

# AMHRC review



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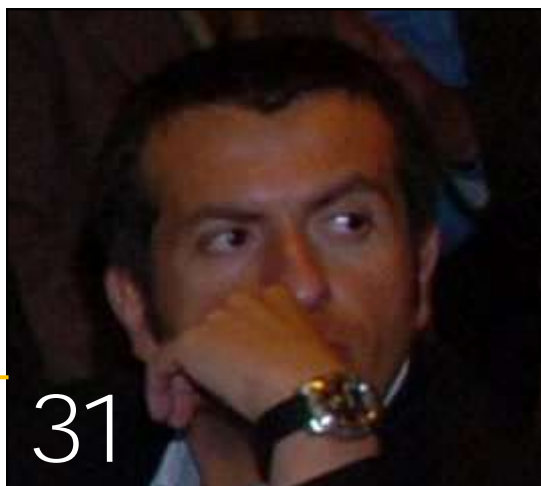
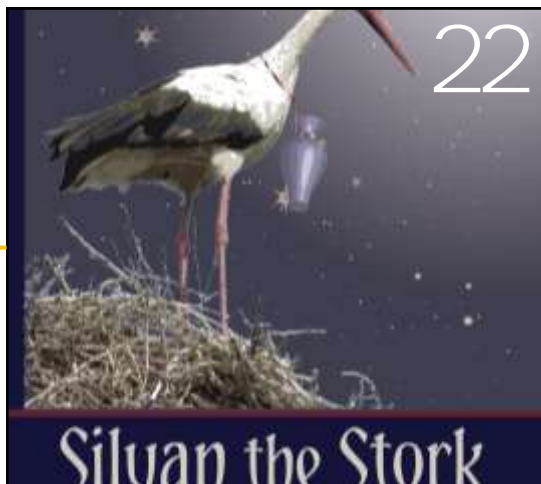
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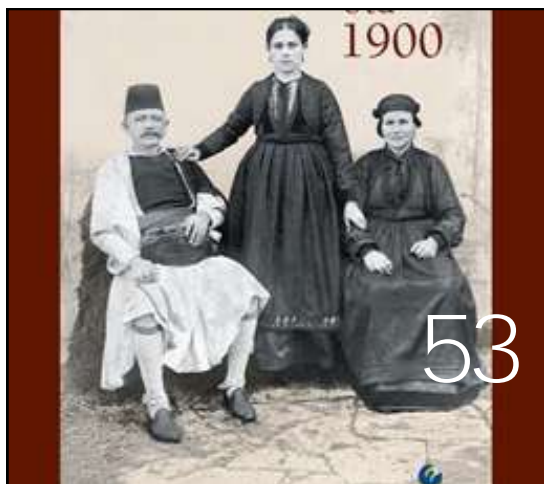


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# Editorial Introduction

By George Vlahov—Editor of the AMHRC Review

## In Review: Macedonian Cinema

We begin this issue of the AMHRC Review, with a focus on Macedonian cinema. For the purpose, Tonia Miovska, a Macedonian filmmaker residing in Toronto, carried out an interview with Vladimir Angelov, a senior member of the *Macedonian Cinema Information Centre*. Their discussion leads one to conclude that Macedonian cinematic art could truly flourish, but for very limited resources. For Macedonian cultural associations and individuals located in the diaspora who are not as interested in the politics of the Macedonian identity struggle, as we in the AMHRC are, this can be viewed as an alternative avenue for the contribution of fiscal support to the cultural life of Macedonia.

Indeed, humanity does not live by politics alone and it is clear that since the 1970's, Macedonian cinema has entered a more sophisticated and subtle phase. Macedonian directors have been creating tales with a more refined and profound loyalty to the aesthetic axiom of depicting the whole in every part. A stand out example in this regard is Manchevski's *Before the Rain* (1994). It should not surprise anyone that this has become the case in a land with so much history (perhaps too much, though that's a discussion for another day) and that has spawned numerous master story tellers like Marko Tsepenkov, as Michael Seraphinoff aptly reminds us in this issue of the Review.

In any case, I think that even the more politically minded among us in the diaspora need to consider becoming involved with Macedonian cinema; for since its invention and especially since the introduction of sound in the late 1920's, cinema has been and remains one of the most powerful means available for the conveyance of social conditions that are predominantly exotic to a global audience. Numerous sociological studies have shown that film can provide an emotional impact that taps deeply into the sensitivities of individual viewers. Generally, dry academically couched reports simply cannot do this and cinema obviously possesses a far greater potential for reaching masses around the world.

*One film*, in other words, could gain for Macedonians the solidarity of an external critical mass that might

then in its own way, make a crucial contribution to the struggle against Greek and Bulgarian state racism. A film that possesses not only a refined yet popular aesthetic, but that also, to paraphrase the great Spanish Surrealist cinematic auteur, Luis Bunuel, embodies another well known artistic dictum: *to describe authentic social relations with the object of transforming conventional wisdom and compelling the public to doubt the perennial existence of the established order; to remind those who have forgotten, that we do not live in the best of all possible worlds...*

## Next Year in Lerin

Certainly, the independent filmmaker/director of a documentary about Macedonian *Detsa Begaltsi* (child refugees), Jill Daniels, ends her film *Next Year in Lerin* (2000), cogently contending that *we do not live in the best of all possible worlds*. The scene shows a large number of *Detsa Begaltsi* refused entry to Aegean Macedonia (the part of Macedonia located within the borders of Greece) by the Greek authorities.

*Next Year in Lerin* was recently projected in cinemas around Australia (Melbourne, Sydney, Adelaide and Perth). The screenings were organised by the Australian Macedonian Theatre of Sydney and we need in particular, to commend two of the theatre group's representatives, Dushan Ristevski and Zoran Lozevski, for their tireless efforts in the promotion of this film.

## Some Historical Background: "The Greek Civil War" 1946-1949

During this period, large numbers of Macedonians eventually joined the Greek communist (KKE) led National Liberation Front (EAM) and its military wing, the National Popular Liberation Army (ELAS). It is not surprising that they did so – after all of the negative discrimination they had endured at the hands of the Greek state since 1912, many of them probably felt that serious change was necessary.

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 Macedo-

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nia. Estimates of how many were killed are dubious, though the number must certainly run 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 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.

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. To quote a 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.”*

### **Who are the Macedonian Detsa Begaltsi?**

During the course of the “Greek Civil War” somewhere between 20 and 35 thousand Macedonian children (there were Greek children too) were taken from their parents and smuggled (mostly on foot) 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.”* Moreover, in 1985, a law was enacted that permitted political refugees who were “Greek by origin” to reclaim their property and thus again, Macedonians were and remain, excluded. *“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 state.

### **Mothers**

*Next year in Lerin* recounts most of these facts as well as some lesser known ones. During a 1998 *Detsa Begaltsi* reunion in Skopje, the film also records the traumatic accounts of a number of then middle aged Macedonian child refugees, of their familial separation and dislocation. I could not help noticing how often I heard them utter the word *mother*:

- *...memories of our parents which were like talismans to us...My mother had given me a coloured bag...and I didn't want to leave it...Someone in charge took it and threw it into a fire... I was so upset to lose the bag... I put my hand in the fire to try and get it out... and burnt my fingers...*
- *Our mothers didn't want to give up their children... But they thought it was better for us... to be alive somewhere abroad than to stay with them and die...*
- *Our Aegean mother is crying for us in sadness...*
- *When we went away I left my right-footed moccasin... I put it at the top of the hill... I stopped... looked around... a shadow passed near me... it looked like my mother... I picked up the moccasin... held it against my chest... as if to stroke my bare foot... I never saw my mother again...*
- *As a partisan's wife, my mother had to go into hiding... at her relatives... She felt that as long as we stayed with her we were in danger: we might be discovered like the first group of children and parents... So we had to leave her behind... Here's my aunt... She was like a mother to me... She took care of us throughout... because we'd been uprooted...*
- *My mother carried my baby brother. He was one year old, I was six... The journey took two weeks travelling at night... She couldn't carry me and it was a very hard walk... I held on to her dress and she dragged me along... Somehow we got there after 15 days... We travelled by night across the mountains, all the way to Macedonia...*
- *We got the children and their mothers together in the evening... They brought all the children and dressed them in their best clothes... We had little bags of food ready for them... We didn't sleep the whole night... Mothers were crying... The children were screaming but they had to be*

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*saved... They hung on to their mothers: "I don't want to go!" The Professor kept saying: "Don't cry, Stoja... Be brave, they'll be back soon" The children were taken from their mothers and put in the carts... We started off and eventually we got to the border...*

- *One day my grandparents told me the truth... that I had a mother who was living in Aegean Macedonia... So when I was 24... I went to meet my real mother for the first time... I was sitting in between two mothers: my real mother I'd just met and the mother who brought me up... It was incredible...having two mothers at the same time...*
- *When I saw my mother and my cousins... I saw them first time almost after ten years... and I had no idea how they look or they had no idea how I looked... so I had a hard time... I had a hard time actually recognising...my mother...and I remember that was back in 1955...we came with a train...here in Skopje... and they took us...to some kind of an institution with a big stage and they place all the children on the stage and they announced... because nobody recognised them you know... ten years after this event happened... in 1948 when they left ...and they had a hard time recognising their children... so they exposed them on a stage... by their names... and telling I am Hristo Mangovski is there anybody to claim me?... and that is how we met actually... our relatives... our mothers... fathers... relatives, cousins... well actually it was very kind of strange... very mixed feelings because... I never had any possibility to grow up with a feeling of loving a mother... so I had to... you know... start from the beginning... start developing some kind of a... instincts... to know how to love a person who is very close to you...*

In particular, the words uttered by one of the interviewees at the very beginning of the film: *"Before we left...my mother hugged me, knelt down before me...and said: Son, wherever you go, never forget your mother's language"*, reminded me of some lines written by Benedict Anderson in his classic *Imagined Communities*: *"What the eye is to the lover – that particular, ordinary eye he or she is born with – language – whatever language history has made his or her mother-tongue-is to the patriot. Through that language, encountered at mother's knee and parted with only at the grave, pasts are restored, fellowships are imagined, and futures dreamed."*

It seems that for many Detsa Begaltsi, the memories of separation from their mothers and the words of their mothers, delivered in the native language of their mothers, are deeply interwoven with the fabric of their Macedonianess...it is through their mother's love that Macedonian continuity and fraternity were essentially created and they refuse to surrender them to the racist endeavours of the Greek state to wipe out Macedonians.

I will at this point take the opportunity to remind readers that the AMHRC, MHRMI and a *Detsa Begaltsi* steering committee based in Skopje, have organised a monumental legal action against the state of Greece, in order to restore the citizenship and property rights of exiled Macedonian refugees. While preparations for this action are now drawing to a close, it is not too late for new applicants to join.

### Again the Importance of Cinema

*Next Year in Lerin* evokes some powerful scenes of Macedonian *Detsa Begaltsi* in exile, brimming with life, and the camera contrasts this with present day images of the villages in Aegean Macedonia that they once inhabited, as emasculated and decrepit...there is also a touching ambivalence within this part of the narrative...it is a must see for anyone interested in the ongoing but not totally intractable problem of Macedonian child refugees.

I had the pleasure of meeting Jill Daniels before and after the Melbourne screening of the documentary and I will here thank her for bringing the story of the *Detsa Begaltsi* to a wider Western audience. DVD copies of the film can be purchased from Jill's website: <http://www.jilldanielsfilms.com/sales.php>

While most of the people I spoke to, enjoyed the experience of viewing *Next Year in Lerin*, some stated that they would like to see a longer and more detailed production. In response, I will here reiterate my claim that it is time for Macedonians to take the medium of cinema far more seriously than hitherto. It did not surprise me at all that most Macedonians thought they were seeing a *"new film"*. *Next Year in Lerin* is a production that is over ten years old and if the recent commemorative showings serve to instil a desire within the Australian Macedonian community to **pay** for a longer and more detailed film, then they were well worth the effort!

