



A Response to Professor Stephen G Miller

By the

**Australian Macedonian Human Rights Committee (AMHRC) and
Macedonian Human Rights Movement International (MHRMI)**

9 June 2009

Dear Sir/ Madam

We write to you in regards to the letter to President Barack Obama dated 18 May 2009 which you appear to have co-signed in your capacity as a scholar of Graeco-Roman Antiquity. (www.macedonia-evidence.org)

The purpose of this letter was to ask Mr. Obama to reverse US recognition of the Republic of Macedonia under its constitutional name. Putting aside the absurdity of referring to ancient history as a basis for conducting present-day foreign policy, the letter itself epitomizes Greece's irrational, and dangerous, stance on the Macedonian issue.

Greece refuses to accept the existence of ethnic Macedonians and the constitutional name of the Republic of Macedonia. Consequently, Greece persecutes its Macedonian minority and its actions are condemned by the European Court of Human Rights, the United Nations, and the international community as a whole.

The author of the letter, Professor Stephen Miller, has even publicly called on Greece to annex the Republic of Macedonia.

Our organizations have taken the opportunity to not only deal with these issues, but to also address relevant matters on ancient and modern Macedonia. Please see our attached response.

We ask that you carefully consider our position and re-examine your endorsement of the above mentioned letter.

Yours sincerely,

Australian Macedonian Human Rights Committee
Macedonian Human Rights Movement International

I Introduction

The letter dated 18 May 2009 by Stephen G Miller to President Barack Obama and its endorsement by other academics purports to be an objective presentation of facts designed to protect the “historical truth” about Alexander the Great and the Ancient Macedonians from “misappropriation by the government in Skopje”. After presenting tendentious historical material which buttresses the central point of his argument—namely, that Alexander the Macedonian was Greek – he appeals to President Obama “*to help- in whatever ways you deem appropriate- the government in Skopje to understand that it cannot build a national identity at the expenses of historical truth*”. In reality, however Professor Miller’s letter is nothing more than a blatant political intervention in support of Greece’s irrational campaign to coerce the Republic of Macedonia to change its name and to thereby deny the existence of the Macedonian people, identity, language and culture, not only in the Republic of Macedonia, but in Greece, Bulgaria, Albania and Serbia as well. He has enlisted the support of other academics in an attempt to lend a semblance of legitimacy to his nefarious political goals.

Professor Miller’s letter does not directly deal with the issue of the emergence of modern national identities, however what logically flows from the way in which he sets out his argument is that as Alexander the Macedonian was a Greek and Ancient Macedonia an Ancient Greek land, the modern Greeks are the direct descendants of the Ancient Macedonians and the name Macedonia can only belong to Greece and Greeks. As he tendentiously states: “*this brings us back to the geographic area known in antiquity as Paionia. Why would the people who live there now call themselves Macedonians and their land Macedonia? Why would they abduct a completely Greek figure and make him their national hero?*”

Professor Miller should be aware that modern national and ethnic identities in the Balkans and indeed, throughout Europe, are relatively recent phenomena which emerged in the wake of the French Revolution as a result of interwoven complex political, economic and cultural processes. No nation in Europe can claim that it is directly descended from the ancient peoples who inhabited the lands on which it has formed its nation state and to assert that this is so, in an attempt to strengthen one’s claim to a name or identity, is nothing less than a nationalistic flight of fantasy. Consequently, European ethnic groups are an amalgam of peoples and their modern ethno-cultural identities realistically have little in common with ancient peoples. Nevertheless, this does not preclude modern ethnic group from investigating and studying the links between them and all the other peoples who have historically inhabited their lands, as modern Italians do with the Romans and Egyptians with the Ancient Egyptians. Professor Miller however, asserts that it is only modern Greeks who have the right to appropriate the legacy of Alexander the Macedonian by using specious arguments such as: “*The ancient Paionians may or may not have been Greek, but they certainly became Greekish, and they were never Slavs. They were also not Macedonians. Ancient Paionia was a part of the Macedonian Empire. So were Ionia and Syria and Palestine and Egypt and Mesopotamia and Babylonia and Bactria and many more. They may thus have become “Macedonian” temporarily, but none was ever “Macedonia”. The theft of Philip and Alexander by a land that was*

never Macedonia cannot be justified.” In making such a statement Professor Miller not only displays his superficial understanding of the construction of modern national identities, but also directly supports the irrational claim that Greece has a monopoly on the classical past. In actuality all modern peoples of European origin have a right to share in the legacies of the ancient past.

Given that the thesis presented by Professor Miller - namely, that the Ancient Macedonians were Greek and by extension that only modern day Greece and Greeks (as if they are the same thing as ancient Hellenes) have the historical and cultural right to the legacy and name of Macedonia- is a central plank of Greece’s attempt to justify its campaign to force the Republic of Macedonia to change its name and to deny the existence of the Macedonian ethnic group-, we should briefly examine the claim that the “Ancient Macedonians were Greek.”

II Ancient Discussions

Both Phillip II and Alexander the Macedonian used the ancient Greek language for diplomatic, trade and administrative purposes. It seems to have been an act of political expediency. The use of the Greek language for these purposes cannot be used to support the claim that ethno-culturally the ancient Macedonians were Greek, any more than the official use of English, French and Portuguese in many countries in Africa can be used to claim that the inhabitants of these countries are thereby of English, French and Portuguese origin. Professor of Ancient History, Eugene Borza, enlisting the support of another Professor of Ancient History, Nicholas Hammond, states: *“But, as Hammond shows, the significance of the Greek-Macedonian cultural conjunction was that the Macedonians adapted and exploited philhellenism for purposes that were uniquely Macedonian. Indeed, one could add that the adoption of Greek adornments over the long run changed nothing fundamental in Macedonian society, so that many Macedonian elite may have talked like Greeks, dressed like Greeks, and imitated, imported, and admired Greek art, but they lived and acted like Macedonians, a people whose political and social system was alien to what most Greeks believed, wrote about, and practiced.”* (Eugene N. Borza; *In the Shadow of Olympus: The Emergence of Macedon*, 1990, Princeton University Press, p.172.)

While the territory of the core of the Ancient Macedonian kingdom waxed and waned, historical analyses show towns such as Skopje, Ohrid and Bitola within the present borders of the Republic of Macedonia, to have been part of Macedonia since the time of Alexander the Macedonian. (Borza, 1990:30-31.) The territory that is now northern Greece formed an important part of Macedonia in Antiquity. However, the greater part of this area did not form part of the first Macedonian kingdom, but was gradually incorporated into that kingdom as Macedonia’s power and prestige grew. If we were to take literally Professor’s Miller’s contention that the Republic of Macedonia was called Paionia in antiquity and did not form part of the core Macedonian territory and thus cannot be called Macedonia today, then it follows that most of the northern Greek region which the Greek authorities claim as the “true Macedonia” can also not be called Macedonia as it did not form part of the first Macedonian kingdom. By applying such “logic” many modern nations would have to thereby relinquish their current names or reduce the size of their territory – as this would not be found to be congruent with the small areas on which pre-modern kings established their

embryonic kingdoms and fiefdoms. Presumably and absurdly, Kosovo should not use that name as it was Dardania in Antiquity.

There is evidence to suggest, that in Antiquity, the Macedonians and Hellenes (we use the term Hellenes, in a general sense, for the sake of convenience, it is well known that there was not in ancient times a unified Hellenic “nation”, in the modern sense, rather, there were numerous city states that were culturally, politically and economically, quite diverse and moreover, they were often in conflict with each other) considered themselves to be separate and distinct people.

We shall begin by noting that there are some important examples of Hellenic speaking ancient Athenians explicitly classifying the Macedonians as foreigners, by applying the word “barbaroi”, to them. (Borza, 1990:96) One, for example need only look at the well-known quote by the great Athenian orator and statesman Demosthenes (384-322 BC) to determine that the Greeks and the Macedonians viewed each other as separate peoples: *“Truly Phillip calls himself a Hellenophile , that is a friend of Greece That is more than a lie. The king cannot be a Hellenophile because of his barbarian origin . He is not a Hellene and is not in any way connected by kin with the Hellenes. He is not even a foreigner with a decent origin. He is only a miserable Macedon: and in Macedonia , as is well known, one cannot even buy a decent slave”*(Demosthenes Cratones, from a History of Diplomacy , Vol 5, Diodor Sikelioidi, Biblioteka Historica, p49)

