in relations between Athens and Skopje. Greek Foreign Minister Theodoros Pangalos repeatedly stressed that relations with our country are improving..."[113]

The improvement in relations made possible the publication of views that a year earlier would have been unthinkable. For instance, the "Aegean Macedonians" were accused of battening on the state and of fostering political dissension for their own benefit.[114] Even Kole Mangov criticised Popovski, the president of

113. "Great victory for the Rainbow, and for the Greek state" (editorial), *Dnevnik* 17.9.1998.

114. "The "creators" of the pompously heralded "jubilee" 50th anniversary reunion of the "child-refugees", with their usual "self-managing style", keep harping on the same strings, forgetting once again that at least 50% of these "refugees" were accompanied by their own (at least at that time) ethnic Greek brothers. What sort of reunion is this, without their presence? Moreover, the Macedonians were not the only ones to have suffered in that bloody civil war: so too, and perhaps to a greater degree, did the Greeks, as well as citizens of the Greek state who were members of other ethnic groups. [...]

And something else. Many of the standing members of the Committee of the "child-refugees" have been using this organisation for more than 10 years solely and exclusively for their own exchequers, either for trips abroad and meetings with the "diaspora", for printing their "monographs" and "poems", etc., using money and resources supplied by their even hotter-headed brethren overseas. This being the case, it was hardly surprising that the "organisers" were publicly held at a distance by "Dignity" and by the Bitola-based "Association of Macedonians from the Republic of Greece"." Letter to the editor, signed Nikola Bundovski, *Dnevnik* 29.6.1998.

"Association of Macedonians from the Aegean Part of Macedonia", saying that he himself visited Greece freely and so did hundreds of others.[115] One of the effects of the rise to power of the VMRO-DPMNE party was to drastically reduce the influence of Popovski and the other refugee organisations from Greek Macedonia. This was reflected in the press by the diminishing frequency of reporting on them. In fact, the VMRO-DPMNE had already warned the refugee associations, via its mouthpiece Dimitar Dimitrov, that it considered the "Association of Macedonians from the Aegean Part of Macedonia" an "*organ of government, that was not working for the interests of the people*".[116] The most important manifestation was the peaceful demonstration of the "Union of Associations of Macedonians from Aegean Macedonia" in the main square of Skopje in protest against Greece's policy towards them.[117]

The issue of talks with Greece to resolve the dispute over FYROM's name regularly crops up in the press and keeps things simmering, much more than it does in Greece. It has become an arena of constant political confrontation between the government and the other parties.[118] The opposition SDSM frequently

115. Letter from Kole Mangov, *Dnevnik* 30.6.1998.

116. M.S., "D. Dimitrov's unorthodox war", *Nova Makedonija* 5.3.1998. Statement from the OMO Ilinden organisation, "Dimitrov hurls false accusations", *Dnevnik* 9.3.1998.

117. "Peaceful demonstration by the Union of Associations of Macedonians in Skopje's main square on Friday", *Nova Makedonija* 20.2.2001.

118. "How we can win, without the Greeks losing", *Dnevnik* 22.2.2000.

"The name 'New Macedonia'", *Dnevnik* 14.5.2000. "The problem of the name moves from the UN to the EU", *Utrinski Vestnik* 13.2.2001. "Greece's diplomatic campaign over the name", *Utrinski Vestnik* 15.5.2001. "Greece salutes the continuation of the parliamentary session", *Utrinski Vestnik* 4.9.2001. "Athens calls for an agreement on the name – Greece has new proposals", *Dnevnik* 5.9.2001. "New proposal for the name", *Utrinski Vestnik* 13.2.2002.

reminds the government that it will accuse it of treason if it ever accepts any name other than "Republic of Macedonia"[119] while, in order to extract itself from the difficult position it kept finding itself in, the governing VMRO party responds with legal action and with threats to publish documents that would prove that the responsibility for the present situation lay with the SDSM which, as the government of the day had accepted the current status.[120] From time to time other contestants such as bodies representing the country's intelligentsia and émigré communities enter the arena.[121] It appeared, however, that by now all the forces making up FYROM's political system and all of the social, cultural and other bodies overtly support retaining the name "Republic of Macedonia" are not willing to see any concession made. Public opinion, according to the polls, agrees with this inflexibility.[122] As a result, Greece remains in the news as the "other", the bugbear, the powerful neighbour, who sets politicians and parties at loggerheads and presses them for a solution in its own favour. Such a solution, it is feared, would affect the cohesion of people and state.

The confrontations on the political level, the conflicts with the Albanians and the reflexes that the media wants to create in the

119. See Frckovski's accusation that the VMRO-DPMNE was working out a compromise with Greece. (*Dnevnik* 13.7.1999).

120. See Ljube Boskovski's attack on Frckovski, that as Foreign Minister he "sold" the name of FYROM to the Greeks. ("Is Boskovski going to sue Frckovski?", *Dnevnik* 12.9.2002).

121. "Academy against changing the constitutional name", *Dnevnik* 14.6.2002.

122. According to surveys carried out on 16 / 17 February 2001 for *Dnevnik* newspaper in response to the rumours that were circulating about a possible compromise with Greece, the "Institute for Democracy, Solidarity and Civil Society" found that, of a sample of 1055 citizens from all parts of FYROM, 90% declared that if a referendum were held they would vote against any change in the country's constitutional name. (*Dnevnik* 19.2.2001).

body politic sometimes lead to the suppression or down-playing of actions taken by neighbouring states, even when these contribute to stabilisation. A characteristic example is the declarations made in support of the existing regime in FYROM by the governments of Greece,[123] Albania[124] and Bulgaria[125] during the clashes with the Albanian guerrillas in 2001, which were given very little publicity in the local media, and the statements made by Albanian officers in Kosovo denying responsibility for the actions of the Albanian guerrillas in FYROM.[126] The media, in fact, attempted to lay the blame for the 2001 crisis on external agencies.[127]

Even in this extremely difficult time, crucial for the very existence of FYROM, the tiniest hint of a rapprochement between the two states over the name of FYROM is met with such a reaction from the press that all government officials hastened to distance themselves from any such move.[128]

Of course, everyone recognises that Greece has the power to block recognition of FYROM as the "Republic of Macedonia." Moreover, it is recognised that as FYROM's participation in the

---

123. "Papandreou on the name and on Greece-FYROM relations", *Macedonian Press Agency,* Skopje 14.2.2001, at www.mpa.gr/article.html?doc_id=171455, downloaded 1 June 2002.