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**Also Inside this Issue**

David Vitkov's article demonstrates the grotesquely ironic contradictions of the Greek state and its foreign policy, as it pursues an irredentist agenda, under the guise of seeking human rights for "Greek" (when one of the official Greek protagonists in this matter, chauvinistically and shamelessly asserts that "*Vlachs are Greeks*", one automatically presses down on the quotation marks button) minorities in weaker neighbouring countries; while at the same time ruthlessly suppressing and flatly denying even the existence of any ethnic minorities within its own borders. The facts establish that Greeks in Albania for example, possess cultural rights in practice that ethnic minorities in Greece, can only dream about. Indeed, upon reading the article, it quickly occurs to one that this is probably more than just a case of the ordinary rough and tumble of international power politics. When Greek state officials, apparently in all seriousness, make their absurdly untenable allegations in reference to "*the territorial pretensions*" of Macedonia (a relatively tiny and landlocked country with a population of two million, possessing a military capacity that could not resist the Greek military even for a day), one feels that one is observing an example of paranoid Projection in a classic psychoanalytic sense. The Greek state, in sub-conscious defence of its own guilty conscience and anxieties in connection with the systematic persecution of its minorities (Macedonians and others), combined with its thinly veiled pretensions on "Northern Epirus" (southern Albania) etc; attempts to foist the whole pathological package onto others...

Perhaps even more disturbing, is that the European Union appears to be doing very little to rein Greece in. Many have pointed out that Greece's recent catastrophic financial crisis, presented the EU with an excellent opportunity to bring Athens into line on issues to do with human rights etc, in exchange for the fiscal bail out. If any such thought had entered the minds of the European powers that be, it was certainly abandoned before any media outlet caught wind of it. Where is the Democratic spirit of the "*new Europe*"? It's as if very little was learnt from the experience of the ultra-nationalism that led to WWII and as if the "*iron curtain*" came down for naught.

Moreover, this spirit is also made conspicuous by its absence when we review the position of all Australian governments in relation to Macedonians and the

Macedonian state, since its secession from Yugoslavia in 1991. As is disclosed in a letter by David Vitkov, the new Australian Foreign Minister, Kevin Rudd, during a recent visit to Greece, with a complete disregard for the facts or for the notion of human rights, praised Greece for its "diplomatic" torture of Macedonia over the last 20 years and even went as far as repeating the outrageous fabrication that there are "*one million*" Greeks in Australia – '*beware of Aussie battlers bearing myths*', especially when they come from a desperate minority government...

Meanwhile, on the ground in Greece, Macedonians remain 'lepers'; unrecognised and generally excluded as is highlighted in an article on the recent local elections held in Greece, by George Papadakis of EFA Rainbow (Vinozhito in Macedonian; a Macedonian political party fighting for the rights of Macedonians in Greece). On the plus side, there is a hint from Papadakis that the electoral victory of EFA Rainbow's Pando Ashlakov, might in the future lead to further positive outcomes; though no such hopes can be entertained in relation to the results of the recent Bulgarian census. As is reported by Stojko Stojkov of OMO "Ilinden" Pirin (a Macedonian political party struggling for the rights of Macedonians in Bulgaria), when, among many other things, it is related on numerous occasions that Bulgarian census officials actually refused to record individuals as Macedonians, one can only agree "*that Bulgaria has missed an opportunity...to free itself from a burden of lies*". Notably, a group of anonymous Bulgarian "*intellectuals*" recently attempted to pass this burden onto UNESCO and the AMHRC executive responded with a simple educational piece that occupies some pages in this issue of our Review.

On the other hand, the national census of Australia beckons in August this year and it presents an excellent opening for Macedonians from Aegean Macedonia, to again reinforce the fact that they migrated to Australia from Greece and thereby remind Australian politicians, academics and other responsible individuals in this country, that, contrary to the claims of Australian-Greek propagandists, Macedonians do inhabit Greece. Incidentally, on this matter, the array of Greek evidence compiled in an article by Ivan Hristovski (*whom we are proud to announce, has become our New York representative*) is unanswerable.

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Curiously, it appears that one Australian academic has so far managed to escape responsibility for perpetuating negative stereotypes about Macedonians. A follow up letter by Chris Angelkov (see the last issue of the AMHRC Review for the initial correspondence) to the Vice Chancellor of the University of Western Australia reveals that the head of the UWA has attempted to veil the racism of Professor Melville-Jones (a classicist who possesses enough ignorance to make pronouncements that conflate social configurations in the ancient Balkans, with those of the present) as 'freedom of thought'. To state the obvious, academics have a duty to measure their words even more carefully (as do politicians, see the MHRMI action alert inside) than the 'average' citizen and the Australian Macedonian community is avidly awaiting to see if the UWA Senate heeds the ethical reminders enunciated in Angelkov's letter.

Of course Macedonians in Australia have seen enough negative discrimination already (with the past implementation of various racial modifiers by state and federal governments); these external assaults have created unique problems that in turn, have considerably deflated our community. So we did not lightly decide to encourage Velika Thomev to open up a discussion on Australian-Macedonian Patriarchy in this Review. The purpose is not to create a new problem, but rather to underline the general neglect of an already existing one.

Feminism comes in many varieties, though most versions essentially, and in my view correctly, propound that women are systematically disadvantaged in Modern society. Thomev's account proceeds from this general basis, though it makes no further Universalist claims. Rather, with admirable restraint, it begins a process of cultural mapping that leaves the door open for other Macedonian women to also contribute to, in succeeding issues of our Review. Nor does her article deny the importance of the struggle to maintain Macedonian identity; indeed, the underlying premise is that unity will be strengthened as a result of confronting the issue of Patriarchy. Ideally, more space will appear for Macedonian women to add their voices to the affirmation of our Macedonian name.

Speaking of which, the AMHRC/MHRMI Our Name is Macedonia campaign, in spite of the sour

comments made by some segments of the media in Macedonia, is revealing itself to be more and more in tune with the average Macedonian citizen, as various polls are appearing to show exceedingly high majorities absolutely opposed to a change of name for the Macedonian state. Yet the farcical "negotiations" between Macedonia and Greece continue; an interesting article neatly summarising all the latest contradictions and stupidities involved, was written by Bill Nicholov, the President of MHRMI. Perhaps the most important thing about this article, is that it was published in the very widely read, Eurasia Review. Our point being to end somewhat near where we began this editorial - the importance of reaching out to a global audience should not be underestimated.

Regards,  
**George Vlahov.**

PS I just remembered two things I had forgotten during the course of drafting this editorial: firstly that Goran Babusku has carried on with his tireless efforts to protect the name of the Macedonian state in some obscure areas that many of us don't come across or unjustifiably neglect. Thank you Goran, for in one way or another, I believe that everything is connected to everything.

Secondly, the AMHRC/MHRMI are continuing to fund Macedonian language classes in Albania and those of you in the diaspora who are interested in contributing to this or any of our other initiatives in cooperation with the Macedonian human rights movements in Greece and Bulgaria, please just contact us, we are only an email or phone call away.

GEORGE VLAHOV  
Editor of the AMHRC Review





# "WHO GAVE YOU THE RIGHT TO NEGOTIATE MY NAME?"

**Do not be deceived by the terms 'international, bilateral, constitutional'**

- Change it once, even bilaterally, and it will be changed *everywhere*
- Do you want to be called '*Northern Macedonian*', '*Vardarian*', '*Skopjan*' or simply '*Macedonian*'?
- We applaud the Macedonian government for saying "*We will not change our name*", but by negotiating we are telling the world "*We will change our name*"
- **No dual-name.** Greece is the only country that objects to our name. It is not our problem. No bilateral or international "solution" is needed
- Countries that have recognized Macedonia have said "*If a bilateral solution is reached, we will abide by that decision and use the new name for Macedonia*"
- **Any change to our name is unacceptable**, even 'qualifiers' like '*Democratic*' or '*Northern*' in front of '*Republic of Macedonia*'. We would be known everywhere as '*Northern Macedonia*' and '*Northern Macedonians*', who speak '*Northern Macedonian*'

**WE ARE WINNING. 127 COUNTRIES HAVE RECOGNIZED MACEDONIA, INCLUDING 4/5 UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL MEMBERS.**

**WE HAVE THE POWER TO END THIS. STOP NEGOTIATING OUR OWN NAME.**

**Prior to 1988, Greece's policy was that Macedonia did not exist. Then it renamed 'Northern Greece' to 'Macedonia'. Now suddenly Macedonia is Greek?**

**As former Greek Prime Minister Constantine Mitsotakis admitted in 1995, the reason Greece objects to our name is to deny the existence and persecution of its large Macedonian minority**

- Macedonians in the Balkans are fighting for their human rights as Macedonians, nothing else

**REMEMBER: IT IS A LIE THAT A COMPROMISE WILL SOLVE OUR PROBLEMS WITH GREECE. IT WILL JUST STRENGTHEN GREECE'S POSITION TOWARDS ITS FINAL GOAL: TO ERASE MACEDONIANS FROM HISTORY, THE PRESENT AND FUTURE.**

**We are Macedonian! Do you want to go down in history as the people who changed our name and identity?**

**What gives the EU and NATO the right to ask you to sell out your identity?**

- The EU and NATO are violating their own principles and laws by asking us to change our name
- Do not give in to scare tactics from Greece and media reports that Macedonia will 'collapse' without EU & NATO membership
- Look at the current economic crisis in Greece
- **Scare-mongering is being used to get Macedonia to change its name**

**Greece is holding the EU and NATO hostage**

- Despite overwhelming support for Macedonia's NATO membership, Greece was permitted to use its veto power against Macedonia
- Greece lied about its economic situation, and now the rest of the EU is being forced to bail them out

**The European Union cannot allow its member-states to be handcuffed by Greece's xenophobic policies. Recognize Macedonia.**

- If the EU and NATO insist on a name change, what other concessions will they ask for?
- By continuing the negotiations, we are telling the world "we will change our name"
- **Stop negotiating our own name**

**Common sense. Would any other country negotiate its own name?**

- Should the US state of Georgia demand that the *Republic of Georgia* change its name?
- Should the Belgian province of Luxembourg demand that *Luxembourg* change its name?

**THE MOST BASIC HUMAN RIGHT IS SELF-IDENTIFICATION.**

**THE MACEDONIAN PEOPLE MUST TELL THEIR GOVERNMENT TO STOP NEGOTIATING OUR NAME.**

**DEMAND AN END TO 'FYROM' REFERENCE.**

**DEMAND IMMEDIATE INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION.**

**MHRMI**  
MACEDONIAN HUMAN RIGHTS MOVEMENT INTERNATIONAL  
[www.mhrmi.org](http://www.mhrmi.org)

**AMHRC**  
AUSTRALIAN MACEDONIAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE INC.  
[www.macedonianhr.org.au](http://www.macedonianhr.org.au)

and other Macedonian organizations - [www.mhrmi.org/our\\_name\\_is\\_macedonia](http://www.mhrmi.org/our_name_is_macedonia)

# OUR NAME IS MACEDONIA



# Macedonian Cinema 1991 – 2011

An Interview Conducted by Tonia Miovska

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This year, the independent Macedonian state is twenty years young and so is its cinema. To be sure, Macedonian cinema has a much older history; but how has it developed in the twenty years as part of an independent republic? What better guide to ask than Vladimir Angelov, a senior filmologist at the *Cinematheque of Macedonia* (the *Macedonian Cinema Information Center*).

**Tonia:** First off, I'd like to congratulate you on the most comprehensive website on Macedonian cinema, past and present. When was the Macedonian Cinema Information Center established? What are your main activities?

**Vladimir:** Thank you. The web site *Macedonian Cinema Information Center* (<http://maccinema.com>) was created in 2002 and the goal was to replicate recent trends in information access. This project succeeded another project, an Interactive CD-ROM *100 Years of Macedonian Cinema* that was issued in 2000. Very soon after we produced the CD, we realized that we will need to address other issues such as current Macedonian film production. At that time, we were using dial up internet connections, everything was very slow, the software was not developed to its current level... But we believed in the future of the new medium and we decided that it would be simpler to make a web-site than to produce a CD-ROM every two-three years. So we have created this site but it is not ideal, it is not flawless and due to some technical problems, has not been updated for a long time. But the goal was to inform



the general public about Macedonian film production from its beginnings to recent times. I hope that we have achieved this goal.