That this was no mere political rhetoric directed at a political opponent who was a fellow “Hellene“ is shown by the Austrian-American historian Ernst Badian who speaks of another occasion when Demosthenes called Philip a barbarian: *“Above all, however, this helps to explain how, half a generation after Philip's revival of the Macedonian king's claim to eminent Greek descent had been accepted at Olympia and his efforts to integrate his court had been bearing fruit, Greek opponents could still call not only the Macedonian people, but the king himself, "barbarian." In this respect, nothing had changed since the days of Archelaus. The term is in fact more than once used of Philip by Demosthenes, most notably in two passages. In one, in the Third Olynthiac (3.24), he claims that a century ago "the king then in power in the country was the subject [of our ancestors], as a barbarian ought to be to Greeks." In the second, a long tirade in the Third Philippic (9.30 f.), he claims that suffering inflicted on Greeks by Greeks is at least easier to bear than that now inflicted by Philip, "who is not only not a Greek and has nothing to do with Greeks, but is not even a barbarian from a place it would be honorable to name--a cursed Macedonian, who comes from where it used to be impossible even to buy a decent slave." This, of course, is simple abuse. It may have nothing to do with historical fact, any more than the orators' tirades against their personal enemies usually have. But as I have tried to make clear, we are not concerned with historical fact as such; we are concerned only with sentiment, which is itself historical fact and must be taken seriously as such. In these tirades we find not only the Hellenic descent of the Macedonian people (which few seriously accepted) totally denied, but even that of the king. It is not even mentioned merely in order to be rejected: the rejection is taken as a matter of course. Now, the orator clearly could not do this, if his audience was likely to regard his claim as plain nonsense: it could not be said of a Theban, or even of a Thessalian. The polite acceptance of the Macedonian kings as Hellenes ruling a barbarian nation was still not totally secure: one would presumably divide over it on irrational*

grounds, according to party and personal sentiment--as so many of us still divide, over issues that are inherently more amenable to rational treatment.(68)" (Ernst Badian, "Greeks and Macedonians" in *Macedonia And Greece In Late Classical And Early Hellenistic Times, Studies In The History Of Art Vol 10: (The National Gallery Of Art, Washington, 1980)*).

The Classics professor, Peter Green, has written many books and articles about the Ancient Greeks and Macedonians in which he provides valuable information about how the Greeks and Macedonians saw themselves. For example on Page 50 of his book *Alexander of Macedon 356-323 B.C*, Professor Green states as follows:

"And though Philip did not give a fig for Panhellenism as an idea, he at once saw how it could be turned into highly effective camouflage (a notion which his son subsequently took over ready-made). Isocrates had, unwittingly, supplied him with the propaganda-line he needed. From now on he merely had to clothe his Macedonian ambitions in a suitable Panhellenic dress." (Peter Green, *Alexander of Macedon 356-323 B.C: A Historical Biography*, University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles 1991).

On page 7 of the book *Alexander to Actium* he states: *"But then, Eumenes was a Greek, and Macedonian troops, especially the old soldiers who had served under Philip II, were never really comfortable being led by non-Macedonians."* (*Alexander to Actium: The Historical Evolution of the Hellenistic Age*, University of California Press, 19 October 1993)

We may summarise by again quoting from Eugene Borza, Professor of Ancient History at Pennsylvania State University: *"No single argument is conclusive, but the case builds in quality as it grows in quantity of evidence, and, in the end, is persuasive. Despite the efforts of Phillip II and Alexander the Great to bridge the gap between the two cultures, Greeks and Macedonians remained steadfastly antipathetic toward one another (with dislike of a different quality than the mutual long term hostility shared by some Greek city-states) until well into the Hellenistic period, when both the culmination of Hellenic acculturation in the north and the rise of Rome made it clear that what these peoples shared took precedence over their historical enmities."* (*Borza,1990:96*)

Borza moves on to ask: *"Who were the Macedonians? As an ethnic question it is best avoided, since the mainly modern political overtones tend to obscure the fact that it really is not a very important issue. That they may or may not have been Greek in whole or part-while an interesting anthropological sidelight-is really not crucial to our understanding of their history. They made their mark not as a tribe of Greeks or other Balkan peoples, but as Macedonians. This was understood by foreign protagonists from the time of Darius and Xerxes to the age of Roman generals."*(*Borza,1990:96*)

So we can conclude that Miller is on very slippery ground, at best, when claiming that Ancient Macedonians and Hellenes were absolutely one and the same thing and that such an assertion is simply an incontestable fact. Clearly, it is still a matter for debate, to say the least. Worse still though, is the ridiculous attempt to claim that modern day Greeks have a right to own the word, "Macedonia". This is simply because of all the

change that has occurred in the Balkans over the last 2,500 years! The region has been invaded and re-invaded and conquered numerous times - by the Romans, various Germanic and Tatar tribes and most notably, by Slavic tribes. Therefore it is absurd for anyone to try to claim some kind of continuous unbroken blood or cultural link. The Slavs that invaded and settled the Balkans in the 5th Century AD did not just stop, as is often claimed by Greek propagandists, at “southern Yugoslavia”. They settled the whole of the Balkans, including almost the entirety of what is today Greece, in what is reputed to have been one of the largest mass migrations in early medieval history. (Fine, 1991:30-36, 60-64; it is also worth noting that over the last decade, new discussions in the academic world have begun about the nature of the early Slavs and their appearance in the Balkans in the 6th century AD – see the work of the Historian, Professor Florin Curta, *The Making of the Slavs*, Cambridge University Press, 2001.) We shall here quote from Professor John Fine of the University of Michigan: *“It is evident that in this period a great deal of ethnic mixture between Slavs and Greeks occurred; probably few pure-blooded Greeks – if such existed prior to the Slavic invasions- were left. A few centuries later many Albanians migrated into these regions and further increased the ethnic mixtures. Thus there is no reason to believe that the Greeks now are any purer blooded than any other Balkan peoples. But, of course, it is culture rather than blood-lines that matters.”* (John V.A. Fine; *The Early Medieval Balkans*, University of Michigan Press, 1991, p.64) In any case, it is clear that serious alterations had occurred by early medieval times, in the cultures, economies and politics of all social groupings in the Balkans. The fact that the Orthodox church and the modern Greek state, relatively recently, succeeded in introducing, on a mass national level, a form of Greek language based on the ancient Hellenic language, does not alter the fact that modern day Greeks, possess a culture, economy and political system, that have little in common with that of the ancient city states. However, if we followed Miller’s “logic”, we would have to go further than pointing this out; we would have to demand that today’s Greeks renounce their claim to Greekness and admit their Slavo-Albanian roots; or at the very least, refer to themselves as “Slavo-Albanian Greeks”.

However, Fine is quite right to stress that culture takes precedence, and culture is a social construction, a human invention. And what we have here been demonstrating is that social constructions can vary over time. For this context, it is pertinent to point out that words like “Macedonian” and “Greek”, are symbols, and the meaning of symbols, what they represent, can vary enormously, over even short periods – let alone 2,000 years! This variation was a normal result of the changes that took place in the Balkans in the periods under discussion. In ancient times, the words “Macedonian” and “Hellene,” undoubtedly referred to socio-cultural groupings that are very different from the ones that these symbols represent today. However, this is not a problem, for these ancient social configurations, disappeared long ago.

Modern day Macedonians and Greeks, were socially constructed during the last four centuries – like most European nations and ethnicities. This was done in the context of Modernity and involved, among other things, the rise of capitalist economies; the rise of a culture dominated by a dialectic possessing, a pursuit of rational mastery on one hand, and romance on the other (and this is where one in particular, should look for the ways in which modern Macedonians and Greeks revived the ancient symbols that came to form part of the basis of their identities); and a centralised state based more or less on mass representative democracy (unlike the democracy of Ancient

Athens!). The social configuration thus produced, is quite unique/new; and so are the modern European nations that inhabit and form an important part of it. (Western academic texts discussing this process are numerous, perhaps two relatively older ones are among the most useful for beginners, (and Miller undoubtedly is!): Ernest Gellner's *Nations and Nationalism*, Blackwell, Oxford 1983 and Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities*, Verso, London 1983) If the basis upon which modern day Macedonians have come into existence is false, as Miller claims, it is no more false than the way in which all other modern nations and ethnicities have come into existence, including the modern Greeks. Thus, to quote the American anthropologist, Loring Danforth, from an *“anthropological perspective, the relatively recent date of the creation of a Macedonian state and the construction of a Macedonian nation, in comparison to other Balkan cases, does not mean, as Greek nationalists claim, that the Macedonian nation is ‘artificial’, while the Greek nation is ‘genuine’. ... Both Macedonian national identity and Greek national identity are equally constructed.”* (Loring M. Danforth, *The Macedonian Conflict*, Princeton University Press, 1995, p.108; and for more on the construction of the Modern Greek nation during the 19th century, see the work of the Historian, John Breuilly, *Nationalism and the State*, The University of Chicago Press, 1994, especially pp.137-148.) Social constructing and reconstructing; defining and re-defining; valuing and re-valuing, appear to be an ontological aspect of the human condition – they create culture; existential meaning, and Professor Miller serves nobody well when trying to claim that the cultural creativity of one group, is superior to that of other groups.

