The word Macedonian (Μακεδόνας, makedhonikos) has always been used in the Greek language to declare the origin of individuals and not to mark out their ethnic identity. That it also why use of it is so widespread and unlimited; all the more so, since it drew on the weighty heritage of Alexander the Great, unforgotten even under Ottoman Rule. In 19th century Greece nobody ever cast doubt on the Greekness of the Macedonians, even though it was entirely clear that many of them spoke non-Greek Slavic, Romance and Albanian dialects. The very use of the word ‘Macedonian’ distinguished them from the Bulgarians and classified them as belonging to the Greek stock.

Yet the word “Macedonian” had the same geographical rather than ethnic sense of origin in the corresponding languages in Bulgaria, Serbia and Romania; it was used to define individuals from the corresponding national groups in the wider Macedonian area.

In short, in the closing decades of the 19th century, individuals, belonging to different national and linguistic groups, natives of the wider Macedonian area, were defined using the same Macedonian name, which varied only linguistically, according to their particular language group (Makedhores, Makedontsi, Matsedoneni).

As emerges from political discussions in Greek parliament and the press, following the liberation of Macedonia from Ottoman suzerainty in 1912-1913, the term ‘Macedonian people’ (“Makedhonikos laos”) was used to define not just the Greek Macedonians, but on occasion also the totality of its mixed population, even including Albanian-, Greek- and Turkish-speaking Muslims. Yet, particularly after the definitive exchange and population movements, which mainly took place in the 1920s, the non-Greek populations of Greek Macedonia were gradually forgotten.

In the same interwar period, a Slavic Macedonian nation-building movement began to appear among the Bulgarian and communist intelligentsia, under the added influence of Comintern policy, in the wider Macedonian area of Greece, Yugoslavia and Bulgaria. In Greece, this movement was treated as a paradox, or a historical irony of which very few people were aware. Even when it became understood -- during the course of World War II and, more so, after the crisis of the Greek Civil War, 1946-1949 -- that the Macedonian...
name, despite historical titles, was acquiring an autonomous ethnic Slav substance through the formation of the federative People’s Republic of Macedonia within the Yugoslav Federation, nobody in Greece imagined that that name would end up as an international term contrasted to Greece; for this would be a contradiction in terms. For that same reason, apparently as a reaction to the usurpation of a cultural component of their Hellenic heritage, the use of the defining adjective “Macedonian” expanded on all levels in Greek Macedonia and the Diaspora in the post-war years. For its inhabitants, the word was synonymous with Greek; it was both a title of honour and a vital catalyst for the mustering and growth of its population.

The same intensification of use was to be seen after 1991, when the Yugoslav federative Socialist Republic of Macedonia became an independent state. The existence of another Macedonia, which was not Greek, was seen as illogical by those Greeks who had forgotten that a part of geographical Macedonia had not been included in the Greek state, as well as by those who had never learned that as a term of geographical origin, the word ‘Macedonian’ was not a Greek monopoly.

So how can all these people adapt to such an extreme reality as the sudden appearance in their vicinity of an independent state by the name of “Macedonia”, in which a ‘Macedonian’ is by definition not Greek?

Moreover, how could they consent to that state’s constitutional name_Republic of Macedonia_ which not only fails to specify the sovereign territory of the new state, but adopts instead the name of the wider Macedonian region, thus laying claims not only on the name of Macedonia but on all its derivatives?

Following over two centuries of intense use of the Macedonian name, and having exalted and fervently promoted Macedonian heritage within and beyond Greece, on both an individual and collective level, how could the Greeks accept not only that this identity does not belong exclusively to them, but that a neighbouring Slavic state is claiming the exclusive right to use it? At a time when regions in Europe are searching for and pushing their distinctive identities to the fore, how can it be possible for the Greek Macedonians to lose theirs?
A newspaper of Serres informs its readers about the anti-Greek propaganda in the postwar USA, which aims at the annexation of Macedonia by Bulgaria (Proodos, 8 June 1961).