124. "Meeting of Foreign Ministers FYROM-Albania", *Macedonian Press Agency,* Tirana 10.3.2001, at www.mpa.gr/article.html?doc_id=176901, downloaded 1 June 2002. "Albania does not help the guerrillas", *Macedonian Press Agency* Ankara 2.8.2001, at www.mpa.gr/article.html?doc_id=208681, downloaded 1 June 2002.

125. "Tension in FYROM disturbing", *Macedonian Press Agency,* Thessaloniki 6.3.2001, at www.mpa.gr/article.html?doc_id=175368, downloaded 1 June 2002.

126. "P. Harandinai: There is no political centre of the insurrection of the Albanians in FYROM", *Macedonian Press Agency,* Skopje 3.4.2001, at www.mpa.gr/article.html?doc_id=182995, downloaded 1 June 2002.

127. See "The Great Powers divide FYROM", *Focus* 1.8.2001.

128. "The issue of the name should be seen in relation to all events", *Dnevnik* 9.2.2001. "Greek diplomatic campaign to change the name", *Utrinski Vestnik* 16.5.2001.

various organisations - of which Greece is a member - grows, so will the pressure for FYROM to "make concessions". Indeed, the expansion of the European Union to the east with the accession of ten more countries aroused the scepticism of FYROM's political and diplomatic circles, since

> "the ten new members may well be pressured by Greece and forced into using the name Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia in the framework of the European Union and not the constitutional name of Republic of Macedonia". One of these countries, in fact, is Slovenia, which has already recognised FYROM as the "Republic of Macedonia".[129]

3. Education

3.1. History teaching in FYROM

The second major focus of this article is the history textbooks used in FYROM's primary schools today. The basis for the selection of these books was that they were the first to be published after the signing of the Interim Accord and the normalisation of relations between Greece and FYROM. The history books used in the country's secondary schools were written and published immediately after its independence. Hence, given the non-existence of official diplomatic relations it is logical that they should over-accentuate the significance of FYROM and present negative images of Greece.[130] Primary school history texts were selected by the Educational Council of FYROM on the basis

129. *Dnevnik,* 13.12.2002.

130. For the history and geography textbooks used in FYROM's secondary schools see Evangelos Kofos, *The Vision of "Greater Macedonia". Remarks on FYROM' s new school textbooks*, Thessaloniki, 1994.

of a competition, and replaced those previously in use during the period 1995–1996.[131] The books intended for use by the Albanian and Turkish minorities are written in those languages and differ slightly from the other history textbooks in that they treat the history of the Albanian and Turkish peoples more extensively. Each school has the right to use a second textbook of their choice.[132] In practice, however, most schools do not avail themselves of this option.

One teaching aid used in primary school history classes is an historical atlas depicting the historical evolution of the world, paying particular attention to the Macedonian region.[133] The atlas contains all the maps presented in the textbooks plus some additional ones, most notably a "Map of the Balkans in Antiquity displaying the name of Macedonia but not that of Greece".[134]

Almost all classrooms have a pair of maps hung side by side on the wall. One depicts FYROM and its borders with neighbouring states and the other the broader region labelled Macedonia by the Slav-Macedonians representing the "national" boundaries of Macedonia.[135] Maps are vital visual aids in almost all history lessons. This is even more the case in FYROM where historical events regarding the regions that correspond to the territories of today's states are narrated in a diachronic manner. With regard to

131. Educational Institute [FYROM], art.21-421/1, Skopje 28 June 1995 (Grade 5), 21-39/1/1, Skopje 5 June1996 (Grade 6), art.21-31/3, Skopje 30 May 1995 (Grade 7), art.21-37/1, Skopje 5 June 1996 (Grade 8).

132. Simoska, *op. cit.*, p. 496.

133. Novica Veljanovski, Simo Mladenovski, Stojan Kiselinovski, *Atlas za osnovno uciliste*, Skopje, 1997.

134. *Ibid*, p. 14.

135. Emilja Simoska, "General Information about FYROM education", presented at Southeast European Joint History Program, Textbook Committee, Workshop III, "The Macedonian Identity: complementarities, conflicts, denials", Skopje, April 17–18, 2000.

Macedonia, this is different and, in effect, the country is always presented in its greatest territorial extent. Thus the daily co-existence of these two maps erroneously inculcates the pupils with the impression that the Slav-Macedonians are to be identified with this greater Macedonia. Moreover, it evokes feelings of bitterness and disappointment over the injustice brought about by this division.

An anthropological study carried out in 1997 among schoolchildren in Bulgaria on "The image of the other" showed that although they recognise the political and economic conditions that govern relations among today's Balkan states as given, they create their own image of the "other" based on the messages transmitted by the media as well as by their school textbooks and other classroom material focusing principally on sentiment.[136]

3.2. Principles and objectives of history textbooks

The material used in the history textbooks covers world history from antiquity to the present, It uses an approach based on a pattern moving from the general to the particular. In each textbook and in each time period there is an historical framework defined by the most important events on the international level and the narration of events passes successively from Europe to the Balkans and the Macedonian region. At the core of each book is the presentation of Macedonia and the Macedonians from antiquity to the present.

In contrast to international academic and didactic practice the schoolbooks used in FYROM present the history of Macedonia as a single and unbroken geographical space comprised of the three

136. See Tzvetan Tzvetanski, "The Macedonian: Romanticism against Realism", in Christina Koulouri (ed.), *Clio in the Balkans. The Politics of History Education*, Thessaloniki, 2002, pp. 282–283.

parts of today's geographical Macedonia and with a uniform — if not very clear — ethnic character.