Modern day Macedonians and Greeks, both have a right to share these ancient symbols, that is the names “Macedonian” and “Greek”, that emerged from the lands they presently occupy and neither has the right to forbid the other from using them. Ethnic identity is of basic existential significance in the modern world and that is one of the reasons why it is a human right and protected by international law. Notably, even though Greece only began to officially refer to its northern province as “Macedonia” (from 1955 till the mid 80’s the official name of the region in Greece was “Northern Greece”, administered by the “Ministry of Northern Greece”, Law 3200, 23 April 1955) as a result of laws and directives passed in 1986 (Law 1622 of 1986) and 1988 (Prime Ministerial decision no.704, 19 August 1988); the Republic of Macedonia (which has been using the name since it was formed in 1944) has not made any request for Greece to drop its usage. Such sharing does not create confusion as the different meanings (provincial/regional as opposed to ethnic or national) are very clear and easily explainable. Such sharing is well within the bounds of reason, though it is curious that Miller should claim for modern Greece, ownership of a word that Greece itself was long reluctant to officially utilise.

Professor Miller’s distress at the *“misappropriation by the government in Skopje of the most famous of Macedonians, Alexander the Great”* and his contention that Alexander has become Slavic is not borne out by an objective review of the facts. The current government in the Republic of Macedonia does not claim that Alexander was Slavic, but Macedonian. Prime Minister Gruevski has recently stated that he neither knows nor cares whether he or the Macedonians are descendants of “Slavs” or the Ancient Macedonians, but that he considers he and his people to be Macedonians with a right to their own language, culture and identity like all other peoples. It should be pointed out that while we may consider it inappropriate and the height of kitsch to erect statues in the main square of Skopje at a time of severe economic crisis, the

decision of the Macedonian government to do so was taken well before the onset of the current global financial crisis. And lest Professor Miller go into paroxysms of rage over the “misappropriation of Alexander by the Slav Paionians”, he should be reminded that of the statues to be erected, only one is of Alexander. Three are of Macedonian revolutionaries from the turn of the 20th century, one is of Tsar Samoil and a further one, is of Cento, the Republic of Macedonia’s first post-war President.

III Modern Denial

On 27 March 1994 the Sunday Telegraph of London commented as follows on the Greek myth of ethnic purity: *“What is the word for the obsessive Greek pseudo-relationship with their country’s past (they even have a magazine, Ellenismos, devoted to the subject)? It is not quite pretentiousness. There is too much passion for that. No, the Greeks, the ancient ones had a word for the modern Greek condition: paranoia. We must accept that Mr Andreas Papandreou (Greek prime Minister) and the current EC presidency are the sole legitimate heirs of Pericles, Demosthenes and Arisitide the Just. The world must nod dumbly at the proposition that in the veins of the modern Greek ... there courses the blood of Achilles. And their paranoid nationalism is heightened by the tenuousness of that claim”*.

The reality which Professor Miller seeks to avoid by focussing on the “misappropriation of Alexander” is Greece’s concerted attempts to deny the existence of the ethnic Macedonians (that is, Macedonians with an ethno-cultural identity, that is not Greek) in the part of Macedonia within Greece. This has been well documented by a number of independent human rights organisations and western anthropologists (see further down). The existence of Macedonians in their ancestral homelands destroys the myth of unbroken continuity between the supposedly “quintessentially Greek” Ancient Macedonians and the Modern Greeks and thus undermines the basis on which the Greek state attempts to justify its annexation of Aegean Macedonia in 1913; namely, that Macedonia was historically a Greek land since Antiquity which “naturally” belonged with the borders of the then Kingdom of Greece.

The existence of ethnic Macedonians and other minorities such as the Turks, Roma, Pomaks and Vlachs in Greece also challenges the myth of ethnic homogeneity which the Greek state considers essential. Denial of minority rights is thus a natural corollary of Greek State’s doctrine of national security. Finally, recognition of a Macedonian minority in Greece exposes Greece to the real possibility that those Macedonians who have been driven out of Greece and deprived of their citizenship, properties (especially in the aftermath of the Greek Civil War, 1946-1949) and even the right to temporarily enter Greece for family or personal reasons, will be encouraged to seek restitution of their rights, thus leading to potentially onerous compensation obligations being placed on Greece and the return of tens of thousands of ethnic Macedonians. It is these considerations which have led to the irrational Greek campaign to force the Republic of Macedonia to change its name.

This problem of Modern Greek fundamentalist ethno-nationalism has been discussed by various western academics and NGO’s. Perhaps it was most succinctly put by the American anthropologist, Loring Danforth, when he wrote that: *“The inability of Macedonians in the Florina (Lerin, in Macedonian) area to register a cultural*

association with the word Macedonian in its name,...is an excellent example of the way in which the activities, purposes and by-laws of private associations are subject to detailed regulation and control by the Greek state. It also confirms the fundamental incompatibility of the Greek nationalist conception of the 'ethnos as an integrated entity embodied in the state' and a philosophy of inalienable human rights. The issue at stake in this case, is an issue of recognition – the refusal of the Greek state to recognise the Centre for Macedonian Culture. This case, therefore, replicates the central issue of the entire Macedonian conflict – the refusal of the Greek state to recognise the existence of a Macedonian nation, a Macedonian language, or a Macedonian minority in Greece.” (Loring M. Danforth, *The Macedonian Conflict*, Princeton University Press, 1995, p.130)

IV Modern Ethno-Nationalism

A point often glossed over is that what had come to be generally accepted in Europe and the Balkans as denoting Macedonia in the late 19th and early 20th century (constructed! – on how this construction developed, see H.R. Wilkinson's classic study, *Maps and Politics: A review of the Ethnographic Cartography of Macedonia*, Liverpool University Press, 1951; especially pp.1-7, where one finds a Greek view from the 19th century, that has all of what is now the Republic of Macedonia, including Skopje!; and on the general issue of map reification and its role in nation building, see Anderson's *Imagined Communities*, pp.170-178.), had been contained as a whole within the Ottoman Muslim Empire for 500 years. It was partitioned during the Balkan Wars of 1912-13 and thereafter became the peripheral territories of its neighbouring Balkan States - Greece, Bulgaria, and Serbia. These lands had also been under Ottoman rule for four centuries. During the 19th Century the inhabitants of these lands shook off Ottoman rule and created modernistic nation-states. By the end of WWI, the partition of Macedonia had resulted in Greece obtaining 51%, Serbia 38% (this is the part that developed in 1944, during WWII, into the Republic of Macedonia) and Bulgaria, only around 12%. (This made it certain that Bulgaria, which had done an equal share of fighting against the Ottomans, would become irredentist.) Their partition of Macedonia was part and parcel of an ethno-nationalist desire to expand. The only problem was that these states did not accept the inhabitants as they found them and a process of often violent ethnic assimilation was begun. From the beginning, this involved both physical and symbolic ethnic cleansing, mass expulsions and the razing of numerous towns and villages. This was documented at the time by an International Commission that was sent to Macedonia to investigate the situation by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. (See the reprint of this over 400 page, report: *The Other Balkan Wars*, Carnegie Endowment, Washington DC 1993 (originally published in 1914). On Serbian and Greek atrocities and methods see especially, pp.50-51, 89, 106 and 154; on the Bulgarians, noteworthy is p.106.)

This Greek policy continued throughout the inter-war years at varying levels of intensity. The 1920s was a period marked by coerced out-migration, internal exile and deportation, as explained by the Greek Anthropologist, Anastasia Karakasidou (see pp.66-68 of her paper, *Transforming Identity, Constructing Consciousness: Coercion and Homogeny in North-western Greece*, pp.55-97 in Victor Roudometof, ed. *The Macedonian Question*, East European Monographs, Boulder, 2000). In particular, coerced out-migration was given further impetus by the signing of the

Treaty of Neuilly in 1919 between Greece and Bulgaria. This was supposed to involve a “voluntary exchange of populations” – actually, tens of thousands (if one considers the period from 1912-1928, then the figure reaches well over 100,000) of Macedonians were systematically driven out of the Greek state. This was stepped up still further after the settlement in Greek held Macedonia between 1923 and 1928, of around 538,000 Greek Orthodox refugees from Asia Minor (many of whom were Turkophone; are these your real Macedonians, with a direct connection to the Ancient Macedonians, Professor Miller??). (Karakasidou, 2000:68.) “*There were “numerous directives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Governor General of Salonika to local authorities making it abundantly clear that the ‘national interest’ necessitated the emigration of as many Slav-speakers [which is how the Greek authorities often referred to Macedonians, regardless of how they themselves chose to identify – the authors] as possible ... who should be compelled to move to Bulgaria through ‘skilful and specialised work’.*” (Carabott, 2003:148-149. For more detail on just how this process of expelling Macedonians was carried out, see the rest of this paper by Dr. Philip Carabott of the Department of Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies, King’s College London: *The Politics of Constructing the Ethnic Other*, published in JGKS academic journal – *History and Culture of South Eastern Europe*, vol.5, 2003, pp.141-159.) This today, is what is known as, ethnic cleansing. As a result, by 1930, the demography of Aegean Macedonia had been transformed. Ethnic Macedonians had definitely become a minority. For those remaining, the Greek state continued to use repression and surveillance with the aid of both the military and the police. (Karakasidou, 2000:75.)

