

Is Greece About to Lay Legal Claim to Atatürk and His Legacy?

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Featured image: Mustafa Kemal Atatürk

It's absurd to consider the founding father of the modern-day Turkish state as anything other than a Turk, but if the Greek Parliament passes the recently concluded "name deal" with Macedonia, then Athens will legally be obliged to regard everything in Greek Macedonia – including Atatürk, who was born in the regional capital of Thessaloniki – as having the "attribute" of being part of "Hellenic civilization, history, culture and heritage...from antiquity to the present day".

Historical revisionism is back in season in the Balkans following the signing of the so-called "[name deal](#)" between the Republic of Macedonia and Greece, which the author extensively analyzed in his recent piece about how "[Macedonia's About To Become The World's First 'Politically Correct' Police State](#)". The details of this topic as they relate to those two countries are contained within the text, but upon further contemplation of one of the many controversial clauses contained within the document, it became obvious that there's also a Turkish tangent to all of this as well that deserves to be highlighted and discussed. Article 7 (2) of the agreement provocatively states the following:

"When reference is made to the First Party, these terms (author's note: 'Macedonia' and 'Macedonian' as per Article 7 (1)) denote not only the area and people of the northern region of the First Party, but also their attributes, as well as the Hellenic civilization, history, culture, and heritage of that region from antiquity to present day." (emphases are the author's own)

Basically, Greece is making maximalist identity claims to the entirety of Greek Macedonia, which it asserts is characterized by the attribute of representing "Hellenic civilization, history, culture, and heritage...from antiquity to the present day", or in other words, refusing to acknowledge the existence of any non-Hellenic people on this territory during any time in the past several thousand years. This is blatant revisionism of the most arrogant kind that insults the intelligence of any person with even a passing knowledge of history who is aware of the wars and migrations that have marked the human story since its very beginning, to say nothing of relatively recent events over the past century.

The founding father of the modern-day Turkish state, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, was born in Thessaloniki, the main city of Greek Macedonia and current capital of the Greek administrative region of Central Macedonia, in 1881, thereby placing him within the purview of Greece's maximalist claims that everything that it refers to by the word "Macedonia" (the

region in which Atatürk was born) is characterized by the “attribute” of being part of “Hellenic civilization, history, culture, and heritage...from antiquity to the present day”. For as ridiculous of a claim as this is, it would be seemingly innocuous if it wasn’t about to become the official law of the state and its officials obligated to promote this on the world stage.

The so-called “name deal” that Greece just reached with the Republic of Macedonia will become the law of the land if it passes parliament, thus obligating the state’s representatives to implement all of its clauses, one of which is the revisionist assertion that everything within the borders of what is regarded as Greek Macedonia (including Thessaloniki, Atatürk’s birthplace) has been part of “Hellenic civilization, history, culture, and heritage...from antiquity to the present day”. That’s factually incorrect for many reasons, the most obvious and universally recognized objective one being the very existence of Atatürk – the founder of the modern-day Turkish state – himself, who was born there.

Should the agreement be approved by parliament, then Greece will have to claim Atatürk as their own per their newly promulgated national legislation, which will undoubtedly be seen as an unprecedented provocation by Turkey. It should be noted that the former mastermind of EuroMaidan and present US Ambassador to Greece Geoffrey Pyatt [ominously predicted](#) (or one could cynically say, planned in advance) that Turkey’s relations with his and his host country would go through “turbulence” ahead of its coming general election, which most certainly happened after Athens [granted “political asylum”](#) to two Turkish coup participants and the US [threatened to sanction](#) its nominal NATO “ally” if it [purchases Russia’s S-400 anti-air missile system](#).

Now, however, Greece is about to take everything much further by passing the Macedonian “name deal” and entering its maximalist identity claims to everything and everyone who ever lived in the region of Greek Macedonia into law, thus making this absurd claim one of the pillars of its national-historic policy and compelling its state representatives to advance this narrative at all international fora. Failure to do so would literally be in contravention of the prospective legislation that’s about to be passed, thereby putting offenders on the wrong side of the law and opening them up to prosecution, or at the very least accusations of dereliction of their state duty. It sounds surreal, but these are the real-life implications if this “name deal” passes.

All of this is terribly ironic because the Greeks accuse the Macedonians of engaging in historical revisionism and appropriating a legacy that isn’t theirs, though with the stroke of a pen and pending passage in parliament, it’ll be Greece itself that will undoubtedly be guilty of this through the promulgation into law of its maximalist identity claims to Greek Macedonia that would inextricably involve laying legal claim to Atatürk’s legacy on the basis that he and his family members were part of “Hellenic civilization, history, culture, and heritage...from antiquity to the present day.” This “politically correct” revisionism will lead to more pronounced interstate tensions if the Greek state gives itself the “right” to officially regard Atatürk as one of its “fellow Hellenes” because there’s no way that President Erdogan would ever remain silent in the face of such a provocation.

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