For the authors of these textbooks the Macedonians are a separate nation with a long history, whose characteristics are indefinite but strongly differentiated from the neighbouring peoples in all historical periods. Instead of presenting the identity of the Macedonians in the political, ideological, social and cultural sectors, the decision was to select and compare elements demonstrating their difference from, first and foremost, the Greeks and, secondly, the Bulgarians.

The concept, or rather the identity, of 'the Macedonian' is unique and in no circumstances can any other peoples invoke it or claim it as part of their historical continuity and cultural heritage. Any such occurrence in the past has always been of a lawless attack against the indigenous and lawful Macedonian entity. By contrast, the Slavs who lived in Macedonia are the successors of ancient Macedonians and the inheritors of their identity since they intermarried. There was no intermarriage between the ancient Macedonians and other peoples and, even if there were, that would not justify any entitlement to their legacy.

The sequel to this position is in conflict with neighbouring peoples to repulse their designs upon Macedonia and a struggle to maintain the particularity, or better the purity, of the Macedonians. But a conflict requires two opponents, and therefore the Macedonians would have to have a physical substance, and indeed one of comparable size and strength to that of their opponents. Consequently it is necessary that there should be a state. The entire history of Macedonia is conceived as a perpetual endeavour to create a state. Whatever political formations may have from time to time been created in Macedonia take on the character of a "national" state representing the "Macedonian" people.

Since these political formations in Macedonia were ephemeral, while Macedonia took part in the general historical continuum as

a province of great empires, the school textbooks cultivate a sense of bitterness and injustice for all that has happened to Macedonia, and for which the "others" — usually neighbouring peoples — are always responsible. The "others" are also responsible for the loss of territory from this "single" Macedonia at various historical periods. In conjunction with this the situation of the Macedonians living in neighbouring states in the modern period is portrayed in the bleakest of ways, while nothing whatsoever is said about the other ethnic groups living in FYROM. The result is to engender, almost by association, revanchist sentiments in the schoolchildren.

3.3. Continuity

The continuity of Macedonia as a geographical and national unit pervades all history books and is fostered by every possible means. All books have maps illustrating a single Macedonia so that the children will have no doubts regarding the truth of the texts, and from time to time the children are required to answer questions on the subject.

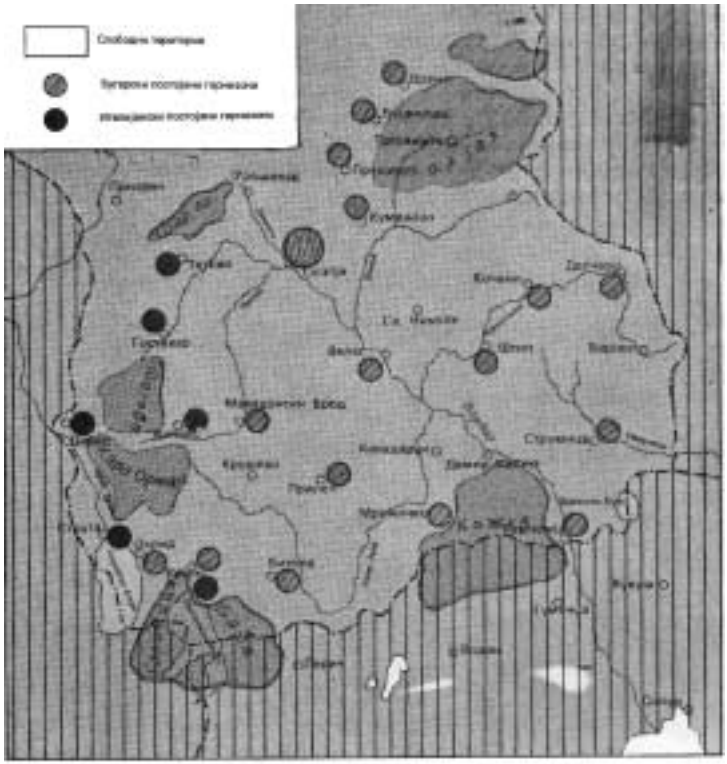
The 5th grade textbook, which covers history up to and including the Roman Empire, has a total of nine maps of the Mediterranean or the Balkan region showing Macedonia as a separate entity divided from the Greek world by a boundary line or as a separate unit within a broader political whole.[137]

137. Simo Mladenovski, *Istorija za V oddelenije*, Skopje, 1996, pp. 63, 69, 78, 81, 92, 97, 102, 107, 114, 133, 146.

„Наша е Македонија" – парола на туѓите пропаганди

The Grade 6 history textbook, which covers the historic past from the late Roman period to the 18th century, has a map illustrating the settlements of the Slavs which, in the case of Macedonia, coincide precisely with the boundaries of the Macedonian continuum.[138] The depiction of Macedonia with its geographical-ethnological boundaries is far more frequent in the Grade 7 history textbook, which covers the period from the end of the 18th century to the beginning of World War I. Specifically,

138. Branko Panov, *Istorija za VI oddelenije*, Skopje, 1996, p. 29.



Слободни території на Македонија во август 1943 година

there are two variations of the map showing Macedonia with its geographical and ethnological boundaries[139] and two showing smaller sections of this map.[140] There are also four political maps of the period where Macedonia is marked with considerable emphasis.[141] The map on page 114, in Trajanovski's textbook, in

139. Alekcandar Trajanovski, *Istorija za VII oddelenije,* Skopje, 1996, pp. 76, 107.

140. *Ibid,* pp. 81, 83.

fact, shows the hands of the newly formed states of Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria reaching out to seize Macedonia, while the title of the map is exceptionally explanatory: "Macedonia is ours, the action of foreign propaganda".