V Recognition and Denial

The authors of this paper, incidentally, are not claiming that all these local Macedonians, identified themselves as possessing a distinct Macedonian identity. Just how many of them did, is difficult to determine, because the Greek state barred the possibility of people identifying as such in the censuses. (It has continued to do so to this very day – unlike in the Republic of Macedonia, where all ethnic minorities are registered and counted.) Inter-war censuses in Greece, did permit citizens to register their native tongue, but as the Greek journalist and author, Tasos Kostopoulos has pointed out, the real results were never revealed. (See his paper - *Counting the “Other”: Official Census and Classified Statistics in Greece 1830-2001* in the JGKS academic journal, vol.5, 2003, pp.55-78 and especially pp.58-59.) For example, as Kostopoulos also explains, the census data from Aegean Macedonia in 1920, was not published. The official reason given by the Greek state, Kostopoulos continues, was “... *for a lack of funds; the decision was made at the highest possible level, by the Cabinet itself. The real reasons, as revealed by the official correspondence between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the General Directorate of Macedonia, were that the authorities ‘did not dare to avow and reveal publicly the existence of a non-Greek Majority in [Greek]Macedonia.’*” (Kostopoulos, 2003:59.) Notably, another Greek author, Dimtris Lithoxoou, while researching the Greek state archives, discovered that Macedonians on seasonal work in Greece but outside of Macedonia, were registered in the 1920 census, as speaking Macedonian. The results show Macedonian clearly recorded as a separate language; a language in its own right; distinct from Greek or Bulgarian etc. Thus it is rather silly for Greece and Professor Miller to today claim that the Macedonian language does not exist; or that it can only be a variant of Greek;

the Greek state officially recognised it as a distinct language as long ago as 1920! (See Lithoxoou's introductory article, pp.44-49, in Vinozhito-Rainbow's 2007 reprint of the ABECEDAR – which was a Macedonian language primer the Greek authorities prepared for Macedonian School children in 1925, that was in the end, not introduced – recognition and then denial!)

There is more evidence from other sources to suggest that those identifying as having a distinct Macedonian identity must have been significant in number. For example, as Carabott points out, in 1923, an officially Greek approved international Mixed Commission, investigating the situation on the ground in Greek held Macedonia, asking villagers in the western and central regions of Macedonia about their conditions, in general replied: *“We want good administration. We are Macedonians, not Greeks or Bulgars. Give us a good father and we will be good children.”* (Cited in Carabott, 2003:145.) Carabott continues on to conclude that *“This self-characterisation as ‘Macedonians’ in juxtaposition to being neither Greeks nor Bulgarians points at a distinct Macedonian identity ...”*. (Carabott, 2003:145.) Also noteworthy in this regard, is “ethnological” research carried out in 1925 by the Greek military officer Salvanos, Chief of Staff of the Tenth Army Division of Western Macedonia in Greece. He found, among other things, that the bulk of the inhabitants of the County of Lerin (Florina in Greek), refer to themselves as “Macedonians” – *“...making up half to three-quarters of any given village’s population.”* (Karakasidou, 2000:64.) Now the implications of such research are yet to be fully debated, but on the basis of all the evidence presented here and other extant documents, it cannot be doubted that there was in inter-war Greece, such a thing as a distinct (non-Greek) Macedonian ethno-cultural identity. And while we agree that the “fluidity” (the tendency to change over time or in particular contexts) of ethnic identity, must be taken into account, we do not support those Greek apologists who try to use the “fluidity” notion to write ethnic-Macedonians off the face of the earth. As the German academic, Dr. Christian Voss, commenting on the current situation in Greece and Bulgaria, explains: *“...it is either politically naive, or in support of Greek and Bulgarian nationalism respectively, to describe minority identity patterns by means of a one-sided constructionism, underscoring the ‘fluidness’ of Macedonian ethnicity in Greek Aegean and in Bulgarian Pirin Macedonia.”* (See p.186 of his paper: *The Situation of the Slavic Speaking Minority in Greek Macedonia*, JGKS, vol.5, 2003, pp.173-187.)

Indeed, those authors who try to ‘protect’ Macedonians from elite essentialist reification, in both recent history and the present (there can be no question that part of the story of ethnicity construction, is about elites mobilising masses for the maintenance and expansion of their power and wealth), forget that the development and maintenance of a distinct ethnic-Macedonian identity, was to a significant extent, a response to the discriminatory reifications of the Greek state (and the Serbian and Bulgarian states, for that matter, both after and *prior* to the 1912 partition). As we have been documenting, these discriminatory reifications have resulted in serious emotional and physical harm and in Greece (and Bulgaria for that matter) at the present, they are still maintained, as we document further below. They are an important part of the historical memory of modern ethnic-Macedonians. Thus ethnic-Macedonian identity, especially in Greece, while also involving essentialist reifying, as all such group identities do, can to an important level, be seen as a counter reification to the often cruel and lethal homogenising efforts of the Greek state.

Macedonians were essentialised and reified in the homogenising process, as undesirable others – mostly by the label, “Slavophones” (see for example, Carabott, 2003:142-144). A distinct Macedonian identity, from this perspective and in the context of Greece (a country that denies the existence of any minorities within its borders), can be viewed as something that does not negate, but *contributes* to diversity and if you like, democracy. (On the development of modern Macedonian identity, see the papers by Professor Victor Friedman of the University of Chicago: Macedonian Language and Nationalism During the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century in *Balkanistica*, 1975, no.2, pp.83-95 and The Modern Macedonian Standard Language and Its Relation to Modern Macedonian Identity in Victor Roudometof, ed., *The Macedonian Question*, East European Monographs, Boulder, 2000, pp.173-206; Danforth’s, *The Macedonian Conflict*, cited above; and a paper by Professor Horace Lunt of Harvard University, *Some Sociolinguistic Aspects of Macedonian and Bulgarian* in B. Stolz et al, ed. *Language and Literary Theory*, Ann Arbor, The University of Michigan, 1984, pp.83-122. For a focus on identity development in the Republic of Macedonia see the work of the Anthropologist Keith Brown, *The Past in Question*, Princeton University Press, 2003 and a paper by H.R.Wilkinson, *Jugoslav Macedonia in Transition*, *Geographical Journal*, vol.CXVIII part 4, December 1952, pp.389-405.)

The mention of diversity connects to the issue of group identity in Modernity in a way that moves somewhat beyond the bounds of matters to do with elite reifications. To begin with, group identity, as was noted by social philosophers long ago, is paradoxically based on both the attractions of similarity and difference. This complex dialectic creates culture; existential meaning, for the inhabitants of the groups (and we are all, more or less, involved in groups). Thus it is not diversity for its ‘own sake’ as some critics of the notion, like to suggest. The revival of ancient names, in the construction of Modern ethnic groups can be seen as part of the Romanticism (which has always been a significant aspect of Modern culture) that has often been called upon as an enchanting (see the work of Max Weber) response to the mundane or disenchanting, for many, calculative rationalism of Modernity. The pursuit of rational mastery of the world, which is another key aspect of Modern culture, creates constant instability and change (popular among social philosophers is the notion of Modernity as accelerated “creative-destruction”); alienation and anonymity; and the use of ancient names in the creation of group identities helps many moderns create the feeling (it may be an illusion, but that does not appear to make it any less useful or less necessary) of some stability, magical continuity and connection to a wider humanity. This does not necessarily need to involve excessive exploitation and discrimination; it can and often is, celebrated in very amicable and positive ways. Though in places where it has become abusive, we are obliged to resist. (For more on this perspective of reification, see the classic work of the social philosopher Georg Simmel, in a 1990 Routledge re-print of his foundational for Sociology, *The Philosophy of Money*, 1900.)

VI Repression and Persecution Continues in the Inter-War Years

Between the years of 1926-1940, the Greek state implemented and ruthlessly enforced a form of symbolic ethno-cultural cleansing. All place (Decree no.332 of 1926) and personal names (Law no.87 of 1936) in Aegean Macedonia were made Greek. Protest

was useless and would merely result in further punishment. (The ban on Macedonian names has persisted to the present.) This was accompanied by the defacing and “Hellenising” of churches in Macedonia. The Greek language was imposed in all areas of public life and the Macedonian language was derided as barbaric and not worthy of a civilised people. (See the report entitled, Denying Ethnic Identity: The Macedonians of Greece; prepared by the well known human rights NGO, Human Rights Watch/Helsinki, New York and London, 1994, pp.6-7; and see also another paper by the Greek Anthropologist, Karakasidou: Women of the Family, Women of the Nation, p.100 in Ourselves and Others, Mackridge and Yannakis, ed. Berg, Oxford 1997.)