**Tonia:** You have certainly done that and

more – our readers can attest to that by visiting your site. Macedonian cinema has a long tradition going back to the Manaki brothers from Bitola who were essentially the first filmmakers in the Balkans at the

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beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century [see clip of the visit of Sultan Reshad to Bitola in 1911 [http://noolmusic.com/youtube\\_videos/macedonian\\_cinema\\_history\\_-\\_turkish\\_sultan\\_visits\\_bitola.php](http://noolmusic.com/youtube_videos/macedonian_cinema_history_-_turkish_sultan_visits_bitola.php)]. Since the independence of Macedonia in 1991, what have, in your opinion,

been the biggest challenges for Macedonian cinematography in these last 20 years?

**Vladimir:** The biggest challenges for the Macedonian filmmakers were to adapt to the new conditions that appeared after independence. Macedonian filmmakers were used to

another system of producing films. And they were used to producing different types of movies. After independence, Stole Popov, Branko Gapo and Dimitrie Osmanli (the directors that were making films in SRM - Socialist Republic of Macedonia) have each produced only one feature film. Some younger directors in the same time have made more feature films: Antonio Mitrevski made two films; Ivo Trajkov made five films (three of them with Macedonian financial support); Milcho Manchevski made four films; Darko Mitrevski made three films (two of them were co-directed); Teona Mitevska made two features. ... In other words, the older directors were used to making films less regularly, because their productions were big and expensive. Also, very often on subjects that were local, not international. These films were mostly funded by the state and today, the necessity of finding foreign producers makes it difficult to carry on in this fashion. Foreign producers are not interested in financing purely local themes; they want films that will appeal to a wider audience (in the Balkans or Europe). On the other hand, our young directors have learned to make their films cheaper and with less production difficulties, even if they are financed only by our local funds and/or their scripts are on a local subject.



Vladimir Angelov is a senior filmologist at the *Cinematheque of Macedonia* and is responsible for the cinema program in the cinema of the *Cinematheque of Macedonia*. He is a Graduate of production from the Faculty of Dramatic Arts in Skopje, 1993 and has been working in the *Cinematheque of Macedonia* since 1994. He also expresses his views on cinema as a regular contributor to *Kinopsis*.

**Tonia:** The role of film in society is often looked at either as mere entertainment or as a medium for the communication of ideas and hence, different approaches in financing films. In this sense, success can be viewed differently. What do you consider as successes of Macedonian cinema over the past twenty years?

**Vladimir:** The biggest success, of course, was *Before the Rain* (1994) for which Manchevski has won (among

(Continued on page 11)





(Continued from page 10)

many other awards) the Golden Lion in Venice, 1994. His second film, *Dust*, opened Venice film festival in 2001. Before that, Stole Popov's films were widely accepted in SFRJ and SFRJ's film festivals. *Happy New '49* stands as one of the best films in SFRJ. Zika Mitrovic, the cult director from Belgrade, claimed that Kusturica and Popov were the best directors in the former SFRJ. So, Kusturica made some 12-13 films, and Popov made 4-5, and his last film was made in 1997... Teona Mitevska with her second film *I'm From Titov Veles* got very good reviews around the world, and the film was widely distributed. Svetozar Ristevski, after his wonderful debut, *Mirage*, has moved to Canada where he made *Dear Mr. Gacy*. Darko Mitrevski's *Bal-kan-kan* was the most viewed film in Macedonia, and was greatly accepted in the Balkans. Ivo Trajkov's *Great Water* also received great reviews all over the world. Mitko Panov has made a wonderful first film (even though he is middle-aged) *The War Is Over*. Sergej Stanojkovski's *Kontakt* was also well received in the region. So, maybe, one of the major problems in Macedonian cinema is a lack of strategy for the distribution and marketing of Macedonian films.

**Tonia:** Many of the films you mentioned were co-productions. How does a filmmaker in Macedonia get a film financed if there is no co-production involved?

**Vladimir:** It's is very hard to get finances if you are not part of a co-production. The policy of the Mace-

donian Film Fund [established in 2008] is to grant projects that already have co-partners. And this policy is not only implemented in Macedonia. All countries in the region, and many in Europe, especially smaller countries, are co-producing their films. So, for instance, if a Macedonian film has an actor from Serbia, or Bulgaria, it's likely that that film will be in distribution in that country. Last year, Macedonia was a co-producer of the most viewed Bulgarian film - *Mission London*. And Bulgaria was a co-producer of *Mothers* by Manchevski. Some years ago, Slovenia was one of the countries that gained an Oscar for a Bosnian film *No Man's Land*. But aside from the Macedonian Film Fund, the Ministry of Culture of Macedonia can also support some projects that they think are important for Macedonia like this year's productions of Stole Popov's *A Tale from Wild East* and Darko Mitrevski's *Third Half*.

**Tonia:** Is there a European fund Macedonian filmmakers can access?

**Vladimir:** European funds are accessible to Macedonian filmmakers. Several Macedonian productions have received funds from *Euroimage* like Teona Mitevska's *I'm From Titov Veles*. She again received support last year for her upcoming film. Milcho Manchevski's third film *Shadows* was also supported by *Euroimage*...

**Tonia:** On average, how many feature films are produced in a year? What is an average budget for a film?

**Vladimir:** From the earliest production, *Frosina*, to the most re-

cent, *Mothers*, Macedonian film production has an average of a little bit more than one film per year. An average budget... A film budget for our films is like everywhere in the world. Maybe honorariums here are lower. You can make a film with 10 000 euros, but if you have 1,000,000 it is better. It mostly depends on the subject of the film.

**Tonia:** With the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the collapse of communism, the former Eastern Bloc countries underwent major societal changes. In the ensuing years, and up until today, many filmmakers from the Bloc dealt in their films with the communist legacy and life in post communism. The Balkans also experienced the ethnic conflicts of the 1990s. What were the major themes in the works of Macedonian filmmakers over the past 20 years?

**Vladimir:** *Gipsy Magic*, *Suicide Guide*, *I'm From Titov Veles*, *Before The Rain*, *Upside-down*, *Does it Hurt*, *Contact*... All these films are connected with the present. Even films that are based in the past are connected with the present, like *Dust*, *Revenge*, *Across The Lake*, *Great Water*, or *Goodbye, 20th Century!*

(Continued on page 12)



(Continued from page 11)

and *Shadows*. So, the present situation of Macedonian society is the main scope of the recent films. ...about people in the present that live with the weight of the past.

**Tonia:** Milcho Manchevski, Stole Popov, Ivo Trajkov, Aleksandar Popovski, Antonio Mitreski and others, are the already established filmmakers. Which names stand out among the younger generation of Macedonian filmmakers?

**Vladimir:** Mitko Panov is not young but after I saw his debut, I think, given the opportunity, that he is capable of great films. I think that Milcho Manchevski and Ivo Trajkov will continue filming their stories. These three are among the middle generation. Svetozar Ristovski, Teona Mitevska, Igor Ivanov - Izy, Aneta Lesnikovska are among the younger ones. From what I have seen, Atanas Georgiev and Bijlana Garvanlieva are extremely talented filmmakers, but they have been working on documentaries till now. Borjan Zafirovski has also a unique expression as a filmmaker.

**Tonia:** What makes the work of the younger generation interesting?

**Vladimir:** Svetozar Ristovski is capable of making suspense out of a very ordinary situation. That is a gift. In *Mirage*, he gave us a whole study of bullying. Teona Mitevska makes small films, in production terms. But her films are full with emotions. Izy can make a lot with his camera. He has a lot of ideas how to use a camera in an innovative way. His must work on storyline, though.

**Tonia:** Speaking of storyline. A lot of Macedonian films are based on adaptations of literary work or scripted by the directors. Is there a separate study of scriptwriting at the Faculty of Dramatic Arts?

**Vladimir:** Yes, there is a separate study at the FDU for screenwriters and playwrights. Professors Rusomir Bogdanovski and Sasko Nasev are in charge of this department.

**Tonia:** What films are in production this year?

**Vladimir:** Stole Popov and Darko Mitrevski will start production. Vladimir Blazevski, I hope, will have a premiere of his *Punk Is Not Dead*, his first Macedonian feature since *HI-FI* (1987). *This is Not an American Movie* by Saso Pavlovski is waiting for replies together with *Skopje*, a film that consists of nine stories directed by nine young directors, Jane Altiparmakov, Borjan Zafirovski, Ognjen Dimitrovski, Sinisa Eftimov, Vardan Tozija, Srgjan Janikievik, Sasa Stanisic, Gjorce Stavrevski and Darijan Pejovski. Teona Mitevska will also have a new film. I hope that Antonio Mitreski will start this year filming Goran Mihic's screenplay *Kids of Winter's Sun*. I sincerely hope that Svetozar Ristovski will find a co-producer for his *My Brother Lazar*...

**Tonia:** Where can Macedonian filmmakers showcase their films? Which film festivals are in Macedonia?

**Vladimir:** Difficult question. There is no cinema-chain for distribu-

tion in Macedonia. There are very few cinemas for screening films. Among the few places is our cinema (*Cinematheque of Macedonia*) that is always open to Macedonian filmmakers and not only for their feature projects but also for their short and documentary films. There are two international festivals in Bitola (IFF Manaki Brothers) and Skopje (SFF). There is a festival in Strumica (ASTERFEST) for alternative films and a festival for documentaries in Skopje - MakeDox.

**Tonia:** You also mentioned earlier the lack of strategy for distribution and popularization of Macedonian films. How do you think this situation can be solved or improved?

**Vladimir:** For sure we need better and more films. But you must promote films. With the promotion of the films, even a bad film can become good. But, a good film without a promotion is a hidden film that no one will see. First, we must improve distribution in the region. Co-production must not be the only factor for receiving money from the Film Fund. Producers must apply for funds with a distribution strategy in place. There are many film festivals in Europe other than Cannes, Berlin and Venice. Producers and distributors must consider smaller festivals as well. Second, the state (Macedonian Ministry of Culture and its institutions) must pay some attention to film journalism and its development.

**Tonia:** Thank you very much for your insights.

.....  
Tonia Miovska is a documentary filmmaker living in Toronto, Canada.



# MHRMI Op-Ed Published by Eurasia Review - Why Is EU Demanding That Macedonia Change Its Name? by Bill Nicholov

4 January 2011

*"The EU is not involved in changing the identity of people. Identity is something sacred and it should not be negotiable,"* according to European Union ambassador Erwan Fouere.

So why is the EU demanding that Macedonia change its name in order to gain membership?

Mr. Fouere was responding to the latest European Commission report that removed references to the Macedonian language and used the term "state language" instead. The United Nations followed suit and removed all references to the Macedonian language. Macedonia had to demand reinstatement.

Greece claims that it wants the Republic of Macedonia to change its name to "prevent confusion" with the province of Macedonia.

Does the EU actually believe this? Then again, it is bailing out Greece after it blatantly lied about its economic situation.

The nonsensical name dispute was initiated by Greece in order to continue its policy of non-recognition and persecution of its large Macedonian minority. Former Greek Prime Minister Constantine Mitsotakis admitted in 1995,

"My main aim was to convince the Republic [of Macedonia] to declare that there is no Slavomacedonian [using the Greek government's pejorative term for the Macedonians of Greece] minority in Greece. This was the real key of our difference with Skopje."

Ironically, Greece now claims that "Macedonia is Greek", but it was not

until 1988, when Greece realized that independence for the Republic of Macedonia was imminent, that it renamed "Northern Greece" to "Macedonia." Prior to this, Greece's policy was that Macedonia did not exist. Now its policy is "The more outrageous the lie, the more believable it becomes".

The question is, does the world believe it? The answer appears to be "no". 129 countries, including four of the five permanent UN Security Council members, have recognized Macedonia. Now will these countries take the next logical step and denounce the name negotiations as an unprincipled intrusion on the constitution of a sovereign nation?

Unfortunately, the United States, which has already recognized Macedonia, is calling for a "compromise". The US views itself as a leader in spreading democracy and human rights throughout the world. So how does it justify asking a country to change its own name?

The European Union and NATO have taken it one step further. In addition to calling for a "solution", the EU and NATO are allowing themselves to be handcuffed by Greece's racist and xenophobic policies. Every NATO member-state supported Macedonia's membership, yet Greece was permitted to veto it.