The map of the geographical and ethnological boundaries of Macedonia is found again in the history book that narrates the events of the 20th century.[142] This book also includes a map depicting the "free areas of Macedonia in August 1943", on which are marked border regions of Greek Macedonia, which had been invaded by partisan units from Yugoslavia with the permission of the Greek National People's Liberation Army (ELAS). It is worth noting that the areas controlled by ELAS are not annotated as "free".[143]

3.4. The historical and ethnological continuity of the Macedonians

According to the textbook authors, in early antiquity Macedonia was inhabited by Phrygians and Paeonians who had their own culture, customs and language. The Macedonians make their first appearance towards the beginning of the 9th century BC.[144] By the end of that century the ancient Macedonians had settled in all of geographical Macedonia, except for its northernmost districts. The ancient Macedonians are presented as a

141. *Ibid*, pp. 29, 114, 120, 123.

142. Novica Veljanovski, Simo Mladenovski, Stojan Kiselinovski, Svetozar Naumovski, *Istorija za VIII oddelenije*, Skopje, 1996, p. 38.

143. *Ibid*, p. 82.

144. Mladenovski, *op. cit.*, p. 29

ОПАСНОСТА ОД МОЌНАТА ПЕРСИЈА

"separate nation, with their own language and culture, and were distinguished from the other peoples and tribes by their dress, their customs and their manner of making war"[145]

These views are reiterated many times in this book:

"The ancient Macedonians had their own language, customs, way of life and dress, faith and religion. Unfortunately apart from their names only a few hundred words of their language have been preserved."[146]

145. *Ibid*, p. 92. Many academics from FYROM involved in the production of textbooks do not embrace this point of view. See Jovanovski, *op. cit.*, p. 133.

146. Mladenovski, *op. cit.*, p. 103.

> "As a different nation, the ancient Macedonians were distinguished from their neighbours by, among other things, their dress and their arms, which bore the [Macedonian] symbols."[147]

And lest there should be any tendency on the part of teacher or children to pass over these statements too lightly, these chapters conclude with the following admonitions:

> "REMEMBER: At the end of the 9th century BC the ancient Macedonians lived in almost all of the area of today's Macedonia.[148]
> "REMEMBER: The ancient Greeks had a different language and civilisation. In some areas of cultural life the influence of Greek civilisation was particularly evident"[149]

According to the authors, despite their contacts with other peoples and the influence of the Greeks and Romans, the ancient Macedonians, remained a separate and distinct people until the arrival of the Slavs. This peculiar ethnic-racial purity is necessary in order to justify the transfer of the name and the history of the ancient Macedonians to the Slavs who began to settle in Macedonia in the 7th century AD. Initially the two peoples co-existed, but in the end the ancient Macedonians were Slavicized by the substantially more numerous Slavs, thereby creating the "Macedonian nation" in the 10th century.[150]

147. *Ibid*.
148. *Ibid*, p. 94.
149. *Ibid*, p. 105.
150. Panov, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

> "The ancient Macedonians transmitted to the Slavs not only their culture and their customs but also the names Macedonia and Macedonians and thus remained distinct from the other Balkan peoples."[151]

This newly crystallised nation was further strengthened with the creation of Samuel's kingdom, which allowed other Slav tribes to come into contact with the "Macedonians" and form part of the "Macedonian nation".[152] The presence of the Byzantines in Macedonia is minimised to the point where Thessaloniki is held to be "the only Byzantine base in the Macedonian region".[153]

The placing of the creation of the new "Macedonian" nation in the 10th century represents a new reality in the education process, thereby rejecting the older approach to the ethnogenesis of the "Macedonians" formulated by Dragan Taskovski. Taskovski based his view of history on a Marxist foundation and placed the appearance of the "Macedonian" people in the period of the rise of capitalism and the bourgeoisie, that is, in the 19th century. It seems that the authors of these books rejected this Marxist approach and adopted a romantic perception of the history of the early 20th century. This approach bases the creation of the nations on the dogma *prior tempore, fortior jure*: that is, the farther back in time the historic presence of a people or nation begins, the stronger its national identity and claims for territorial expansion.[154] With this new position, the "Macedonian" people may have coalesced in the 10th century but their roots go back to

151. *Ibid*, p. 35.
152. *Ibid*, p. 55.
153. *Ibid*, p. 33.
154. These positions were adopted by all the Balkan peoples in the early 20th century (Greeks, Bulgarians, Serbs, Romanians) and later by the Albanians.

ancient Macedonia. A second advantage of this new position is that the creation of the "Macedonian nation" is now synchronous with the ethnogenesis of the other Slav Balkan peoples and, therefore, the modern "Macedonians" do not feel disadvantaged in contentions over matters of history with their neighbouring Slav nation-states.

This nation continued to exist through the twists and turns of history. Despite the attempts of the Byzantine Empire to Hellenise them via the Archbishopric of Ohrid, "the Macedonians" continued to speak their own language, considered as barbaric by the Byzantines. All uprisings and local leaders were "Macedonized". This happened with the insurrections of Deljan (1041–1042), of Vojteh (1072–1073), of Karpos (1689), with the heresy of the Bogomils and with most feudal rulers, including the Serb princes Vukasin and Ugljesa, who ruled in the districts of Prilep and Serres.[155] The children, thus, absorb the message that the "national boundaries of Macedonia" remained unchanged and that the "Macedonian" people remains unsubjugated.