During the ultra-nationalist dictatorship (1936-1940) of General Metaxas in Greece, the mistreatment of Macedonians was further stepped up. Laws were enacted that then not only banned the speaking of Macedonian in public, but also in private. (Karakasidou, 2000: 77.) The punishments for breaking these highly bigoted and cruel laws (most Macedonians did not know how to speak Greek) involved steep fines, beatings, the forced ingestion of castor oil and or imprisonment. In many cases, to pay the fines, farmers had to sell their means of livelihood – i.e. their livestock. (Karakasidou, 2000:77 and Human Rights Watch, 1994:7-8.) More than 5,000 Macedonians from the County of Lerin (Florina) alone were jailed for breaking these language laws. (Human Rights Watch, 1994:7.)

VII World War Two and the Greek Civil War 1946-1949

During this period, many local and ethnic Macedonians eventually joined the Greek communist (KKE) led National Liberation Front (EAM) and its military wing, the National Popular Liberation Army (ELAS). (Human Rights Watch, 1994:8 and Karakasidou, 2000:77-78.) It is not surprising that they did so – after all they had endured at the hands of the Greek state since 1912, many of them probably felt that serious change was necessary. Moreover, as Karakasidou points out, during the Axis occupation, many of them suffered harshly at the hands of Greek nationalist forces. (Karakasidou, 2000:78.)

When the Greek Civil War began in 1946 (fought between the Communist forces of the KKE and the British-installed, Western-styled Greek government forces), the hardships of Macedonians increased, as almost all the fighting took place in Aegean Macedonia. Estimates of how many were killed are dubious, though they certainly ran in to the tens of thousands. By the war’s end in 1949 and with victory gained by the government forces, tens of thousands of local Macedonians (and of course Greeks too) had fled the country for their safety – whether they were part of the Communist forces or not. Estimates are again unreliable; they range from 35,000 to over 200,000. (Human Rights Watch, 1994:8 and for a more detailed analysis, see the paper by Dr. Riki van Boeschoten: “Unity and Brotherhood”? Macedonian Political Refugees in Eastern Europe, in JGKS, vol.5 2003, pp.189-193.)

Notably, those who fled Greece for their safety (not least because of the incessant aerial bombing of Macedonian villages), again, whether they actually fought against the government or not, were deprived of their citizenship and property. (Human Rights Watch, 1994:8 and 27.) To quote the Human Rights Watch report: “Among

those stripped of their citizenship were families – wives, children, other relatives – of Macedonians who had fought with the Partisans. No individual hearings were held as to the actions of family members or, in fact of Partisans themselves. All were stripped of citizenship without the internationally accepted rights to due process: the presumption of innocence; notice of the charges; a fair hearing before an independent and impartial tribunal; opportunity to defend oneself, including the right to confront witnesses and to present witnesses on one's own behalf and legal representation.” (Human Rights Watch, 1994:27.)

Also noteworthy is that over 10,000 Macedonian children (there were Greek children too; and although some estimates of the Macedonian children are much higher, this figure is a safe minimum, see van Boeschoten, 2003:190-193) were during the course of the civil war, smuggled across the Greek borders and housed in Eastern-bloc countries – again, this was done because of the bombing of villages. In most cases, they have not been permitted to return. However, in a 1982 twist, a Greek Ministerial decree provided that *“all Greeks by genus [i.e. of Greek origin] who during the civil war of 1946-49 and because of it have fled abroad as political refugees may return to Greece, in spite [of the fact] that Greek citizenship has been taken away from them.”* (Human Rights Watch, 1994: 9.) Moreover, in 1985, a law was enacted that permitted political refugees who were “Greek by origin” to reclaim their property and thus again, ethnic Macedonians were and remain, excluded. (Human Rights Watch, 1994: 9.) *“Human Rights Watch has been unable to obtain accurate figures on the number of people ‘of Greek origin’ who availed themselves of the 1982 law, but the number is in the thousands. Those who considered themselves Macedonians, although born in Greece, or children of parents born in Greece, were not permitted to return, even, for the most part, to visit. ... To this day, ethnic Macedonian families are divided...”* by the Greek authorities. (Human Rights Watch, 1994: 9-10.) At present a class action against Greece is being prepared in the Republic of Macedonia by Macedonian political refugees from Greece and their descendants for the return of their properties and restoration of Greek citizenship.

VIII The Post War Period

For those ethnic-Macedonians who managed to remain in Aegean Macedonia after the war, discrimination continued. Indicative of the situation, is the example given by Human Rights Watch of the introduction of “language oaths”. The Greek authorities, in 1959, administered in several Macedonian villages, “language oaths” – *“which required Macedonians to swear that they would renounce their ‘Slavic’ dialect and from then on speak only Greek.”* (Human Rights Watch, 1994: 7-8.) During the 1960s, free education was introduced in Greece but the discrimination faced by Macedonians *“...in their quest for employment...left many sharply alienated.”* (Karakasidou, 2000:80.)

From 1967-1974, Greece came under the dictatorship of an ultra-nationalist military junta and this explains another upsurge in discrimination against Macedonians. (Karakasidou, 2000: 81.) This was combined with a continued policy of economic underdevelopment for areas inhabited by ethnic-Macedonians (Karakasidou, 2000:82) – with the hope no doubt, of speeding up their emigration. Lastly, during this period, the church *“re-emerged as a strong nationalist force, and a new puritan Bishop,*

Kandiotis, was appointed Metropolitan of Florina and began to cultivate Greek Orthodox fundamentalism.” (Karakasidou, 2000: 81.) After the junta some improvement in the treatment of Macedonians resulted, but in general, the discrimination has remained. We shall document this further below.

Since 1995, when it was formed (after having to utilise the European courts in order to get itself officially registered in Greece), the Macedonian political party, Vinozhito- Rainbow, which has its seat in Lerin (Florina), has been active in leading the struggle of the Macedonians in Greece for respect of their basic human rights by the Greek State. Its leaders have been prosecuted and on 7 September 1995 their offices burnt and ransacked by far-right Greek nationalists. Presently, some of its leaders face the possibility of prosecution on charges of state treason for maintaining that Macedonian is spoken in Greece. Another important activist is Archimandrite Nikodim Tsarknias, who has been active in defending the religious and human rights of the Macedonians. Tsarknias who is an ordained priest of the Macedonian Orthodox Church has repeatedly over the years been prosecuted on charges of “impersonating an Orthodox priest”.

IX In Summary

Greece denies its Macedonian minority the enjoyment of those fundamental human rights contained in major international and European human rights agreements and covenants. The Greek state refuses even to recognise the very existence of ethnic Macedonians and instead refers to them as “Slavophone Greeks”. Ethnic Macedonians are forbidden from using the term Macedonia in the name of organizations, associations or businesses that they may care to register. For example, as already mentioned earlier, the Home of Macedonian Culture in Lerin (Florina), which the European Court of Human Rights has ordered Greece to register in several decisions over the last 10 years, still remains unregistered by the Greek authorities. There is no education at any level in the Macedonian language and no radio and television programs or print media in Macedonian. There is no state funding for Macedonian cultural activities. Ethnic Macedonians who openly proclaim themselves to be Macedonians are subjected to discrimination in employment and education as well as social ostracism. Macedonians are not permitted to use their Macedonian fore and surnames officially and those Macedonians who attempt to officially reclaim their Macedonian names are routinely denied permission to do so. The Greek authorities maintain a black list of Macedonians abroad-both activists and non-activists who simply identify as Macedonians and who may originate from Aegean Macedonia-and routinely deny such people entry to Greece. Macedonians who originate in Greece have also been deprived of their Greek citizenship, often without being informed of the decision or having any right to appeal, which affects their ability to claim or dispose of property they may own in Greece. One of the goals of such repressive measures is to prevent contact between Macedonians abroad and those in Greece so that the forcible Hellenization of Macedonians in Greece can continue unabated. Lastly, it is difficult to estimate the number of ethnic Macedonians in Greece, as the Greek state still completely denies the existence of a Macedonian minority and does not include statistics on ethnic minorities in its census, however estimates range from 50,000 to 300,000.

X Current Human Rights Abuses in Documented Detail

Professor Miller opens his letter by claiming that the recognition of the Republic of Macedonia by the former US administration has somehow “*abrogated geographic and historic fact*”. What the Professor of Graeco-Roman antiquity seems to fundamentally miss is that it is the state of Greece that abrogates the facts over the existence of the ethnic Macedonian minority living in present day Greece. Whilst the Professor of Graeco-Roman antiquity immerses himself in a purposive interpretation of the ancients, conveniently but at the same time, he also suspiciously draws absurd connections between peoples that lived some 2,500 years ago and modern national identities. What he seems to be incapable of recognizing is that his slavish acquiescence to ancient history at the same time dispenses with the apparent awkwardness (for Greece, but obviously also for Professor Miller) of exigent circumstances. Namely the continuing human rights violations perpetrated by his beloved “Greece” against its ethnic Macedonian minority. To borrow from Levi, Professor Miller’s blind capitulation to ancient relationships seems to fundamentally confuse the modern day perpetrators with the victims, and to do so is a “*moral disease or an aesthetic affectation or a sinister sign of complicity; above all, it is precious service rendered ... to the negators of truth.*” (Primo Levi, *The Drowned and the Saved*, (first published 1988), Abacus, London, 1989, p.33.)