According to former US Secretary of State, Lawrence Eagleburger, *The name dispute is unnecessary and unfounded, since Macedonia was called the same in the time of former Yugoslavia and this did not cause any problems then.* He added, *Is there anything more immature and more foolish than 'blackmailing' a nation by denying its membership in international organizations, which goal is to preserve the peace and protect their members from*

*aggression of non-members.*" Yet for two decades, the United Nations admission of Macedonia as a member under the "temporary" reference "Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia" persists.

If Greece's "name dispute" with Macedonia made any sense, then where are the calls from the US State of Georgia for the Republic of Georgia to change its name? How about the Belgian province of Luxembourg demanding that Luxembourg change its name?

The first UN mediator for the name dispute, Robin O'Neil, said that *Macedonia must not and will not change its name in order to appease Greece. If Macedonia succumbs to pressures and changes its name, such events will only give more firepower to Greece until it reaches its final goal - Macedonia to vanish from the map.*"

Every Macedonian government has continued the ridiculous name negotiations solely to satisfy American and Western European pressure to find a "compromise" with Greece. Instead of capitulating to countries that demand a change to Macedonia's name and identity, the Macedonian government must immediately end the name negotiations and demand support from these countries.

Bill Nicholov, President  
Macedonian Human Rights Movement International

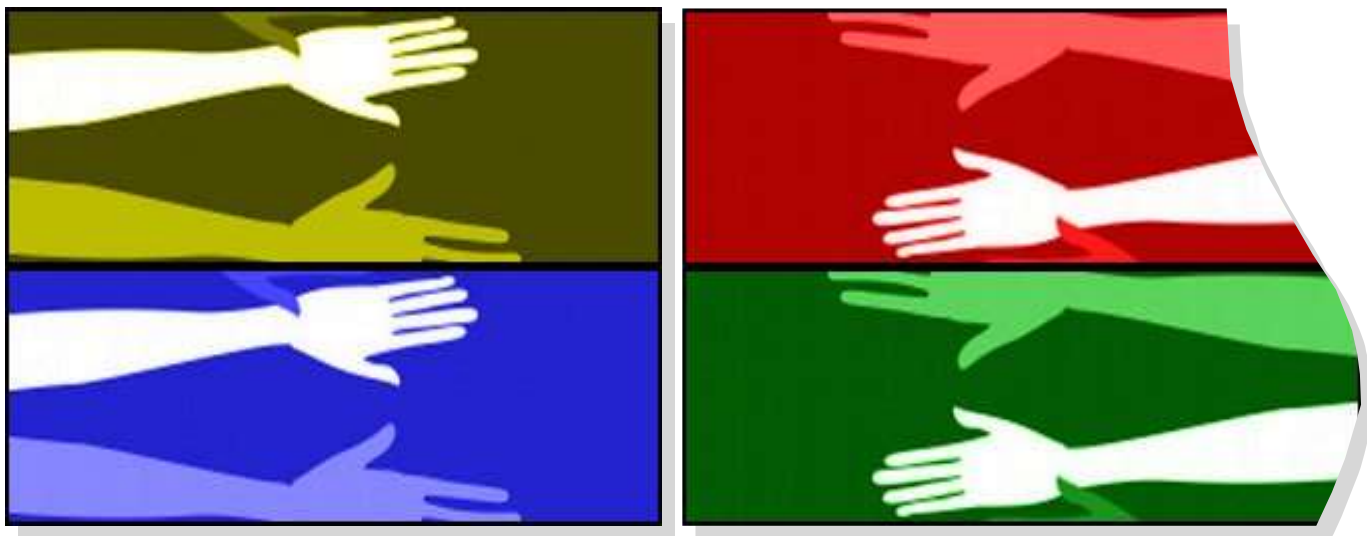
<http://www.eurasiareview.com/opinion/opinion-opinion/why-is-eu-demanding-that-macedonia-change-its-name-05012011/>





# MACE DONIANS IN ALBANIA DEMAND END TO DISCRIMINATION

by AMHRC & MHRMI



10 December 2010

nian teachers.

of its Macedonian minority and force Albania to uphold its obligations regarding minority rights under international human rights law.

The Australian Macedonian Human Rights Committee (AMHRC) and Macedonian Human Rights Movement International (MHRMI) condemn the Albanian government's continued threats against Macedonians in the Golo Brdo area for conducting Macedonian language classes. Since AMHRC and MHRMI's announcement of funding for the language classes (see issue no.2 of the AMHRC Review), Albanian government officials, secret service agents, and police have tried to prevent the classes from taking place and have issued death threats against the Macedo-

“We feel like third class citizens. We feel degraded; how can it be that we live in a country in the 21st century, with a police force that bans the learning of one's mother tongue?”, asked an angry Edmond Osmani, President of the Golo Brdo local committee of the Macedonian Alliance for European Integration – a Macedonian political party working to protect the rights of Macedonians in Albania.

AMHRC, MHRMI and the Macedonian Alliance for European Integration reiterate our demand to the international community to hold Albania accountable for its persecution

AMHRC and MHRMI also affirm that we have expanded our funding of Macedonian language classes throughout Albania, and have opened a new kindergarten in the village of Vrbnik. Anyone interested in making a contribution towards the struggle for the survival of Macedonian culture in Albania or towards the human rights struggle of Macedonians throughout the Balkans, may contact us, per the details contained at the end of this publication.





# "НИКОЈ НЕМА ПРАВО ДА ПРЕГОВАРА ЗА МОЕТО ИМЕ!"

Немојте да бидете измамени од термините 'меѓународно, билатерално, уставно'.

- Ако се промени еднаш, дури и билатерално, насакаде ќе биде променето
- Дали сакате да бидете нарекувани 'Северномакедонци', 'Скопјанци', 'Вардарци' или само **Македонци**?
- Ние и честитаме на македонската влада за ставот **"Ние нема да го промениме нашето име"**, меѓутоа со самиот факт дека преговараме, му кажуваме на светот дека **"Ние ќе го промениме нашето име"**
- Земјите кои што ја признале Македонија велат дека **"ако се постигне билатерално решение, тие тогаш тоа решение ќе го прифатат и ќе го користат новото договорено име за Македонија"**
- Било која промена на нашето име е неприфатлива, вклучувајќи и одредници како 'Демократска', 'Вардарска' или 'Северна' пред името 'Република Македонија'. На пример со една таква промена ние би биле основувани насакаде како 'Северна Македонија' и 'Северномакедонци' кои зборуваат 'Северномакедонски' јазик.

**НИЕ ПОБЕДУВАМЕ. ВЕЌЕ 127 ЗЕМЈИ ЈА ПРИЗНАА МАКЕДОНИЈА ПОД ИМЕТО РЕПУБЛИКА МАКЕДОНИЈА, ВКЛУЧУВАЈЌИ И 4 ОД 5-ТЕ ПОСТОЈАНИ ЗЕМЈИ ЧЛЕНКИ НА СОВЕТОТ ЗА БЕЗБЕДНОСТ НА ОБЕДИНЕТИТЕ НАЦИИ.**

**НИЕ ИМАМЕ СИЛА ДА СТАВИМЕ КРАЈ НА СЕТО ОВА.**

**ДА ПРЕСТАНЕМЕ ДА ПРЕГОВАРАМЕ ЗА НАШЕТО СОПСТВЕНО ИМЕ.**

Пред 1988 год., Грција тврдеше дека Македонија не постои. Тогаш ја преименува 'Северна Грција' во 'Македонија'. Сега одеднаш Македонија е грчка?

Во 1995 год., поранешниот грчки премиер Мицотакис призна дека причината поради која Грција се спротивставува на нашето име е за да може да го негира постоењето на бројното македонско малцинство и да продолжи да го прогонува. Сите знаеме дека проблемот на Грција е македонскиот идентитет и јазик.

- Македонците на Балканот се борат за своите човекови права како Македонци и ништо друго

**ЗАПОМНЕТЕ, ЛАГА Е ДЕКА БИЛО КАКОВ КОМПРОМИС ЌЕ ДОНЕСЕ РЕШЕНИЕ НА ПРОБЛЕМИТЕ СО ГРЦИЈА. ТОЈ САМО ЌЕ ГИ ЗАСИЛИ ПОЗИЦИИТЕ НА ГРЦИЈА ДО НЕЈЗИНАТА КРАЈНА ЦЕЛ - ДА ГИ ИЗБРИШЕ МАКЕДОНЦИТЕ ОД ИСТОРИЈАТА, СЕГАШНОСТА И ИДНИНАТА.**

Ние сме Македонци! Дали сакате да влеземе во историјата како луѓе кои го променија нашето име?

**Кој им дава право на ЕУ и НАТО да бараат да го промениме нашиот идентитет?**

- ЕУ и НАТО ги прекршуваат своите сопствени принципи и начела со тоа што бараат ние да си го промениме името.
- Да не се предаваме на заплашувањата од страна на Грција и медиумските предупредувања дека Македонија ќе 'пропадне' без влез на земјата во ЕУ и НАТО
- Видете ја сегашната економска криза во Грција
- **Кампања заснована на заплашување се користи за да ја натера Република Македонија да си го промени името**

**ЕУ и НАТО се заложници на Грција**

- Грција пакеше за економската состојба во својата земја и сега останатите земји членки на ЕУ се принудени да и помагаат за да се справи со кризата

**ЕУ не смее да дозволи ксенофобичната политика на Грција да ги врзи рацете на нејзините земји членки. Признајте ја Македонија!**

- Ако ЕУ и НАТО настојуваат да се промени името, какви ли други отстапки ќе побараат тие и Грција подоцна?
- Со продолжување на преговорите ние праќаме јасна порака дека ќе го промениме името
- **Мораме да престанеме да преговараме за нашето сопствено име!**

**Здравниот разум порачува: Дали некоја друга земја би преговарала за своето сопствено име?**

- Дали би требало американската сојузна држава Грузија (на англиски *Џорџија*) да побара од Република Грузија да си го промени името?
- Дали би требало белгиската провинција Луксембург да побара државата Луксембург да си го промени името?

**НАЈОСНОВНОТО ЧОВЕКОВО ПРАВО Е ПРАВОТО НА САМОИДЕНТИФИКАЦИЈА.**

**МАКЕДОНСКИОТ НАРОД МОРА ДА И КАЖЕ НА ВЛАДАТА ДА ПРЕСТАНЕ ДА ПРЕГОВАРА ЗА НАШЕТО ИМЕ. ДА ПОБАРАМЕ КРАЈ НА СРАМНАТА РЕФЕРЕНЦА 'ФИРОМ'. ДА ПОБАРАМЕ ВЕДНАШ МЕЃУНАРОДНО ПРИЗНАВАЊЕ ПОД ИМЕТО РЕПУБЛИКА МАКЕДОНИЈА.**

**ММДЧП**  
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АВСТРАЛИСКО-МАКЕДОНСКИОТ КОМИТЕТ ЗА ЧОВЕКОВИ ПРАВА  
www.macedonianhr.org.au

и други македонски организации - [www.mhmi.org/our\\_name\\_in\\_macedonia](http://www.mhmi.org/our_name_in_macedonia)

# НАШЕТО ИМЕ Е МАКЕДОНИЈА





**Professor Alan Robson**

Vice Chancellor of University of Western Australia

Dear Sir,

Thank you for your letter of reply dated 9 December 2010 which we only just recently received.

Whilst we can understand the very important principle of academic independence which you rightly want to protect, uphold and nurture at The University of Western Australia, I am deeply disappointed with your response as you have totally misunderstood the basis of our complaint which is Professor Melville-Jones denigration of Macedonians in Perth as being “often not well educated” and “generally not being in a position to question the distorted view of history that is the basis of their nation”.

Decent and civilized people everywhere condemn the notion of a “civilized society” where “academic independence” views malicious vilification of a whole group as ethically acceptable. The most basic of human rights in a modern civilized society is the unconditional right to self identify as being part of any particular nation, culture or ethnicity without fear of retribution or ridicule. Professor Melville-Jones’s degrading and humiliating comments have been exacerbated by your failure to condemn or apologize for his behaviour in any shape or form using “academic independence” as your excuse.