Naturally, anything Greek or Byzantine that was produced in Macedonia or any Greeks who came from that region were baptised "Macedonian" and cut off from their environment in order to foster the image of the historic continuity of the "Macedonian" nation. The origin of Cyril and Methodios is not clearly stated, but the pupil is led to believe that "Macedonia is rightly considered by historians as the homeland of the Slavic script and culture".[156] Thus Ioannis Koukouzelis, the brilliant composer of Byzantine music, was baptised a Macedonian because he came from Debar. Moreover, the Macedonian school

155. Panov, *op. cit*., pp. 64, 66, 68, 80, 128–129.
156. *Ibid*, p. 40.

of painting was endowed with an ethnic content and wholly dissociated from the painterly tradition of Byzantium, as was its production outside the borders of the modern-day FYROM.[157]

During the years of Turkish rule there occurred a retrogression, a loss of awareness of "Macedonian identity." However, this was due to the ecclesiastical and educational activity of the Greeks via the Oecumenical Patriarchate. Again, there is no hint of the general characteristics of the Ottoman society as a whole. There is of course a reason for this. If we accept that the Turks, as landowners, represent the aristocracy in the Ottoman Empire, then the Greeks who staffed the machinery of state, conducted trade and were the spiritual leaders of the Orthodox Christians via the Oecumenical Patriarchate were the bourgeoisie. Those of the lower classes who wanted to climb the social ladder had to receive a Greek education and speak the Greek language. In other words, they had to become members of a different national group.[158] If, however, we adopt this commonly accepted view, then it becomes very difficult to justify the appearance of the "Macedonian Enlightenment" which, although there are a number of earlier expressions, followed a course parallel to that of other national enlightenments.

Thus, "in the beginning of the 19th century the ethnic structure of the cities changed and became Macedonian once again" and, finally, "the Macedonian population constituted the majority in the cities".[159] With the growth of trade, many cities in Macedonia developed into important trade and artisanal centres, sparking a

157. *Ibid*, p. 134.

158. Nikola Jordanovski, "Between the Necessity and the Impossibility of a 'National History", in Christina Koulouri (ed.), *Clio in the Balkans. The Politics of History Education*, Thessaloniki, 2002, p. 267.

159. Panov, *op.cit*., p. 78.

process that "gradually led to the creation of a local Macedonian urban population and a Macedonian bourgeoisie".[160] This "Macedonian population" took part in uprisings against the Ottoman Turks like that of Naoussa in March 1822[161]. This turn of affairs was followed by the development of ecclesiastical and educational activity, particularly after the establishment of the Archbishopric of Ohrid in 1869.[162]

Although in the case of the other Balkan peoples' ecclesiastical and educational activity, the people were first educated and then given a national consciousness which subsequently led to national liberation movements, in the case of the "Macedonians" we have a different trajectory. According to the authors of these textbooks, first there was the autonomous creation of an urban class with an ethnic character, followed by participation in national liberation movements and only later by the strengthening of ecclesiastical and educational activity, an antecedent expression. The national liberation struggle finally finds its expression in the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organisation (IMRO) and its action, which led to the Ilinden Uprising and the "Republic of Krusevo".[163]

3.5. The purity of the Macedonian nation

From the beginning of its ethnogenesis and throughout its history, every nation is defined in part on the basis of its relations — friendly or hostile — with other nations. There will be dividing points, but there is always a continuous contact leading to the next

160. *Ibid.*
161. *Ibid*, p. 82.
162. *Ibid*, p. 94.
163. *Ibid*, pp. 106–112.

stage. In the case of the "Macedonians" the relation with other nations at every moment in history is defined as a continuous differentiation and defence from every form or expression of "Macedonianism".

Thus, textbooks write that in antiquity the Greek tribes settled the land as far as Thessaly, while the Greek presence in Macedonia is traced back to and depends solely on Greek colonisation.[164] Alexander I "the Philhellene" was not Greek, because

> "the epithet 'philhellene' was at that time attached only to foreigners, which constitutes the best proof that the Macedonians were not of Greek origin."[165]

The influences of Greek civilisation were, of course, evident in several areas of cultural life, but

> "the Macedonians over time developed the arts and in no way fell short of the Greeks in the arts"[166]

With Alexander the Great's expedition into Asia, indeed,

> "Macedonian civilisation was extended to those peoples along with Greek [...] The new civilisation, which was different from the Greek, was called Hellenistic".[167]

164. Mladenovski, *op. cit.*, pp. 63, 71.
165. *Ibid*, p. 95.
166. *Ibid*, p. 103.
167. *Ibid*, p. 106.

The image dominating the history books concerned with the mediaeval period is that of Byzantium conquering and constantly oppressing the Slav populations in the Balkans. This image becomes even more powerful after the destruction of Samuel's kingdom, when the "Macedonians" opposed Byzantine authority.

> "The Macedonians successfully resisted the intense Hellenization applied by Byzantium in Macedonia with the assistance of the archbishops in Ohrid and their helpers."[168]

Indeed, according to these authors, the resistance of the "Macedonians" to the Byzantines was so strong that a whole chapter is dedicated to it. This chapter deals with the anti-feudal risings and liberation movements of the "Macedonians", Bulgarians, Serbs and Albanians.[169]

Moreover, the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Constantinople, is held solely responsible for the abolition of the Archdiocese of Ohrid in 1767 and for the founding of Greek schools in Macedonia in order to promote Greek education and culture.[170] The negative image of the clergy and the Ecumenical Patriarchate persists into later periods, since

> "the growing use of the non-understood Greek language in education and worship and generally the hatred of the efforts towards Hellenization put forward by the Ecumenical Patriarchate brought to the fore the unresolved Macedonian ecclesiastical question",[171]

168. Panov, *op. cit.*, p. 58.
169. "Boctanijata na makedonskiot narod protiv vizantiiskata vlast vo XI vek", Panov, *op. cit.*, pp. 63–66.
170. *Ibid*, p. 131.
171. Trajanovski, *op. cit.*, p. 93.

In addition, the Ecumenical Patriarchate was also held responsible for the arrest of the Miladinov brothers by the Turks, because

> "the loss of the Miladinov brothers was one of the most costly of Macedonian sacrifices to Greek "craftiness".[172]

The Greek revolution is treated guardedly.

> "In early March 1821 the revolutionary forces of the "Society of Friends" (*Filiki Etairia*) crossed the Danube and from Bulgaria and Macedonia reached Greece to prepare the revolution"[173].

This makes a clear distinction between Greece and Macedonia. With this distinction every action of the Greeks north of Thessaly loses its legitimacy and acquires the character of propaganda and menace. Thus

> "the Greek people ...succeeded in liberating themselves from the Turks and in acquiring its independence, and set in motion its expansionist foreign policy especially towards Macedonia".[174]

The Greek propaganda was the most dangerous because

> "it sought via the Greek schools, associations and other organisations to spread Greek education and Greek culture in Macedonia".[175]

172. *Ibid,* p. 94.
173. *Ibid*, p. 53.
174. *Ibid*, p. 54.
175. *Ibid*, p. 95.