Greece’s appalling human rights record against its ethnic Macedonian minority is well documented. How does Professor Miller suggest Graeco-Roman antiquity can overcome these actual modern day problems? Does he suggest that the ancient practice of conquest and pillage is the answer? (Actually he does, as we demonstrate further down!) Is Professor Miller opposed to human rights? Or is he simply opposed to the human rights of ethnic Macedonians? Let’s look at what actual demonstrable evidence tells us.

The essence of the protection of minorities has been well defined since the Permanent Court of International Justice delivered its Advisory Opinion on *Minority Schools in Albania Case*, handed down on 6 April 1935. The Court stated that minorities have the right to full equality with the majority and to the preservation of their separate identities. The Opinion reads as follows:

“The idea underlying the treaties for the protection of minorities is to secure for certain elements incorporated in a State, the population of which differs from them in race, language or religion, the possibility of living peaceably alongside that population and co-operating amicably with it, while at the same time preserving the characteristics which distinguish them from the majority.”

Subsequently, the International Court of Justice made it clear in the *South West Africa Cases* that any distinction on a racial basis is contrary to the principle of equality. (*South West Africa Cases* (Ethiopia v South Africa, Liberia v South Africa) (Second Phase) ICJ Rep 1966 6, Judgement of 18 July 1966, 317). Today, various international human rights law documents exist that contain specific provisions concerned with minorities and that place obligations on states to recognise the rights of minority groups living within their borders, importantly without distinction of any kind. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which is a

binding document of substantive and precise human rights principles states clearly under Article 27 that: *“in those states in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities exist, persons belonging to such minorities shall not be denied the right ... to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practice their own religion, or to use their own language”* Article 27 is a statement that is essential to the defence of minority identity, therefore it also reflects a ‘right to an identity’. The UN Human Rights Committee determined that even though *“the rights protected ... are individual rights, they depend in turn on the ability of the minority group to maintain its culture, language and religion.”*

Accordingly, the UN Human Rights Committee has clarified under General Comment 23 that *“positive measures by the States are also necessary to protect the identity of a minority and the rights of its members to enjoy and develop their culture ... in community with other members of the group.”* Greece ratified and acceded to the ICCPR on 5 August 1997. Article 27 has also inspired the UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities, which establishes standards to which member states of the United Nations should aspire. At the outset, Article 1 asserts that:

“States shall protect the existence and the national or ethnic ... identity of minorities ... and shall encourage conditions for the promotion of that identity.”

Unfortunately, when it comes to Greece, there seems to be no such prospects. Recently the UN independent expert on minority issues reported how some of the ethnic Macedonians in Greece have:

“...described pressure not to display their Macedonian identity or speak Macedonian, previously banned in some villages. Despite their claim of the existence of distinct Macedonian villages, they described a general fear to demonstrate their identity. It was acknowledged that the situation had improved from a previous era, however they described a “softer discrimination” manifested in general hostility and pressure on the part of authorities and the media. One participant stated: “I am a Greek citizen...but I am Macedonian when talking about my village, my language and my identity.” (Promotion and Protection of all Human Rights, Civil, Political, Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, including the right to Development’, Report of the independent expert on minority issues, Gay McDougall, Addendum Mission to Greece, (8-16 September 2008), A/HRC/10/11/Add.3, 18 February 2009, para. 46).

“Some recounted personal experiences of harassment including aggressive interrogation at borders. Another described being physically attacked allegedly due to his ethnic identity and membership of the Rainbow party. Another representative stated: “Greece does not trust the people who live here because they don’t feel Greek - they don’t speak Greek”. Participants described experiencing problems in performing songs in the Macedonian language and traditional dances ...” (UN independent expert on minority issues, para. 47).

The Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe has equally expressed that he *“remains deeply concerned about the persistent denial by Greek authorities of the existence on Greece’s territory of minorities.”* (Commissioner for Human Rights,

REPORT by Thomas Hammarberg, Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe Following his visit to Greece on 8-10 December 2008, Strasbourg, 19 February 2009, para. 40). These concerns are neither new nor original. A fact finding mission conducted in Northern Greece during July 1993 by the Danish Helsinki Committee, Minority Rights Group-Greece and Human Rights Watch/Helsinki concluded early on that:

“ ... the Greek government has denied the ethnic identity of the ethnic Macedonian minority in violation of international human rights laws and agreements. This is evidenced by open statements by Greek officials; by the government’s denial of the existence of a Macedonian language; by the government’s refusal to permit a “Center of Macedonian Culture”; and by the government’s refusal in the recent past to permit the performance of Macedonian songs and dances;

... freedom of expression is restricted for ethnic Macedonians in violation of international human rights laws. Some rights activists have been prosecuted and convicted for the peaceful expression of their views ...

... the Greek government discriminates against the ethnic Macedonian minority in violation of international laws and agreements to which it is a party;

...

... ethnic Macedonians, and particularly Macedonian rights activists, are harassed by the government, followed and threatened by security forces, and subjected to economic and social pressures resulting from government harassment; this has led to a marked climate of fear in which many ethnic Macedonians are reluctant to assert their Macedonian identity or to express their view openly.” (Human Rights Watch/Helsinki, Denying Ethnic Identity: The Macedonians of Greece, New York, 1994, pp. 2-3).

Greece, as a member state of the EU since 1981, also has human rights obligations that begin with the Treaty Establishing a Constitution for Europe. Some of the basic values expressed in this document include *“respect for human dignity ... equality ... respect for human rights ... non-discrimination, tolerance [and] justice.”* (Treaty Establishing a Constitution for Europe, Preamble, Part I, Title I Definition and Objectives of the Union, Article 1-2, The Union’s Values). Respect for human dignity, equality, human rights, non-discrimination, tolerance and justice is not merely an empty rhetorical promise. Indeed Greece signalled its intent to support such concepts when its parliament unanimously (268-17) ratified the EU Constitution on 19 April 2005.

The EU has recently moved to enshrine such standards in a type of Bill of Rights for the EU, known as the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. This is an unambiguous human rights instrument that has been incorporated within the EU Constitution itself. (See amendments made to the Treaty on European Union in the Amsterdam Treaty of 1999). The Preamble of this document outlines in clear terms its overriding context when it declares *“human dignity ... [and] ... equality”* as part of its most fundamental values. More importantly it firmly declares its regard for the rights

espoused in “*international obligations common to the Member States, the Treaty [itself] ... the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, (a Council of Europe document) and the case-law*” evolving from the judicial organs of these European institutions. (Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, (2000/C, 364/01), Preamble).

Chapter III of the European Charter deals with the issue of equality. Article 20 declares that ‘*everyone is equal before the law*’ and Article 21 asserts that “*any discrimination based on any ground such as ... ethnic ... origin ... political or any other opinion, membership of a national minority [and/or] property ... shall be prohibited.*” (Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, (2000/C, 364/01), Chapter III, ‘Equality’, Article 20 & 21). Article 52(3) of the Charter provides for the common application of corresponding rights in the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (European Convention) in both meaning and scope. Greece itself ratified this convention on 28 November 1974.

The European Convention has an extensive array of protections afforded to individuals. Article 8 asserts that “*Everyone has the right to respect for his ... family life [and] his home.*” The provision goes on to assert that “*there shall be no interference by a public authority with the exercise of this right except such as is in accordance with the law and is necessary in a democratic society in the interests of national security...[and]...public safety.*” (European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, (1950) (entered into force 3 September 1953) as amended by Protocol No 11 (1998), (entered into force 1 November 1998), Article 8(1) & (2)). Article 9 provides that “*everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion*”, under Article 10, freedom of expression and under Article 11 the freedom of assembly and association.

Notably, Greece has been found to be in violation of the provisions in the European Convention by the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) on many occasions. This has not gone unnoticed by various international human rights monitors. For Example, the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance excoriated Greece in this regard:

“ *... persons wishing to express their Macedonian, Turkish or other identity incur the hostility of the population. They are targets of prejudices and stereotypes, and sometimes face discrimination, especially in the labour market. In the Sidiropoulos and others v. Greece judgment of 10 July 1998, the European Court of Human Rights found that the refusal to register the association “Home of Macedonian Civilisation” constituted an interference with the freedom of association as guaranteed by Article 11 of the European Convention on Human Rights. ECRI deplors the fact that, five years after the decision of the European Court of Human Rights, this association has still not been registered despite the repeated applications made by its members.*” (See European Commission against Racism and Intolerance, Third Report on Greece, Adopted on 5 December 2003, CRI (2004) 24, Strasbourg, 8 June 2004, para. 81).