The University of Western Australia’s own Code of Conduct states:

“The Code of Conduct does not and cannot convey every possible situation. You can however test yourself on whether your behaviour is ethical by asking yourself three questions:

Would I be happy to have what I am saying or doing appear on the front page of the news paper? Is what I am saying or doing serve a purpose beyond self-interest? Would I like to be spoken to or treated in this way?”

It is quite clear that Associate Professor Melville-Jones has failed the UWA test of ethical behaviour and it is also quite clear that your failure to condemn his behaviour has also failed this test.

Furthermore Vice Chancellor, I would like to bring to your attention this very relevant excerpt from the Australian Human Rights Commission Website which can be found at the following

(Continued on page 17)





(Continued from page 16)

link: [http://www.hreoc.gov.au/racial\\_discrimination/cyber racism/vilification.html#relevant](http://www.hreoc.gov.au/racial_discrimination/cyber racism/vilification.html#relevant)

“Since the introduction of provisions dealing with racial hatred in 1995, the *Racial Discrimination Act* makes it unlawful to insult, humiliate, offend or intimidate another person or group in public on the basis of their race. Specifically, the Act states:

*It is unlawful for a person to do an act, otherwise than in private, if:*

- (a) the act is reasonably likely in all the circumstances to offend, insult, humiliate or intimidate another person or group of people, and*
- (b) the act is done because of the race, colour or national or ethnic origin of the other person or some or all of the people in the group.*

A variety of acts can constitute racial hatred, including speaking, singing and making gestures in public, as well as drawings, images, and written publications such as newspapers, leaflets and websites.

There are three essential components of this unlawful conduct:

- 1) The act must be done in public;
- 2) It must be reasonably likely to offend, insult, humiliate or intimidate the people against whom it is directed; and
- 3) It must be done because of the race, colour or national or ethnic origin of the group against whom it is directed.”

With all due respect, only a cursory glance of the above would strongly suggest that your employee Melville-Jones has clearly breached the requirements of this Act as he has publicly insulted, humiliated and intimidated the whole Australian Macedonian community with his comments and any reasonable person would have been able to predict such an outcome.

We once again request that the University of Western Australia distances itself completely from the unfounded and insulting comments made by Associate Professor Melville-Jones in relation to this matter together with an unconditional apology from him personally. Failure to properly deal with our request adequately will leave us no alternative but to explore alternative means of redress for this injustice.

Yours faithfully,  
**Chris Angelkov**  
MCCWA Chairman  
MBA BCom (UWA) CPA





**Dear KaiserBaas**

I have recently installed one of your products - a USB digital TV tuner Stick. I was quite impressed with the ease of the installation, use and the quality of the product.

However, during the installation I was very unpleasantly surprised to see the name of my country of origin, Macedonia, listed incorrectly in the list of countries as "Macedonia, the former Yugoslav Republic of".

I am sure that you are simply unaware of how highly offensive the naming of our country under this name is and that it was implemented around two decades ago because of irrational pressure. The name "Former Yugoslav republic of Macedonia" is for use in the realm of the United Nations and its bodies only.

As KaiserBaas to my knowledge is a non-UN related company, I sincerely hope I will see the correct name - Macedonia or Republic of Macedonia, in the next revision of your software or updates.

Failing that, I will be discouraged from recommending your products to my professional peers, clients and colleagues.

I am unsure of the source you received the current list of countries from to be used in your software, however I would also strongly encourage you to contact your supplier of the list of countries to also correct this unwanted error.

Sincerely yours,

**Goran Balazska**

IT infrastructure & Multimedia

Melbourne, AU

8 February 2011

The Hon Kevin Rudd MP  
Minister for Foreign Affairs

Dear Mr Rudd,

We write in relation to your recent visit to several European countries including the Republic of Greece and the Republic of Turkey. We believe that the Australian government's continued engagement with European partners can have a beneficial impact on regional stability and cooperation in the Balkans, as well as making a positive contribution to the promotion and protection of human rights.

We do however regret that during your tour, despite your very close proximity to the Republic of Macedonia, you did not take the opportunity to visit that country. We sincerely hope that you will be able to do that on your next tour of the region.

Nevertheless, we would like to take this opportunity to raise a number of issues with you stemming from your visit.

### 1. The Republic of Macedonia

Minster, while in the Republic of Greece, you proceeded to "*commend the government of Greece for its various diplomatic initiatives in relation to the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia* [sic]".

Despite the fact that the Republic of Greece sends out signals that it may be prepared to agree to a composite name for all purposes as long as it contains a geographical identifier to supposedly distinguish the Republic of Macedonia from regions in the Republic of Greece, whenever the UN mediator, Matthew Nimetz, puts forward any proposal containing the word Macedonia, the Republic of Greece, promptly rejects it. Its rejection of all these proposals has nothing to do with any claimed "irredentist" threat to its "territorial integrity" by Macedonia. The real reason for such rejections is that it wishes to erase the Macedonian ethnic identity and language in the Republic of Macedonia and the Balkans in general, so as to not to have to face up to the crimes and continuing human rights abuses it has committed against the Macedonian minority in the Republic of Greece from 1913. In this regard, we would like to add that the Republic of Greece's "diplomatic initiatives" in its attempts to force Macedonia to change its name have included an 18 month economic embargo in 1994-95.

For its part, the Government of Macedonia has reiterated that it would be prepared to consider a "fair and equitable solution" if the Republic of Greece acknowledged the existence of the ethnic Macedonians and the Macedonian language, a condition which the Republic of Greece is most unlikely to agree to.

For our part, to be quite frank, our organisation has demanded that the Macedonian government put an end to the name negotiations with the Republic

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(Continued from page 19)

of Greece. They are a racist abomination in the face of the concept of human rights and indeed the UN charter itself. Far from praising the Republic of Greece, Minister, you should condemn it for attempting to bully a smaller nation into giving up the fundamental right to name itself and thereby participate in erasing its national identity.

The Gillard government refers to Macedonia as the “Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia” and indeed Australia has done so since 15 February 1994. The Federal Government has attempted to justify the use of this derogatory name on the basis that negotiations are continuing between Macedonia and Greece under the auspices of the UN on finding a solution to the name dispute. The negotiations taking place within the UN do not preclude member states from recognising Macedonia under its freely chosen name. Accordingly, some 131 countries (over two thirds of all UN members) have indeed recognised the Republic of Macedonia as just that.

Therefore given that Australia’s position is in the clear minority now, we strongly urge you to review the policy of the government in relation to Macedonia with a view to adopting the name “Macedonia” or “Republic of Macedonia” as have Australia’s major and strategic allies (i.e. USA, UK, Canada) as well as other major powers such as Russia, China and India.

If the Australian government decides not to give Macedonia the respect it deserves, by recognising it by its democratically chosen name, we would like to be given a reasonable explanation for why, in your response.

## 2) Inaccurate representation of the size of the Greek community in Australia

Minister, in your joint press conference with Greek Foreign Minister, Droutsas, you asserted that there were “one million Greek Australians”. While the contribution of the Greek community to Australian society has been significant, this community does not number “one million”. According to official ABS statistics and as noted on your own department’s website, “the 2006 Census records...365,145 people of Greek ancestry living in Australia.”

While this oversight on your part might seem trivial, in fact it is not. For many decades now, representatives of the Greek community in Australia have over-inflated the number of Greek-Australians in representations to political parties, MPs and government departments. This practice has been quite intentional and has the purpose of ‘demonstrating’ that the ‘Greek vote’ in Australia is more significant than it really is. Despite the official ABS statistics, this misrepresentation has been accepted as fact by the major parties in this country (and other organisations including mainstream media outlets) and thus we believe that it has had a direct impact on policy with respect to the name of the Macedonian state, and related issues such as the disgraceful and discriminatory decision in 1994 of the Federal Government to rename the Macedonian community as “Slav Macedonian”.

Minister, do you agree that it would be more appropriate to only quote official ABS figures in future?

## 3) Human Rights Violations in the Republic of Greece and the Macedonian Minority

Minister, during your visit to the Republic of Greece while you ‘praised’ the country for its diplomatic efforts,

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you failed to raise or comment on its abysmal human rights record, especially in relation to the Macedonian minority in Northern Greece.

As you might be aware, in 2008 the United Nations' Independent Expert on Minority Issues, Gay McDougall visited Greece to assess the plight of minorities in that country. In the subsequent report, released in 2009, the UN Independent Expert recommended that:

*"The [Greek] 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." (p. 24)*

We have enclosed a copy of the full report for your information.

Minister, your defence of the rights of the Tibetans on recent visits to the People's Republic of China was well received by the Australian community and showed that you are prepared to speak up for those that are oppressed by tyrannical regimes. Your government's 'voice' on the issue of the recognition of the Macedonian minority in Greece would be equally well appreciated by the Macedonian community in this country and indicate that you and your government support the promotion and protection of human rights everywhere.

Furthermore Minister, we need not remind you of the importance of the UN system and the significance of its bodies. We therefore urge you to raise the issue of the Macedonian minority with your Greek counterpart and urge the Greek government to implement, in full, the UN recommendations.

#### 4) Meeting request

Minister, since the change of government in 2007, the Australian-Macedonian Human Rights Committee has made numerous attempts to meet with either your predecessor or yourself. We have made several requests in writing, some of which remain unanswered. Of course we appreciate the fact that you do have a busy schedule, however we do feel that after three years your office would find it possible to schedule a meeting with our organisation.

We therefore kindly request a meeting with you to discuss the issues raised in this letter and other matters of importance to the Macedonian community in Australia.

Yours sincerely,

David Vitkov.  
Executive Member

**CC: The Hon. Julia Gillard, Prime Minister of Australia**



# SILYAN THE STORK

By Dr Michael Seraphinoff

Tsepenkov collected many such Macedonian folk tales from the oral folk tradition and wrote them down for the first time. The tale of Silyan the stork is probably the best known and the longest of all Macedonian folk tales. Tsepenkov certainly added his own personal artistic touches to the story as he wrote it down.

One readily available published source of this story in the Republic of Macedonia is SILJAN STRKOT, Kultura, Skopje, 2001. That publication of the story contains both the original written in the nineteenth century dialect of the Prilep region of Macedonia by Marko Tsepenkov and a modern day standard literary Macedonian language version created by Jasminka Janeva. I have made my own English language translation of the story available to readers as a free download from the website MacedonianLit.com. Bound and printed copies of my translation are also available there, and through the Macedonian Canadian history society website.

Silyan the Stork is a captivating tale with vivid imagery and numerous expressions and elaborate detail from Macedonian folk life. It describes wedding customs,

farm work, family relations and many other facets of Macedonian village life. The story is one window into the Macedonian's world of centuries past. As such it is an excellent way to acquaint new generations with the world of their grandparents

and great grandparents for generations. The story of is one more part of the ancestors. Just as Macedonia share the music, native land with a story connect the generations.

many  
Silyan the stork  
rich legacy of our  
Macedonians continue to  
songs and dances of their  
new generations, so can such

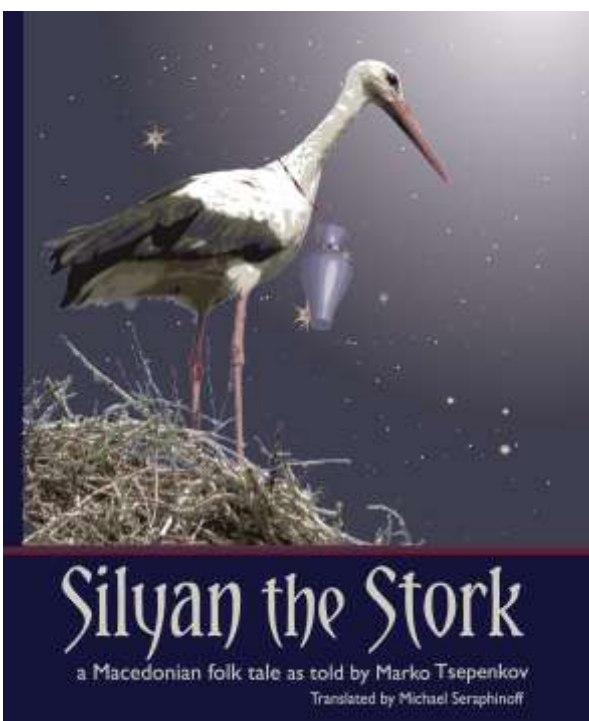


The story is timeless in many respects. It contains powerful archetypal images. The magical transformation of men into animals and animals into men is most definitely a narrative tradition connected to the deep past of humanity. While each generation might embellish the story with some things from their own time, certain elements or symbols in the story are certainly archetypal having Neolithic or possibly even Paleolithic origins. Stories of people magically taking on the forms of animals are ancient indeed, and one can easily imagine our nomadic Ice Age hunter/gatherer ancestors sitting around the fire in the evening reciting stories with such characters in them.