Prime minister Tsolakoglou in his interview to the German sponsored newspaper The New Europe certifies that “neither the freedom nor the integrity of Macedonia will be touched. Warm speeches for the Macedonian people. (8 Oct. 1942).

A local provincial newspaper, the Voirani of the village Agios Athanasios of Drama, inspired by the great mobilizations stimulated by the independence of the Former Republic of Macedonia, it claims that ‘Macedonia was, is and will be Greek’. Greek had always in mind only Greek Macedonia.

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> Invitation issued by the Municipality Eleftheria- Kordelio (suburb of Thessaloniki) for the rally for Macedonia of 14 February 1992. The invitation explains that participation in the struggle for “historical vindication” is the duty of each citizen of the municipality.

> A newspaper of Serres informs its readers about the anti-Greek propaganda in the postwar USA, which aims at the annexation of Macedonia by Bulgaria (Proodos, 8 June 1961).

The employees of 'Balkan Export' company demonstrate and state that "The Macedonians is us and we are here. [...] For Thessaloniki. For Macedonia. For Greece."

> Gathering at the provincial town of Axioupolis. "We, Macedonians are here" is written on the placard. On the banner, along with the Greek Flag the sun of Vergina is also displayed as a regional symbol.
Theodoros Pangalos delivers a speech at the Greek parliament and presents himself as the representative of the Macedonian people. (Praktika Synedriaseon tis Voulis 2 February 1925).

Advertisement for a series of forthcoming articles at the newspaper Ethnos under the title 'Macedonia the heart of Greece.' (O Ellinikos Vorras”, 20 Sept. 1951)

Under the title "The Macedonians and the Army" the newspaper claims that there is a special bond linking the Macedonian and the Thracian peoples with the army. (O Ellinikos Vorras, 17 Dec. 1952).

The Macedonians brethren in the USA were alerted by the Bulgarian Propaganda. (O Ellinikos Vorras, 15 August 1951)

"Actions of the Macedonian Delegates for the promotion of the provisional industry." (O Ellinikos Vorras, 2 March 1965).

"The American artists toured the Macedonian countryside. They reached our boarders." (O Ellinikos Vorras, 19 April 1953).

"The Macedonian ex- minister Mr. Gotzamanis arrived two days ago from Athens". (O Ellinikos Vorras, 26/4/1953).
"A Paradox of Definitions"

"Aegean Macedonia" has been placed in brackets. The article explains that this denomination is used in Yugoslavia instead of the term Greek Macedonia (O Ellinikos Vorras, 15 Dec. 1948).
Α ΠΑΡΤΙ ΑΓΓΕΛΙΑ: 'Μακεδονικοὶ Μάταιοι Αναδροματικοί Αγώνες'
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Well done to the Macedonian people! (Icho tis Makedhonias, 3 May 1915).

“The political direction of the deputies of Macedonia”. (Icho tis Makedhonias, 18 Feb. 1915).

The article argues that the proper term is “Greek Macedonia” because the term “Aegean” undermines the Greek possession of this land. (Elliniki Makedhonia, 30 Jan. 1950).

“Macedonia thunders out: Velliadis [a football player, [must join]] in the national team of Greece”. (Akrites tou Vorra, 9 December 1946).

“The placard states: “It is not long before they tell us that Vukefalas [the mighty horse of Alexander the Great] was the ancestor of Zastava [Yugoslav] cars”.

“How Macedonian Brothers!” (Icho tis Makedhonias, 7 Nov. 1919).

The newspaper claims that “Macedonia is Greek” a handy slogan which was used to protect Greek Macedonia. In other words “Greek Macedonia is Greek” is what the Greeks had in mind, since being “Macedonian” and “Slav” together was a contradiction in terms. This is why the newspaper Makedhoniki Foni declares “Hands of our Macedonia.” (4 April 1949).