The recent Report of the United Nations independent expert on minority issues notes that “*subsequent [Greek] domestic court decisions have failed to conform to the European Court finding and the Home of Macedonian Culture remains unregistered.*” (UN independent expert on minority issues, para. 43). In the recent ECHR case of *Vinozhito and Others v. Greece* (2005), the Court again found Greece in violation of the European Convention, specifically Article 6(1), which provides for a right to a fair trial and Article 11, a right to freedom of assembly. The case concerned the vandalism perpetrated on the office of Vnozhito in 1995 by a violent mob and the non-intervention of the local Greek police. Vnozhito is a political party representing the ethnic Macedonian minority in Greece. In bringing its decision, the Court stated that:

“ *... two days before the incidents, the local authorities clearly incited the population of the town of Florina [Lerin] to protests against the applicants in which some of their members took part ... thus [contributing] by their behaviour to provoke the hostile feelings of part of the population with regard to the applicants [Vinozhito]. The Court considers that the authorities of the State [Greece] are supposed to defend and promote the intrinsic values with a democratic system, such as pluralism, the tolerance and social cohesion.*”

Not surprisingly, yet another report, this time by the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe noted “*with particular concern that the Greek authorities’ refusal to recognise the existence of any other kind of minority apart from the ‘Muslim’ one has led in fact to a number of applications before the European Court of Human Rights, especially concerning minority members*” right to freedom of association, as provided for by Article 11 of the European Convention. (Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe, para. 16). Moreover, the Commissioner made a point of recalling that “*freedom of ethnic self-identification is a major principle in which democratic pluralistic societies should be grounded and should be effectively applied to all minority groups, be they national, religious or linguistic.*” (Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe, para. 42). He went further and stated that “*as regards in particular freedom of association, the great importance for democracy of the freedom of establishment and functioning of associations “seeking an ethnic identity or asserting a minority consciousness” has been emphasised by the European Court of Human Rights.*” (Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe, para. 48).

Protocol No 1 to the European Convention adds under Article 1, which deals with the protection of property that “*no one shall be deprived of his possessions*”. (Protocol No 1 to the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms: protection of property, education, free elections (1952), (entered into force 18 May 1954), Article 1). These provisions should be read alongside Article 14, which asserts that these rights “*shall be secured without discrimination on any ground such as sex, race, colour, language, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth or other status.*” It is interesting to note that “*in a number of spheres Greek law draws a distinction between non-citizens of Greek origin (sometimes called “homogeneis”) and non-citizens of another origin (sometimes called “allogeneis”). This difference in treatment generally takes the form of a privileged status for persons of Greek origin.*” (European Commission against Racism and Intolerance, para. 60). This cannot be dismissed as of no consequence. A blatant example of its

discriminatory effect is the introduction of Ministerial Decree number 106841, which announced the relevant passages to the stipulations of Law no. 400/76, providing that:

“Free to return to Greece are all Greeks by genus, who during the Civil War of 1946-1949 and because of it have fled abroad as political refugees, in spite that the Greek citizenship has been taken away from them.” (Official Gazzettier of the Government of the Republic of Greece, Part Two, Ministerial Decrees and Approvals, No. 106841, ‘Free repatriation and return to Greek citizenship of the political refugees’, Athens, 5 January 1983, p.1).

As the UN independent expert on minority issues, Gay McDougall reports, *“this decision excludes those identifying as ethnic Macedonians and is therefore considered discriminatory.”* (UN Independent expert on minority issues, para. 44). Similarly, Law no. 1540 was subsequently introduced making provision for the return of confiscated properties to political emigrants, read political refugees. The wording used in the legislation was again unjustly circumspect. It defines political emigrants for whom the law shall have application as *“Greeks by genus, who, because of the Civil War, had fled abroad.”* (Official Gazzettier of the Government of the Republic of Greece, Volume One, Law No. 1540, Provisions Concerning the Properties of the Political Emigrants and Other Regulations, Athens, 10 April 1985, No. 67). As the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance notes, *“this regulation applied solely to persons “of Greek origin”, thus excluding persons of non-Greek, and particularly Macedonian, origin who had nonetheless left Greece under the same conditions.”* (European Commission against Racism and Intolerance, para. 61).

Yet another minority rights document, not ratified by Greece, is the UNESCO Convention Against Discrimination in Education (1960). Article 5.1(C) provides that *“it is essential to recognise the right of members of national minorities to carry on their own educational activities.”* The UN Independent expert on minority issues also raises this issue with Greece, noting that she:

“ ... met numerous individuals identifying as ethnic Macedonian. Some described themselves as fluent in the Macedonian language, having learned it within their families as it is not taught at school. Others described frustration that they lack fluency due to the lack of learning opportunities. They claim to have made numerous approaches to the Greek Ministry of Education regarding language education, which have never been acknowledged.” (UN Independent expert on minority issues, para. 45).

The UN independent expert on minority issues takes up the point further:

“Successive governments have pursued a policy of denial of the ethnic Macedonian community and the Macedonian language ... The response of earlier Greek governments was to suppress any use of the Macedonian language and cultural activities. In recent times the harsh tactics have ceased but those identifying as ethnic Macedonian still report discrimination and harassment. They consider it of crucial importance for their continued existence that their ethnic identity and distinctiveness is respected. The Macedonian language is not recognized, taught, or a language of tuition in schools.” (UN Independent expert on minority issues, para. 41).

Moreover the report did not neglect historical aspects of the denial of the existence of ethnic Macedonians in Greece. It well notes the symbolic ethnic cleansing of ethnic Macedonians by the Greek state in the early half of the 20th. Century: *“In the 1920s and 30s laws required the replacement of non-Greek names of towns, villages, rivers and mountains with Greek names. The family names of the Macedonian speaking population were also required to be changed to Greek names. Individuals seeking to re-instate Macedonian family names have had their petitions refused by authorities on administrative grounds. Community representatives note that traditional names continue to be in common usage and call for reinstatement and the official usage of a dual nomenclature e.g. Florina/Lerin”* (UN Independent expert on minority issues, para. 42).

Similarly in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), Article 30 states that *“in those states in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities ... exist, a child belonging to such a minority ... shall not be denied the right, in community with other members of his or her group”* to enjoy their cultural, religious and linguistic rights as a minority.

The OSCE is another forum in which various human rights standards are advocated. Greece signed the Helsinki Final Act on 1 August 1975. This instrument spells out explicitly its respect for *“human rights and fundamental freedoms ... for all without distinction.”* Moreover, it forcefully advances the proposition that people belonging to national minorities have a right to equality before the law. (Helsinki Final Act 1975, Part VII. Respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief). Similarly, the Charter of Paris, (which Greece signed on 21 November 1990), affirms the freedom of movement for people without discrimination. Indeed *“ethnic ... minorities will be protected ... [and will have the right to] ... develop that identity without any discrimination and in full equality before the law.”* (Charter of Paris for a New Europe, Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law, 21 November 1990. See also subsection on ‘Human Dimension’ – States party, which includes Greece, declare respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms to be irrevocable and acknowledge that the rights of persons belonging to national minorities must be fully respected as part of universal human rights.) The Copenhagen Document adopted in 1990 as part of OSCE proceedings states clearly that;

“To belong to a national minority is a matter of a person’s individual choice and no disadvantage may arise from the exercise of such choice. [These] persons ... have the right freely to express, preserve and develop their ethnic cultural, linguistic or religious identity and to maintain and develop their culture in all aspects, free of any attempts at assimilation against their will.” (Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, Copenhagen Document, (1990), para. 32).

The above underpins a group’s right to *“establish and maintain unimpeded contacts among themselves within their country as well as contacts across frontiers with citizens of other States with whom they share a common ethnic or national origin [or] cultural heritage.”* (para. 32, Section 4). Other human rights instruments that Greece has simply refused to ratify are the European Charter for Regional and Minority

Languages and the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. The latter is an instrument that seeks to ensure the respect for the right of every person belonging to a national minority to freedom of peaceful assembly, association, expression, thought, conscience and religion, (Article 7), the right to manifest their religion, (Article 8), and to hold opinions and impart information and ideas in the minority language, (Article 9). The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance has strongly recommended that *“the Greek authorities ratify as soon as possible the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities.”* (European Commission against Racism and Intolerance, para. 5). Similar requests have been made by the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe, calling on *“the Greek authorities to proceed promptly to the ratification of or accession to certain major Council of Europe treaties, such as the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, the European Convention on Nationality and the Fourth Protocol to the European Convention on Human Rights.”* (Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe, Part III).

Not surprisingly, there are modern day rules under international law that are specifically concerned with the recognition and protection of minority groups - today. The fact is that Greece has consistently contravened the treaties it is a party to, and has simply refused to ratify and implement several others. As Minority Rights Group declares, *“there is no question that the Greek state’s human rights record is in violation of the many international conventions it has ratified, i.e. the various [OSCE] documents on the human dimension, the Council of Europe’s human rights conventions, and the UN human rights conventions ... Greece is behind all other European Union and West European countries.”* (MRG-Greece, *Report: The Southern Balkans*, Minority Rights Group, London, 1994, p.19).