One can also imagine our ancestors gathered around the hearth in the evening relating stories of young men who craved excitement and adventure eventually returning home to beg the forgiveness of their families after coming to the realization that there really is no place like home. The theme of loss of home and its restoration is certainly a powerful one. Such a loss is all too familiar to many Macedonians, who today live in exile as a result of the Balkan wars of the last century that divided their homeland. That loss is still deeply felt by many, and it is still the subject of powerful art such as the recent play "Mr. Balkan" by Macedonian Australian playwrights Stefo Nantsou and Dushan Ristevski.

The story of Silyan the stork is marked by a series of dramatic events with interesting elements and details. For example, toward the end of the story Silyan finally succeeds in returning home and regaining his human form, but on his way home Silyan witnesses an epic life and death struggle between the storks and predatory eagles. Over the course of the several centuries of Ottoman Turkish rule, the Macedonian people on numerous occa-

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sions stood up to the fierce, predatory occupiers of their land. The storks in the story are identified with the Macedonian people, and, no doubt, listeners would readily associate the eagles in the story with their Turkish oppressors. There are a number of little details in this portion of the story that also illustrate folk customs from the Macedonian world of the past, such as Silyan's kissing of his parents' hands upon his return and his wife's washing of his feet.

Here is the excerpt from that portion of the story that tells of these events:

*"As he had the year before, he made the long, arduous journey with the other storks to his home region. However, the journey was not without its special challenges. At one point in their journey, the flock was attacked by eagles. The storks and the eagles fought a fierce battle and many storks died that day. The storks had passed over a high mountain range and then landed in a large field in the valley below, filled with grasshoppers for them to eat. But when they landed, the eagles spotted them and swooped down on the storks in a swift attack by a large flock of them. The storks fought the eagles for three days and three nights, and the blood flowed like water on the field of battle. Silyan didn't take part, the old stork headman shielded him from the attackers. He was, after all, under his protection as a guest. And the eagles were somehow afraid of the strange stork with the glass flask attached around his neck. Silyan found a small cave to hide himself in until the battle was over. Fortunately, the storks prevailed in the end, and they were able to eventually continue their journey to the land of Silyan's birth. When*

*the happy storks finally arrived at their destination and the individual families dispersed throughout the village and the surrounding villages and towns, Silyan and the old headman made their way to Konjari.*

*Silyan immediately flew into the barn and opened the flask and drenched himself thoroughly in the magical water. Suddenly he was transformed back into a man- the man that was familiar to his mother and father, sister, wife and son. Silyan left the barn and made his way to the house and entered it. Because it was early and the weather was not very good- rainy and overcast, as it often is at the end of winter- the family was inside, huddled around the woodstove. The family dog, Liso, who lay by the door, failed to recognize Silyan, and began to bark loudly.*

*"Liso, girl, what are you barking at?" he said to her.*

*"Why, mother, Silyan just spoke at the door!" Neda called to Silyan's mother.*

*They all leapt to their feet and rushed to the door. Weeping and kissing him, they greeted Silyan, and he kissed his mother and father on their right hands as a gesture of respect, and asked forgiveness for all he had done. His mother put a cup of homemade plum brandy on the stove to heat up, while Neda brought the largest stool over for Silyan to sit on. She took off his sandals and washed his feet and then brought out his best Easter clothes to wear. Velko woke from his nap and Silyan lifted him onto his lap and stroked his hair and kissed him."*

**Dr. Michael Seraphinoff**  
[www.macedonianlit.com](http://www.macedonianlit.com)



## Marko Tæpenkov

The folk lore collector and tailor from the Macedonian town of Prilep, Marko Tæpenkov (1829-1920), heard the tale of *Silyan the Stork* from one of his visitors some time in the mid-nineteenth century.



## MHRMI Demands Immediate Resignation of Racist Liberal MP Jim Karygiannis

Toronto, Canada (March 8, 2011)

Liberal MP Jim Karygiannis spewed out more anti-Macedonian hate speech at a lecture titled "Insight to Hellenism" at the University of Toronto on March 5, 2011. While praising the lecture, which glorified Greece's policy of denying the existence and persecution of its large Macedonian minority and which defended Greece's bombing of Macedonian civilians during Greece's Civil War, Karygiannis once again referred to Macedonians as "Skopjans". This is a term used by Greece to negate the ethnic identity of Macedonians and evokes Greece's horrific campaigns, past and present, at ethnically cleansing or forcibly assimilating its large Macedonian minority.

Karygiannis encouraged one of the guest speakers, Christos Karatzios, to send a letter to Canadian MPs and to "... *come and enlighten the rest of my colleagues on what is Greece...*"

He accused Prime Minister Harper of "selling out" Greek-Canadians because of the Conservative Party's recognition of Macedonia.

But will the Liberal Party reprimand him?

Karygiannis referred to Macedonians as "Skopjans" in an interview for the Globe and Mail on September 21, 2007, following Canada's recognition of the Republic of Macedonia. Canadian-Macedonians were outraged and flooded the Liberal Party with demands that Karygiannis be reprimanded. The Liberal Party ignored the issue and instead chose to attack the Conservative Party's recognition of Macedonia, pandering to the Greek-Canadian community.

Ironically, the Liberal Party and their apologists consistently accuse the Conservative Party of the underhanded tactics that Liberals employ. The federal and provincial Conservatives have come under recent attack for targeting ethnic voters and

for ties to banned separatist groups. However, pandering to ethnic communities is a Liberal specialty and it is Jim Karygiannis who has notorious ties to the Tamil Tigers, classified by the Canadian government as a terrorist organization. Paradoxically, Karygiannis is an Associate Member of the House of Commons' Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights.

Macedonian Human Rights Movement International (MHRMI) calls on Canadian politicians, regardless of party affiliation, to demand Jim Karygiannis' immediate resignation. We ask that concerned Canadians do the same via the contact information below. Jim Karygiannis' continued presence in Parliament is an affront to traditional Canadian values.

### Members of Parliament:

[webinfo.parl.gc.ca/  
MembersOfParliament/  
MainMPsCompleteList.aspx?  
TimePeri-  
od=Current&Language=E](http://webinfo.parl.gc.ca/MembersOfParliament/MainMPsCompleteList.aspx?TimePeriod=Current&Language=E)



НЕ ГИ ИНТЕРЕСИРААТ НИ ВМРО НИ СДСМ

# ДИЈАСПОРАТА САКА ПРАТЕНИК ШТО НЕМА ДА ГО ДАДЕ ИМЕТО

**Катерина Нешкова**

Трите пратеници од дијаспората (Европа со Африка, Америка со Канада и Австралија) треба да бидат независни од сите политичка партии. Македонските друштва во дијаспората најјавуваат дека на предвремениот избори државјаните со право на глас во странство ќе поддржуваат кандидати што ќе се залагаат за прекинување на преговорите со Грција за спорот за името.

- Македонската дијаспора има гледиште и ставови во врска со одредени теми различно од ставовите на главните партии во Македонија. Пример, одговорот на прашањето дали Македонија треба да продолжи со преговорите со Грција за името е: дефинитивно не. За да се пренесе оваа перспектива на дијаспората со точност, ние ќе бараме кандидати што се сосема независни - вели **Горги Влахов** од Австралиско-македонски комитет за човекови права.

## ПАРТИИТЕ ДА НЕ ПОДМЕТНУВААТ КАНДИДАТИ

Тој предупредува дека главните партии, пред сè ВМРО-ДПМНЕ и СДСМ, дури и да се обидат меѓу независните кандидати да подметнат свои фаворити, тоа нема да им помине.

- Ние не сме наивни и се разбира дека главните партии во Македонија ќе организираат свои кандидати, ама, пак, ние ќе работиме за победата на вистински независни претставници. Откако сè ќе биде договорено и спроведено во врска со правото на дијаспората да гласа, ние сакаме дијаспората да ја добие улогата на независен глас и независен фактор во политичкиот живот на Македонија - вели **Влахов**, кој говори и во името на Македонското меѓународно движење за човекови права со седиште во Торонто, Канада.

Според измените на Изборниот законик што се во тек, кандидат за пратеник од изборна единица во дијаспората можат да предложат најмалку 200 избирачи. Овие народни избраници ќе се избираат според мнозин-

стапува во македонското собрание, ни самите иселеници не знаат колку од нив ќе излезат на гласање. Нашинците во Австралија велат дека не е проблемот во интересот - тие сакаат да гласаат на изборите во Македонија, но до нив стигнуваат многу малку информации како точно да го направат тоа.

- Сега е тешко е да бидеме сигурни колку Македонци во Австралија, а и во дијаспората воопшто имаат право на глас (во Австралија, на пример, бројот може да не достигне 10 илјади.). Не е вистина дека има мал интерес за гласање, напротив, има голем интерес. Кога законите за гласање ќе

бидат јасно направени и објавени, повеќето од нас ќе учествуваат, а и многу други ќе побараат државјанство за да можат да гласаат - вели **Влахов**.

Пребројувањето на дијаспората го оставаат на рацете на матичната држава.

Според изборната регулатива, иселениците што сакаат да го искористат своето право на глас треба да бидат државјани на Република Македонија и електронски да се пријават во македонските дипломатско-конзуларни претставништва откако ќе се распишат изборите и откако МНР ќе објави оглас во тамошните весници за при-

јавување на гласачите. Конечната бројка на избирачи од дијаспората ќе се знае на само 15 дена од одржувањето на изборите. Искуствата од гласањето на дијаспората во регионот покажуваат дека интересот за гласање се движи од 1 до 8 проценти.

Ако ова е тенденцијата и кај македонските гласачи во дијаспората, тоа би значело дека еден пратеник во дијаспората ќе се изгласа и со само неколку илјади гласа. За разлика од тоа, народните избраници од домашните изборни единици ќе треба да освојат најмалку 10 илјади гласа за да седнат во собраниското столче.

## RELATED ORGANISATIONS

The AMHRC is part of an international Macedonian network that spans Australia, North America and Europe, including:



**Address** Suite 106, Level 1  
55 Flemington Rd  
North Melbourne, 3051  
**Telephone** +61 3 9329 8960  
**Email** info@macedonianhr.org.au  
**Website** www.macedonianhr.org.au



**Address** Stephanou Dragoumi 11  
PO Box 51, 53100 Florina/Lerin,  
Greece  
**Telephone** +30 23850 46548  
**Email** vinozito@otenet.gr or  
rainbow@vinozito.gr  
**Website** www.vinozito.gr



**Address** 157 Adelaide St. West, Suite 434  
Toronto, Canada M5H 4E7  
**Telephone** 1 416 850 7125  
**Email** info@mhrmi.org  
**Website** www.mhrmi.org



**Address** Bulgaria, Blagoevgrad 2700  
Zk 'Elenovo' bl 6 v. Bar. 6  
p.k. Mechkaroovi  
**Email** omo\_ilinden\_pirin@yahoo.com  
**Website** www.omoilindenpirin.org



**Website** novazora.gr







## Македонците се подготвуваат за пописот во Австралија

Дневник – Скопје 17.03.2011

Во пописните графи нашите иселеници имаат можност да се впишат како Македонци кои зборуваат македонски јазик.

Голема акција за што помасовно изјаснување на нашите сонародници како Македонци на претстојниот попис на населението во Австралија закажан за август годинава покрена Австралиско-македонскиот комитет за човекови права. Целта на кампањата е нашите иселеници исправно да ги пополнат пописните формулари за да се дојде до точната цифра на македонското иселеништво на овој континент и од кои земји потекнуваат. Комитетот добил цврсто убедување од официјалните претставници на Австралиското биро за статистика дека сите граѓани што ќе се изјаснат како Македонци и кои зборуваат македонски јазик ќе бидат евидентирани како такви. Односно, не постои опасност во конечните пописни резултати да бидат заведени како „славوماкедонци“, како што во одредени држави и ситуации се користи во австралиското општество.