At the dawn of the 20th century every action by neighbouring states within the territory of Macedonia was seen as imperialistic and iniquitous. Thus, the chapter on the Balkan Wars states that Serbia, Montenegro, Bulgaria and Greece carried out wars of expansion, subjugating and dismembering Macedonia and other parts of the Balkans that had, until then, been under Ottoman rule. In fact

> "the Treaty of Bucharest was the gravest tragedy for the Macedonian people, since Macedonia was divided into four parts and enslaved by the Balkan states".[176]

The "unlawfulness" of the presence of the other Balkan peoples – except for the "Macedonians" – in Macedonia is made clear in the study of the period before and after World War II. Developments in the parts of Macedonia that had been incorporated into Yugoslavia, Bulgaria and Greece are treated in separate chapters and not with political developments in those Balkan countries. In addition the word *pod* (under) is used in presenting the position of Macedonia on the historical stage – "Part of Macedonia under Greece",[177] "Part of Macedonia under Bulgaria",[178] "Part of Macedonia under Albania"[179] and "Part of Macedonia under Yugoslavia"[180] – only during the inter-war period. By contrast, the part of Macedonia that was included in Yugoslavia after World War II is proudly referred to as "Macedonia".

176. *Ibid*, p. 123.
177. Veljanovski, *op. cit.*, pp. 44, 120.
178. *Ibid*, pp. 42, 118.
179. *Ibid*, pp. 44, 120.
180. *Ibid*, p. 39.

The choice of the word 'under' is not accidental, for it indicates occupation and not incorporation, expansion, liberation. The authors chose this word to contrast Macedonia, which is identified with the state of FYROM, with the other parts of Macedonia that are under the domination of neighbouring states. And, lest there be any doubt about the intentions of the book's authors, there are chapters narrating the national liberation struggles in Pirin and Aegean Macedonia during WWII.[181]

With regard to Greek Macedonia in particular, the authors describe the exchanges of population in the inter-war period and the Greek policy of assimilation of the local community in the darkest of ways. Greece is accused of deliberately "altering" the ethnological make-up of Macedonia by settling refugee populations there, of refusing to recognise the "Macedonian" national identity, of oppressing the "Macedonians" because of their participation in ELAS and the Democratic Army of Greece, and of refusing the repatriation of and the acquisition and management of property assets by the "Macedonian" refugees from the Civil War period.[182]

3.6. Efforts to demonstrate a statal entity

This unlawfulness, however, only becomes meaningful once someone else is able to demonstrate the legality of his own presence in the contested place. Extracts from various sources are selectively compared, while events and situations are distorted to portray that Greeks, Bulgarians, Serbs, Ottoman Turks and any other peoples who were or still are living in the geographical region of Macedonia, only have a place in the same region that another people had already established its supremacy in earlier

181. *Ibid*, pp. 85–88.
182. *Ibid*, pp. 31, 32, 34, 45, 46, 87, 104.

ages. And this supremacy is evidenced largely by the existence of a statal entity. The creation of the Macedonian state in antiquity cannot be used to this end, however. Indeed, even the authors of these books argue that Alexander the Great carried "Macedonian" and Greek civilisation into Asia, while the Hellenistic period is overall presented as an age of synthesis and interaction of the Macedonian, the Greek and the ancient civilisations of the East.

Particular emphasis is thus laid on the mediaeval kingdom of Tsar Samuel. According to the textbooks, Tsar Samuel was not the last ruler of the first Bulgarian realm but the leader of a new Macedonian state. This new Macedonian state was created by a liberation movement led against the Bulgarians by Samuel and his brothers David, Aaron and Moses Komitopoulos.[183] According to the author, during his short reign and while he was engaged in fighting the Byzantine Emperor Basil II, Samuel managed to create an admirable realm with a central organisation, an army, a church and significant cultural production. As a result Basil – who is nowhere referred to as the "Bulgar-slayer" – is unfavourably sketched.[184] All the feudal lords and passing princes in Macedonia are transformed into "Macedonians." Indeed, even the Serb rulers Vukasin and Ugljesa, are considered "Macedonians" since they ruled over Prilep and Serres.[185]

Further attempts to present a statal entity occur in the second half of the 19th century. Here, accounts of the risings of Kresna, Berovo and Razlog and of the Ilinden Uprising are accompanied by maps in which the boundaries of these insurgencies are indicated as national frontiers.[186]

183. Panov, *op. cit.*, pp. 32, 50.
184. *Ibid*, pp. 60–62.
185. *Ibid*, pp. 64, 66, 68, 80, 128–129.
186. Trajanovski, *op. cit.*, pp. 81, 83, 84, 108.

3.7. Cultivating a sense of national injustice

Given the ephemeral nature of these national structures, their dubious validity and their incomparability to the states created by all the neighbouring Balkan peoples, the textbooks are deliberately written — contrary to all pedagogical principles for the teaching of history and the development of responsible citizens — on the basis of an appeal to sentiment. They describe the tribulations and the injustice suffered by the "Macedonians", create revanchist sentiments, and cultivate irredentist attitudes. This is most evident in the history book used in Grade 8.

Neither the Balkan Wars nor the ensuing Great War I [either refer to it as Great War or as World War I] permitted the creation of a unified and independent Macedonian state. On the contrary, it brought about the dismemberment of Macedonia. The "Macedonian" people knew new conquerors and suffered great woes. Every unit mentions the difficulties they faced as a result of wars, and the policy of assimilation and colonisation they endured by other population groups. All this was caused by the other Balkan states, which were acting for the sole purpose of diminishing the number of or eliminating the "Macedonians." In no case was this seen as the result of the ideological currents prevailing in Europe at the time, nor was it put into the context of broader historical events.