How does the Professor of Graeco-Roman antiquity reconcile with these contemporary norms and standards? Perhaps he too, along with Greece, should take note of what the authorities on human rights recommend, such as to *“acknowledge the existence in Greece of an ethnic Macedonian minority with its own culture and language; end free expression restrictions on ethnic Macedonians ... [and]. ... end harassment of ethnic Macedonians in general, and of Macedonian rights monitors in particular.”* (Human Rights Watch, p.61). It is worth finishing with Gay McDougall, the UN independent expert on minority issues, who encapsulates the problem of Greece in her detailed recommendations. Something the Professor of Graeco-Roman antiquity should also read:

“81. The Greek government’s interpretation of the term “minorities” is too restrictive to meet current standards: it focuses on the historical understanding of “national minorities” created by the dissolution of empires or agreements concluded at the end of wars; the so-called Minority Treaties. This historical paradigm limits the definition to those communities identified in specific bi-lateral treaties that may also delineate the obligations to the beneficiary community, in some cases tying those benefits to reciprocal arrangements for kinship communities in the other state. Treatment of the identified minorities, therefore, is a matter of inter-state treaty relations. Greece does not recognize the minority status of other communities, stating that those claims are unsubstantiated and politically motivated. ...

82. *One also senses an interest in promoting a singular national identity. This approach may leave little room for diversity. It can contribute to a climate in which citizens who wish to freely express their ethnic identities face government blockages and in some instances, intimidation from other individuals or groups. In the northern part of the country some people expressed their view that the term “minority” implies “foreign.” Some consider those who want to identify as a person belonging to a minority ethnic group to be conspirators against the interest of the Greek state.*

...

90. *The government should retreat from the dispute over whether there is a Macedonian minority or a Turkish minority and place its full focus on protecting the rights to self-identification, freedom of expression and freedom of association of those communities. The Greek government should comply with the judgments of the European Court on Human Rights that associations should be allowed to use the words Macedonian or Turkish in their names and to freely express their ethnic identities. Those associations denied in the past must be given official registration promptly. Their further rights to minority protections must be respected as elaborated in the Declaration on Minorities and the core international human rights treaties.*

91. *The government should guarantee the right to personal security and freedom from intimidation or discriminatory actions by private or public actors on the grounds of the exercise of their right to self-identification.”*

So in summary, the mistreatment of ethnic Macedonians in Greece has been well documented in recent years by respected organizations such as Human Rights Watch (Denying *Ethnic Identity: The Macedonians of Greece, 1994*), The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI 2004), Minority Rights Group (MRG 1994), a Council of Europe body which on 8 June 2004 published its third report on Greece and, most recently, the U.N. report titled “Promotion and Protection of All Human Rights in Greece” of 18 February 2009 which was prepared by the U.N.’s expert on minority issues Gay McDougall. One of Ms McDougall’s most important recommendations is worth noting again, it emphatically states that the Greek government should “... *withdraw from the dispute over whether there is a Macedonian or Turkish Minority in Greece and focus on protecting the right to self-identification, freedom of expression and freedom of association of those communities. Their rights to minority protections must be honoured in accordance with the Declaration on Minorities and the core international Human Rights treaties. Greece should comply fully with the judgements of the European Court of Human Rights, specifically those decisions that associations should be allowed to use the words “Macedonian” and “Turkish” in their names and to express their ethnic identities freely.*” (p.2). The case against Greece is simply overwhelming.

XI Miller - The Last of the Distortions and Miller the Proponent of Annexation!

Professor Miller’s claims that “Skopje’s territorial aspirations” are evidenced by

school maps which in his own words “*show the pseudo-greater Macedonia, stretching from Skopje to Mt. Olympus and labeled in Slavic. The same map and its claims are in calendars, bumper stickers, **bank notes**, etc., that have been circulating in the new state ever since it declared its independence from Yugoslavia in 1991. Why would a poor land-locked new state attempt such historical nonsense? Why would it brazenly **mock and provoke its neighbour**? However one might like to **characterize such behavior**, it is clearly not a force for historical accuracy, nor for stability in the Balkans. It is sad that the United States of America has abetted and encouraged such behavior.*”

The evidence he provides for such “irredentist behaviour”, a map of Macedonia which places the three parts of Macedonia firmly within the Republic of Macedonia, Greece and Bulgaria and a further one which shows the division of Macedonia after World War I, hardly qualify as incontrovertible proof that the Republic of Macedonia has designs on Greek territory. They are simply part of a history lesson. The bank note which he claims is from 1991 and displays the White Tower of Salonika was not legal tender and not issued by the Macedonian government. This is quite apparent given that the note is for the value of *One Makedonka*, which has never been legal tender in Macedonia. Macedonia’s official unit of currency until the introduction of the Denar on 26 April 1992 was the old Yugoslav Dinar. The professor should really do what we are sure he advises his students to do; his homework.

The fact of the matter which Professor Miller wilfully ignores is that under the Interim Accord of 13 September 1995 signed by the foreign ministers of Greece and Macedonia, both sides confirmed their existing frontiers as an enduring and inviolable international border. They also agreed that they would not support the action of a third party directed against the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of the other party. They agreed to refrain from the threat or use of force, including the threat or use of force designed to violate their existing frontiers, and they agreed that neither party would assert or support claims to any part of the territory of the other, or claims for a change of their existing frontier. Furthermore, Macedonia agreed that nothing in its Constitution, and in particular in the Preamble thereto or in Article 3 of the Constitution, can or should be interpreted as constituting or will ever constitute the basis of any claim by it to any territory not within its existing borders. In addition , Macedonia agreed that nothing in its Constitution, and in particular in Article 49 as amended, can or should be interpreted as constituting or will ever constitute the basis for it to interfere in the internal affairs of another State in order to protect the status and rights of any persons in other States who are not citizens of Macedonia. Finally Macedonia agreed to change its flag and stop using the Sun of Kutlesh (Star of Vergina). (GREECE and THE FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA, Interim Accord (with related letters and translations of the Interim Accord in the languages of the Contracting Parties). Signed at New York on 13 September 1995 found at:

http://untreaty.un.org/unts/120001_144071/6/3/00004456.pdf).

When one considers the above and the obvious disparity in economic and military power between the two countries, it is apparent that any accusations that the Republic of Macedonia has irredentist designs on Greek territory have no basis in fact.

Despite Greece's vehement objections over 120 countries, including UN Security Council members USA, Russia, China and the UK, have recognised Macedonia as the Republic of Macedonia. None of them has voiced the concern that the name Republic of Macedonia is an attempt to usurp Greek history. Nor did Greece up until 1988, as evidenced by the fact that it had a consulate in the then Socialist Republic of Macedonia which regularly addressed correspondence to the Socialist Republic of Macedonia.

Despite Professor Miller's protestations that he is solely concerned with the historical truth and that "*Our common international society cannot survive when history is ignored, much less when history is fabricated*", his resolution of the question of the use of the name Macedonia, as detailed in his letter (apparently unpublished by the magazine) of 22 January 2009 to the editor of the Archaeology Magazine, which is published in Long Island City, New York reveals that far from the Republic of Macedonia harbouring irredentist ambitions on Greek territory, it is the good professor himself who sees annexation as the solution to "Paionia's mocking and provocation of its neighbour".

In that letter Professor Miller states explicitly: "*Allow me to end this exegesis by making a suggestion to resolve the question of the modern use of the name "Macedonia." Greece should annex Paionia – that is what Philip II did in 359 B.C. And that would appear to be acceptable to the modern residents of that area since they claim to be Greek by appropriating the name Macedonia and its most famous man. Then the modern people of this new Greek province could work on learning to speak and read and write Greek, hopefully even as well as Alexander did.*" (<http://www.panmacedonian.info/Archaeology+Miller.htm>)

There we are, Professor (or should it be Warrior?) Miller, the proponent of annexation - Greece should simply invade the Republic of Macedonia. Bravo Professor, Alexander the Macedonian and his father Philip II would have been proud of you. What we now need to know is whether your co-signatories are also proud of your malicious intentions?

Australian Macedonian Human Rights Committee (AMHRC) and Macedonian Human Rights Movement International (MHRMI)

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Founded in 1984, the Australian Macedonian Human Rights Committee (AMHRC) has been working towards achieving human rights for Macedonians and other oppressed minorities. For more information, please visit www.macedonianhr.org.au, or contact AMHRC at +61 3 9460 2910, or mail@macedonianhr.org.au.

Macedonian Human Rights Movement International (MHRMI) has been active on human and national rights issues for Macedonians and other oppressed peoples since 1986. For more information, please visit www.mhrmi.org, or contact MHRMI at 416-850-7125, or info@mhrmi.org.