Според последниот попис на населението од 2006 година во Австралија имало 83.983 Македонци, за околу две илјади граѓани повеќе отколку на пребројувањето пред десет години. Во пописните формулари припадниците на македонската етничка заедница ќе треба своерачно да ги пополнат графите за националност, јазик и религија за разлика од некои други заедници кои тоа треба да го направат со заокружување на понудените одговори.

Ѓорѓи Влахов, претседател на Австралиско-македонскиот комитет, изјави дека акцијата треба да придонесе да се утврди точниот број на Македонците.

- До сонародниците апелираме да се изјаснуваат како Македонци кои зборуваат македонски јазик и се припадници на македонска православна религија. Ако напишат така, така и ќе бидат заведени статистички - потенцира Влахов.

Тој наведува дека е многу важно македонските иселеници што потекнуваат од Егејска или Пиринска Македонија да не ги впишуваат ваквите термини.

- Тие треба да напишат дека се Македонци родени во Грција или во Бугарија како Македонци. Со тоа јасно ќе се покаже дека и во тие земји постојат Македонци. Нашето постоење во Грција најмногу го негира токму грчката етничка заедница и затоа ова ќе биде најдобар доказ за нивните неосновани тврдења - потенцира Влахов.

Препораката до иселениците што биле родени во периодот кога нашата земја беше во составот на југословенската федерација како земја на раѓање е да ја наведуваат Република Македонија, а не Југославија. Слична акција мината година поведоа и повеќе македонски иселенички организации во САД. (Б.Ѓ.)

<http://www.dnevnik.com.mk/default-mk.asp?itemID=FFAED515F88F734C97675D18096C07A4&arc=1>



# Information for the Macedonian Community

Australia's 16<sup>th</sup> national Census of Population and Housing will be held on **Tuesday 9 August 2011**.

Its objective is to accurately measure the number and certain key characteristics of people in Australia on Census night, and the dwelling in which they live.

The census collects information relating to each person and household in the country but it is not concerned with information about individuals as such.

The public expects that the information they provide will be kept confidential and this protection is given by provisions in the *Census and Statistics Act 1905*. All employees of the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) are legally bound to secrecy and to never release identifiable personal information to any person or organisation outside the ABS. Should a person breach this secrecy requirement they face a fine and/or imprisonment.

In order to ensure that the Macedonian Community in Australia is accurately identified, it is essential that each and every person takes care with in the manner in which they answer the questions in Census 2011.

The Australian-Macedonian Human Rights Committee (AMHRC) after consultation with the relevant government authorities has identified the four questions featured in this leaflet to be of particular relevance to the Macedonian Community.

Australian-Macedonian Human Rights Committee  
Suite 106, Level 1  
55 Flemington Road  
North Melbourne, VIC 3108

Tel/Fax: (03) 9329 8960  
info@macedonianhr.org.au  
<http://www.macedonianhr.org.au>

*Disclaimer: The responses provided in this leaflet are the suggestions of the AMHRC. Individuals are free to answer any question as they wish.*

## QUESTION 12: COUNTRY OF BIRTH

If you were born in what is now the Macedonian republic, you should answer this question the following way:

 Write "MACEDONIA" IN THE SPACE BELOW THE CATEGORY "Other – Please specify".

<p><b>12</b> In which country was the person born?</p> <p>Remember to mark box like this: <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Australia → Go to 14</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> England</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> New Zealand</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Italy</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Viet Nam</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Scotland</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Greece</p> <p>Other – please specify</p> <p><input type="text" value="MACEDONIA"/></p>
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## Important Information!

Even though you may have been born in the Macedonian state during the period that it was a part of Yugoslavia, it is very important that you do not respond to this question with an answer of "Yugoslavia", as a separate category exists for this answer and you will therefore NOT be counted as originating from the current state of Macedonia.

МАКЕДОНСКА ВЕРЗИЈА НА СТ. 29

(Continued on page 20)






## QUESTION 12: COUNTRY OF BIRTH

The following information for Question 12 only applies to those individuals born in Aegean Macedonia or Pirin Macedonia

If you answer "Aegean Macedonia" or "Pirin Macedonia" or any other derivative of "Macedonia", you will be counted as having originated from the country of Macedonia. It is very important that you do not answer this way.

In order to highlight the existence of Macedonians outside the borders of the state of Macedonia, you must respond accurately. Therefore, if you were born in Aegean Macedonia:

 Mark the box "Greece"

12 In which country was the person born? Remember to mark box like this: —	<input type="checkbox"/> Australia → Go to 14 <input type="checkbox"/> England <input type="checkbox"/> New Zealand <input type="checkbox"/> Italy <input type="checkbox"/> Maltese <input type="checkbox"/> Scotland <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Greece <input type="checkbox"/> Other – please specify
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Please note that by responding "Greece" you are not declaring your ethnic identity to be "Greek". A separate question exists for ancestry (question 18) where you can declare Macedonian.

## QUESTION 16: LANGUAGE

If you speak Macedonian, regardless of how fluently, you should for this question:

 Write "MACEDONIAN" in the space below the category "Other – please specify".

16 Does the person speak a language other than English at home? Mark one box only. If more than one language other than English, write the one that is spoken most often. Remember to mark box like this: —	<input type="checkbox"/> No, English only → Go to 18 <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, Italian <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, Czech <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, Croatian <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, Arabic <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, Vietnamese <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, Mandarin <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, other – please specify
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## QUESTION 18: ANCESTRY

Regardless of where you were born (Macedonia, Greece, Australia or elsewhere) your ancestry (heritage/background) is Macedonian.


For this question, you may count back three generations (parents, grandparents, great-grandparents).

 Write "MACEDONIAN" in the space below the category "Other – please specify".

18 What is the person's ancestry? Provide up to two ancestries only. Examples of 'Other – please specify' are: GREEK, VIETNAMESE, HONGKONG, DUTCH, KOREAN, MACIL, LESAWAN, AUSTRALIAN SOUTH SEA ISLANDER. See page 7 of the Census Guide for more information. Remember to mark boxes like this: —	<input type="checkbox"/> English <input type="checkbox"/> Irish <input type="checkbox"/> Italian <input type="checkbox"/> German <input type="checkbox"/> Chinese <input type="checkbox"/> Scottish <input type="checkbox"/> Australian <input type="checkbox"/> Other – please specify
--	--

## QUESTION 19: RELIGION

If you identify as belonging to the Macedonian Orthodox religion you should answer the question in the following manner:

 Write "MACEDONIAN ORTHODOX" in the space below the category "Other – please specify".

19 What is the person's religion? Answering this question is OPTIONAL. Examples of 'Other – please specify' are: SALVATION ARMY, HINDUISM, JADASH, HUMANISM. If no religion, mark the 'No religion' box. Remember to mark box like this: —	<input type="checkbox"/> Catholic <input type="checkbox"/> Anglican (Church of England) <input type="checkbox"/> United Church <input type="checkbox"/> Presbyterian <input type="checkbox"/> Green Orthodox <input type="checkbox"/> Buddhist <input type="checkbox"/> Baptist <input type="checkbox"/> Islam <input type="checkbox"/> Lutheran <input type="checkbox"/> Other – please specify
--	---

Please note that if you respond simply "Orthodox", a separate category exists for this and you will not be counted as "Macedonian Orthodox".

Also, if you have a different religion (eg: Methodist, Islam, Jehovah's Witness) or have no religious affiliation, you should answer this question accordingly.



# Информација за македонската заедница

16-иот Национален попис на населението и домаќинствата на Австралија ќе се одржи во вторник на 9ти август 2011 г.

Целта на овој попис е точно да се изброи населението и да се добијат некои главни карактеристики на жителите на Австралија и условите во кои живеат на ноќта на пописот. Со пописот се собираат информации кои се однесуваат за секој член од секое семејство во државата, но не ги зема во предвид приватните податоци на поединци.

Јавноста очекува дека информацијата што тие ќе ја кажат ќе се чува доверливо и ова е обезбедено преку Законот за попис и статистика донесен во 1905 г. Сите вработени во Бирото за статистика се законски обврзани на доверливо делување и никогаш не смеат да идентификуваат лични податоци на поединци или организации надвор од Бирото за статистика. Доколку некој службеник го прекрши овој закон, може да добие парична казна или затвор.

За да можеме да обезбедиме точна идентификација на македонската заедница, потребно е секој човек внимателно да одговори на сите прашања во прашалникот во 2011 г.

Австралиско-македонскиот комитет за човекови права со претходно консултирање на претставници од соодветни државни институции, ги има идентификувано следните четири прашања што се важни за македонската заедница.

Брошурава беше подготвена од:

Australian-Macedonian Human Rights Committee  
Suite 106, Level 1  
55 Flemington Road  
North Melbourne, VIC 3108

Tel/Fax: (03) 9329 8960  
info@macedonianhr.org.au  
<http://www.macedonianhr.org.au>

Забелешка: Одговорите наведени во брошурава се предлози на АМКЧП. Вие сте слободни да одговорите на прашањата како што сакате.

## ПРАШАЊЕ БРОЈ 12: ДРЖАВА ВО КОЈА СТЕ РОДЕНИ

Ако сте родени во денешната Македонска држава, треба да одговорите:

✎ “MACEDONIA” во местото каде е специфицирано “Other – please specify”

12 In which country was the person born? - Remember to mark box like this: —	<input type="checkbox"/> Australia > Go to 14 <input type="checkbox"/> England <input type="checkbox"/> New Zealand <input type="checkbox"/> Italy <input type="checkbox"/> Viet Nam <input type="checkbox"/> Scotland <input type="checkbox"/> Greece <input type="checkbox"/> Other – please specify <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">M A C E D O N I A</div>
---	--

### Важна информација!

Иако сте биле родени во времето кога Македонската држава беше дел од Југославија, многу е важно да НЕ одговорите на ова прашање со одговор „Југославија“. Постој посебна категорија за ова прашање и со ваков одговор вашата родна земја НЕМА да биде забележана како „Македонија“.

(Continued on page #)

ENGLISH VERSION ON p27





## ПРАШАЊЕ БРОЈ 12: ДРЖАВА ВО КОЈА СТЕ РОДЕНИ

Следната информација на прашањето број 12 се однесува за оние што се родени во Егејска Македонија или Пиринска Македонија.

Ако одговорите „Егејска Македонија“ или „Пиринска Македонија“ ќе бидете забележани како да потекнувате од Македонската држава. Многу е важно да **НЕ** одговорите вака на ова прашање.

За да се истакне дека постојат Македонци надвор од границите на Македонската држава, мора да одговорите точно.

Значи, ако сте родени во Грција:

✍ Забележете “Greece”

12 In which country was the person born? - Remember to mark box like this: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Australia ▶ Go to 14
	<input type="checkbox"/> England
<input type="checkbox"/> New Zealand	
<input type="checkbox"/> Italy	
<input type="checkbox"/> Viet Nam	
<input type="checkbox"/> Scotland	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Greece	
Other – please specify	<input type="text"/>

Важна информација! Со тоа што одговорите „Грција“ **НЕ ЗНАЧИ** дека декларирате грчко етничко потекло. Има посебно прашање за етничко потекло каде што ќе можете да напишете „македонско.“

## ПРАШАЊЕ БРОЈ 16: ЈАЗИК

Ако зборувате македонски, без разлика колку добро, треба да одговорите:

✍ “MACEDONIAN” во местото што е специфицирано “Other – please specify”.

16 Does the person speak a language other than English at home? - Mark one box only. - If more than one language other than English, write the one that is spoken most often. - Remember to mark box like this: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> No, English only ▶ Go to 18
	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, Italian
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, Greek	
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, Cantonese	
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, Arabic	
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, Vietnamese	
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, Mandarin	
Yes, other – please specify	<input type="text"/>

## ПРАШАЊЕ БРОЈ 18: ПОТЕКЛО

Без разлика каде сте родени (Македонија, Грција, Австралија или било каде) вашето етничко потекло е **македонско**.

За ова прашање се брои до три генерации наназад (родители, баби и дедовци, или прабаби и прадедовци).