> "In general the situation of the Macedonian people who found themselves under occupation by the Greeks and the forces of the Entente was no better. They too treated the Macedonian people with the same savagery as the Bulgarian authorities in the other part of Macedonia."[187] "In November 1919 a treaty was signed between Greece and Bulgaria for the "voluntary displacement of

187. Veljanovski, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

> the domestic population living in the two countries [...] Under the pressure of government terrorist activity 86,000 Macedonians were forced to move to Bulgaria [...] With the resettlement of these populations [...] the Aegean part of Macedonia lost its national character.[188]
>
> "The Greek state exploited the political break-up of Macedonia in 1913 and began to implement a policy of denationalisation and assimilation of the Macedonians. Macedonian names and the Macedonian language were forbidden, and the Macedonians were labelled Bulgarians, Slav-speaking Greeks or locals. At that same time all Macedonians were compelled to change their personal and family names."[189]

The sufferings of the "Macedonians" in Greece continued through the period of the Greek Civil War, in which they lost their opportunity for liberation:

> "Some armed bands wanted, instead of liberating Yugoslavia, to head south to Aegean Macedonia. This the Great Powers (Great Britain and the USA) would not allow."[190]
>
> "About 30,000 Macedonians, including many children, were forced to seek refuge in countries in Eastern Europe, while 20,000 Macedonians gave their lives for national liberty. Many Macedonian villages were razed (Babchor, Prekopana and others), while whole districts around Kastoria, Florina and Edessa were emptied and laid waste."[191]

188. *Ibid*, p. 45.
189. *Ibid*.
190. *Ibid*, p. 81.
191. *Ibid*, p. 122.

The policy of discrimination continued after the change of regime in 1974. Except that now

> "the Macedonians put up greater resistance to assimilation and to the loss of their ethnic identity. They expressed themselves more in the Macedonian language, melody and song and stressed their Macedonian national identity. This was also accompanied by active political resistance. The year 1984 saw the founding in Thessaloniki of the "Movement for the Human Rights of the Macedonians" and of the "Central Organisational Committee for Macedonian Human Rights". These two Macedonian organisations asked the Greek state to recognise them and to legalise the basic human and ethnic rights of the Macedonians living in Aegean Macedonia".[192]

4. Conclusions

To conclude, it is fair to say that FYROM's newspapers portray a dual image of Greece. The image of Greece as a country is undoubtedly positive, but on the other hand there is a negative attitude towards anything Greek and anything that refers to Macedonia's historical and cultural past. Depending on the period and the political forces in power at any given time, the balance swings either in favour of Greece, or in suspicion and prejudice about the past, present and future of Greek Macedonia.

The positive image of Greece is the result of its position in international organisations such as the European Union and NATO. Moreover, it is the result of Prime Minister Costas Simitis' and PASOK's policy for better relations, good neighbourship, co-operation in all sectors, and promotion of

192. *Ibid*.

FYROM's positions and interests in the international environment. The improvement in relations between FYROM and Greece - which coincided with the difficult conjuncture in the former country (NATO attacks on Kosovo, waves of refugees from Kosovo into FYROM, radicalisation of the Albanians in Tetovo, interethnic clashes and foreign intervention in favour of the Albanians) - did not go unnoticed by any politician or journalist in Skopje. The helping hand and support often extended by Greece to the government of FYROM may not have prevented any unfortunate events, but they did mitigate their negative effects on local society. The image of Greece is that of the stronger and thrifty neighbour who can provide much of what FYROM and her citizens need but who demands something in return.

What Greece can provide, apart from guarantees on the diplomatic level, is extensive investment in infrastructure and production, and the increase in bilateral trade that comes from stimulating business activity, improving economic aggregates and reducing unemployment. This, in a period of manifest economic stagnation which is leading the country into greater depression and is reducing its chances of rapid integration into the European Union and NATO.

But what Greece wants, or what they think Greece wants, causes commotion and controversy on all levels of political life. Greece's insistence that a name be found to replace that of "Republic of Macedonia" causes the shiftiness and discomfort of the political leadership and public opinion, creating negative associations for Greece. There is also a fear that Greece's goodwill and neighbourliness is part of achieving what it wants and that, having got what it wants, its attitude towards FYROM will change.

The aforementioned positive image is wholly reversed when it comes to matters relating to Macedonia and concerning the past and the present. For FYROM and its inhabitants, Greek

Macedonia is not the Macedonia the Greeks know. It is another, imagined, world, constructed over the decades and passed on to the population via the education system and other means. The Greek presence in Macedonia from antiquity to the present is challengedand is in no case legitimated. All the important changes that have taken place in Macedonia in the 20th century — according to the prevailing view — have been engineered for the purpose of ousting the Slav-Macedonians and altering the ethnological, cultural, etc. identity of Macedonia.

There is, thus, a diffused prejudice with regard to anything relating to the Greek presence in Greek Macedonia. The reporting on the Rainbow Party and its activities was extensive and exhaustive. The activities of the exiles from Macedonia receive preferential treatment in the press. Indeed, it was given greater coverage than the political activity of the Albanian political parties in FYROM. The improvement in bilateral relations has significantly reduced the number of such articles, but has not changed the image of Greek Macedonia.

Turning to education, it is obvious that the history textbooks used in FYROM's schools are not examples of the application of contemporary pedagogical thinking, nor do they promote understanding and co-operation with neighbouring peoples. Instead, they project a construct by which the "Macedonian people" have, throughout their history, been the victim of expansionary wars on behalf of neighbouring peoples and states. The actions of the "Macedonians" were always correct. Any responsibility that there may be for historical events is mechanically shifted on to the neighbouring peoples and states, whose activities are condemned?. Students are made to feel the "historic injustice" practised against the "Macedonian people" and are pressed to expect or even to work for the goal of a "single and undivided Macedonia within its geographical and ethnological boundaries".

It is not easy to find an explanation for this. All the Balkan states have chosen an ethnocentric approach to history: that is, they devote most if not all material to the narration of the events of their nation and usually far less to the history of their neighbouring peoples.[193] In some cases the history of the neighbouring peoples is totally ignored and the peoples themselves are only mentioned when they come into conflict with the nation.[194]

All the Balkan states present their national history as a series of injustices caused by other peoples at different periods of history and as a continual struggle between conflicting territorial claims, that usually remained on the level of revendication.[195] In fact, the smaller nationswho had no state of their own in the past, emphasise the oppression they suffered at the hands of stronger nations and try to show that their independence was refused by their more powerful neighbours.[196] In the case of FYROM, things were even more complicated. As one historian from FYROM says, his country

> "came to the "Age of Nationalism" entirely unprepared, unable to invoke a mediaeval state bearing its name (unable, that is, to evoke a glorious past) or any figure or hero from that age (even the King Marcus of the popular songs, unlike the Serbian version, has nothing to do with any national idea or heroism)"[197]

193. Simoska, *op. cit.*, pp. 98–99.

194. This includes the history textbooks used in Greece's schools. See Dragonas-Frangoudaki, *op. cit.*, pp. 40–42.

195. Dubravka Stojanovic, "History Textbooks and the Creation of National Identity", in Christina Koulouri (ed.), *Teaching the History of Southeastern Europe,* Thessaloniki, 2001, p. 29.

196. Bozo Repe, "The Situation Regarding History Textbooks in SEE", in Christina Koulouri (ed.), *Teaching the History of Southeastern Europe,* Thessaloniki, 2001, p. 90.

197. Jordanovski, *op. cit.*, p. 267.

Thus the books have essentially adopted the extreme view that the Slav-Macedonian enlightenment was created in the 19th century along with the enlightenments of the other Balkan peoples, such as the Serbs, Bulgarians, Romanians, Croats and Slovenes. This view, however, presupposes the existence of a nation in a previous age, and particularly in the Middle Ages.[198] Although the sources are of no help, since they all refer to the kingdom of Samuel as Bulgarian, nonetheless the very fact that he created a state centred on Macedonia with its capital at Ohrid is enough for the authors of the school texts to call this a "Macedonian" state. This provides them with the ethnic myth they need to put the Slav-Macedonians on an equal footing with the other Balkan peoples.

This, however, is not enough. Other peoples like the Bulgarians, have a far greater historical presence, and the Greeks have the most extensive and splendid history of all the Balkan peoples and played a decisive role in shaping the present identity of the Slavs. The contrast with Greece's historic past and civilisation is inevitable, and any attempt at comparison is risible in the eyes of any observer. This is why they have chosen to appropriate part of the historic past and civilisation of the Greek world (chiefly that which developed in Macedonia in the classical and Hellenistic periods). The "Macedonians" are represented as a separate nation, strongly influenced by Greek and Roman culture, thereby justifying the archaeological finds throughout Macedonia and their similarities with finds in the rest of the Greek world. It is argued that the Macedonian nation existed in the Middle Ages, at which point it became intermingled with the Slavs who settled in Macedonia. This co-existence led to assimilation and, consequently, the Slavs of Macedonia inherited the past of the

198. *Idem*, p. 268.

ancient Macedonians. It is thus argued that the Greeks and Byzantines were a different and entirely separate people with no historical or cultural rights upon the land of Macedonia. The same motif was repeated continuously over the years until the 20th century. Historically and culturally, Macedonia is a unit wholly self-existent within the historical development of the age and any attempted influence from any other region is considered a hostile threat to the Macedonian *esse*. Moreover, while anyone who comes from Macedonia is baptised a Macedonian and any event that takes place in Macedonia is evaluated positively or negatively in proportion to whether it can be taken as an expression of Macedonianism.

The older generations, namely those who went to school in the former Yugoslavia, learned a more moderate version of the history of the Slav-Macedonians. In particular, they were taught that while the ancient Macedonians may not have belonged to the Greek tribes, they had nevertheless been gradually Hellenised.[199] Even President Gligorov himself said in an interview that

> "that we did not come into an empty country, that we intermingled with the people who were living there before: this is not correct. But to identify ourselves with the ancient Macedonians and forget that we are incomers is historically inaccurate."[200]

Indeed there are many who feel uncomfortable with the new orientation of the history textbooks used in FYROM's schools today and try to persuade their children that reality is somewhat different from the way it is presented in their history books. These

199. Kofos, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

200. "How can the past be a stable foundation for the future of the state?", *Forum* 24.4.1998.

efforts, naturally, count for nothing, since young people have been taught to accept whatever they hear in school.[201]

Therein lies the most serious problem lies. The younger generations who are brought up with the new ideas cannot see the neighbouring people and states in their real dimension and substance, but only in the light of what they are taught at school. Instead of seeing the Bulgarians, the Albanians and — most of all — the Greeks as friends and associates, they see them as rivals, as eternal enemies, occupying part of what belonged to their ancestors and should have been handed on to them. This also creates problems on the level of everyday existence, for they have been inculcated with a sense of superiority and difference, which manifests itself in their everyday relations with the Albanians in their schools.

Finally, the content of the school textbooks is considered a violation of article 7 par. 1 of the Interim Accord, which stipulates that each party shall take effective measures to prohibit hostile activities or propaganda by state-controlled agencies and to discourage acts by private entities likely to incite violence, hatred or hostility against each other. FYROM's schoolbooks, as we have seen, contain a series of texts, maps and pictures that promote hatred against other states, including Greece. Greece, therefore, would be justified in asking for the implementation of the third paragraph of article 7, which stipulates that if either party believes that one or more symbols constituting part of its historic or cultural patrimony is being used by the other party, it shall bring this to the attention of the other party and ask that it take appropriate corrective action.

201. The president of the Liberal Party and Mayor of Skopje Risto Penov, the editor of *Dnevnik* newspaper Branko Gerovski and the — Albanian — Minister for Education Aziz Polozani in Skopje 25–26 November 2002, all of whom have school-age children, reported in conversation with this author to having this kind of problem with their children.