✍ Напишете “MACEDONIAN” во местото обележано “Other – please specify”.

18 What is the person's ancestry? - Provide up to two ancestries only. - Examples of 'Other' – please specify are: GREEK, VIETNAMESE, Hmong, DUTCH, KURDISH, MAORI, LEPANSE, AUSTRALIAN SOUTH SEA ISLANDER. - See page 7 of the Census Guide for more information. - Remember to mark boxes like this: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> English
	<input type="checkbox"/> Irish
<input type="checkbox"/> Italian	
<input type="checkbox"/> German	
<input type="checkbox"/> Chinese	
<input type="checkbox"/> Scottish	
<input type="checkbox"/> Australian	
Other – please specify	<input type="text"/>

## ПРАШАЊЕ БРОЈ 19: РЕЛИГИЈА

Ако се идентификувате со македонската православна религија тогаш треба да одговорите на ова прашање:

✍ “MACEDONIAN ORTHODOX” во местото обележано како “Other – please specify”.

19 What is the person's religion? - Answering this question is OPTIONAL. - Examples of 'Other' – please specify are: SALVATION ARMY, HINDUISM, JUDAISM, HUMANISM. - If no religion, mark the 'No religion' box. - Remember to mark box like this: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Catholic
	<input type="checkbox"/> Anglican (Church of England)
<input type="checkbox"/> Uniting Church	
<input type="checkbox"/> Presbyterian	
<input type="checkbox"/> Greek Orthodox	
<input type="checkbox"/> Buddhist	
<input type="checkbox"/> Baptist	
<input type="checkbox"/> Islam	
<input type="checkbox"/> Lutheran	
Other – please specify	<input type="text"/>

Ве молиме да забележите дека ако одговорите само „Orthodox“, постои посебна категорија за ова прашање и **НЕМА** да бидете забележани како верник на македонската православна религија.

Исто така ако се идентификувате со друга религија (на пример: методистичка, исламска, итн) тогаш ќе треба да назначите која.

# Почетокот на крајот

By George Papadakis



Гјоргос Пападакис е  
нови́нар и член на  
Претседателство на  
Виножито

Годината која само што помина, беше без двоумење една од најлошите од создавањето на новогрчката држава. После историската фраза на Трикупис (премиер на Грција), пред 100 и повеќе години „за жал банкротиравме,, стигнавме во техничкото банкротирање на Георгиос Папандреу, на Папаконстадину, но и на Костас Караманлис, Костас Симитис, Андреас Папандреу и на други „национални добротворци,, . Се повеќе луѓе почнаа да ја преиспитуваат сликата која имаат за целиот систем, внатре во кое живеат и се спремни да „отворат,, многубројни табу теми.

Оваа тенденција на една голема тивка маса на луѓе, која не расипува тротоари, не уништува туѓ имот и се обидува да живее достоинствено и не како товар на

некој друг, беше забележителна во неодамнешните избори за локалната самоуправа.. Скоро никој пред изборите, не им даваше шанси на Јанис Бутарис и на Гјоргос Каминис, но тие добија. Заедно со нив доби и драгоцен кислород и целото грчко општество, посебно тие кои се различни од мнозинството или едноставно подржуваат дека иднината на оваа земја може да биде само мултикултурна, мултијазична, мултиетничка. И двајцата во минатото се имат занимавано, секој од своето место, и со Македонците во Грција, нивната историја, јазик, правата. Секако решението на проблемите на Македонците нема да дојди од градоначалниците на Солун и Атина, но сепак секогаш е добродојден еден ветер на промена кој се обидува да ја истера

(Continued on page 32)



неподносливата политика и општествената смрдеа, која се повеќе се чувствува во оваа држава.

Но ако Бутарис и Каминис не можат да дадат решение на проблемите на Македонците, тогаш кој може? Нормално самите Македонци. И како може тоа да стане? Давајќи можност на Македонци да се изберат во значајни самоуправни позиции, давајќи можност на македонскиот политички носител (виножито) да учествува во превземањето на политичката власт во новите проширени општини на северна Грција, давајќи на крај можност на самите себе да се изборат активно за тоа што им следи но не им е дадено во новогрчката држава, од тогаш кога ги присвој македонските територии кои денес ги поседува.

Почетокот се направи во Овчарани-Мелити од еден член на Централниот Совет на Виножито, Македонец активист, но и значаен финансиски подржувач на партијата, Панде Ашлаков-Панајотис Анастасиадис, кој со голема разлика беше избран за Претседател на Овчарани. Чудното и смешното во целата таа работа беше дека додека Pande Ashlakov учествуваше во листата на Олга Мусју Милонa за општината Лерин, со поддршка на Пасок, беше

истата таа Мусју која брзо брзо се откажа од него, по изборите, кога познатите медиумски фашисти ја повикаа да изјави јавно дали знаеше дека овој човек е значаен член на Виножито.

Одговарајќи на релативен прес на македонската партија, кандидатка за градоначалник се обиде уште еднаш да потврди дека нејзините ставови за ова прашање, се „чисто патриотски и грчки, ставови на официјална грчка влада и Пасок,, и други работи, лесни и смешни. Обидувајќи се да се оправда, -на кој?- г.Мусју ни откри дека го опфати Панде Ашлаков во нејзината листа за да ги придобие гласовите на многубројната фамилија Ашлакови и на нивните другари, во обид да се избере градоначалник. Гласовите ги доби, но за градоначалник беше избран повеќето режимски и многу по внимателен Јанис Воскопулос, кој се погрижи да не опфати ниеден Македонец активист во неговата листа.

А бизарната работа –дури и луда- продолжи кога главната на опозицијата веќе, во општината Лерин, Мусју, го „предупреди,, новоизбраниот претседател на Овчарани дека нема да може да прави што сака бидејќи важната улога ќе ја игра 33 членскиот општински совет, додека новиот градоначалник ќе биде „крајниот гарант и налогодавач за реализирање на одлуките,, . Со други зборови, и ако Јанис Воскопулос беше противник (и тоа ич сакан) во текот на предизборниот период, сега Мусју ги соединува нејзините сили со него, со цел заедно да го попречат „душманот,, да ги реализира неговите планови.

(Continued on page 33)



(Continued from page 32)

Преферира значи да се сврти против нејзината општинска листа ако е потребно, за да биде „чисто патриотка и Гркинка,, . Ако тоа не се вика шизофренија, тогаш не знам како поинаку би можело да се вика...

Навистина, што е тоа што толку многу ја плаши г.Мусју, г.Јанис Воскопулос, тајната полиција (кип) и целата парадржава? Што може да направи Пандо Ашлаков, да предизвикува толкава паника? Сигурно е дека не планира да го земи Офчарани-Мелити, Неокази-Неохораки, Долно Врбени-Итеа, Крушоради-Ахлада, Сетина-Скопос, Забрдени-Лофус, Баница-Веви и другите села на неговата општина и да ги однесе во Р.Македонија. Ниту може да прогласи револуција против целата грчка држава (а ниту го посакува). Во неодамнешна дискусија која имавме, ми даде до знаење дека ќе се движи строго во рамките на европските и државните закони и ќе ги искористи сите можности што законите му дават. Но таму се наоѓа едниот лик за длабоката новогрчка држава. Комбинацијата на грчкото и на европското законодавство дава можности кои ќе ги ценат не само Македонците туку и сите жители на оваа општина. Ако амбициозниот план на новиот претседател продолжи, тогаш неговото реизбирање е скоро сигурно. И тогаш (пара)државата – која малку спиеше во текот на овие избори- ќе трча и не ќе стигнува.

Но постој уште еден параметар, уште по значаен. Македонците се стекнуват веќе со пристап кон механизмите на власта.

Ако експериментот Овчарани-Мелити успее, тогаш е математички сигурно дека и други ќе го имитираат. Веќе соседни села како што е Петораци-Трипотамос, гледат кон страната на Пандо, спремни да го следат примерот и да соработуваат со него. За неколку години, ќе зборуваме со други услови дури и за Општината Лерин или Воден. Почетокот на крајот на политиката на банкротираната новогрчка држава за „непостоечките,, Македонци, е веќе тука.

Среќна нова годиа.

P.S: Внатре во нејзиното збунување, несреќната г.Мусју призна –за прв пат официјално од грчки политичар, и ако од мал калибар- дека ги познава, како и сите, македонските имиња на градовите и селата на леринската околија. Оти не се помачува малку за да ги пренесе овие имиња до министерствата за Надворешни Работи и за Администрација (нели тие и кажаа што да објавува), со цел да не се спречува веќе влезот на многубројните Македонци, чии единствен греш е дека имат пасош каде се прикажуваат токму овие имиња?

**This Article originally appeared in Nova Zora no. 9 January 2011. Special thanks to Dimitri Jovanov, the editor of Nova Zora, for translating it especially for the AMHRC Review from the original Greek to Macedonian. <http://novazora.gr/>**

**ENGLISH VERSION ON p44**





# MHRMI and AMHRC Demand a Macedonian Government That Will Defend Macedonia's Interests

by AMHRC & MHRMI

5 March 2011

Even more disturbing than every Macedonian government's continued participation in the nonsensical name negotiations is the recent letter by Foreign Minister Antonio Miloshoski to the United Nations Secretary-General that states, *"In the course of those negotiations, the Republic of Macedonia accepted a number of proposals put forward by Mr. Nimetz as a basis for a solution, including the proposal of March 2008 of 'Republic of Macedonia (Skopje)', which the Hellenic Republic regrettably rejected."*

If any Macedonian government is willing to change Macedonia's name, they would go down in history as traitors to the Macedonian people.

The leader of SDSM, Branko Crvenkovski, is headed down this path as he repeatedly calls on Macedonia to change its name to enter the EU and NATO, and uses the pro-SDSM media to instil fear among the public and threaten Macedonia's collapse without membership. Ironically, Crvenkovski criticizes VMRO-DPMNE for its handling of the "name dispute", yet he was the President of Macedonia when the Nimetz proposals were accepted. He was Prime Minister when the ruling SDSM accepted the ludicrous acronym "FYROM" and had the audacity to change Macedonia's flag. Branko Crvenkovski and the SDSM are in no position to criticize anybody based on Macedonia's national interests.

If the recent letter to the UN is a ploy

to appease Western pressure on Macedonia to find a "solution", it is backfiring. By participating in the name negotiations, Macedonia is legitimizing Greece's ridiculous claims and is indicating that it will change its name.

Greece is using the standard "offence is the best defence" tactic. Macedonia should be employing the same strategy, especially because of one distinct advantage; the truth.

Macedonia should make it clear to the world that Greece, ironically, now claims that "Macedonia is Greek", but it was not until 1988, when Greece realized that independence for the Republic of Macedonia was imminent, that it renamed "Northern Greece" to "Macedonia." Prior to 1988, Greece's policy was that Macedonia did not exist.

Macedonia must expose the reason for Greece's initiation of the ridiculous name dispute - to deny the existence and persecution of its large Macedonian minority. Former Greek Prime Minister Constantine Mitsotakis admitted as such in 1995.

Instead of vehemently defending Macedonia's name and identity, the Macedonian government, in the letter to the UN, apologetically explains the building of Macedonian historical statues in the context of the 1995 Interim Accord. How many other countries would need permission to celebrate their history?

In response to Greece claiming a violation by the Republic of Macedonia *"of article 7 of the Interim Accord in the form of 'a series of relief representations of prominent Greek historical*



Photo sourced from [www.daylife.com](http://www.daylife.com)

*figures of Ancient Macedonia, such as the Vergina sun ... on the basis [sic] of the lion statues at the 'Goce Delcev' road bridge in Skopje"; the government even "proudly" states "...that the symbol formerly displayed on the Republic of Macedonia's national flag...had been removed from the statues on the bridge in question."*

There was no entity known as Greece during the time of Ancient Macedonia. Greece was created by the powers of Europe in the 1830s, yet it has the temerity to dictate present-day politics based on arbitrary interpretations of ancient history.

According to former US Secretary of State, Lawrence Eagleburger, *Greece claims that Macedon or Macedonia, as well as Alexander of Macedonia are its own. This is a false claim and it is time someone confirms this.* He added, *The Greek claim about Macedonia is based on historically incorrect information and are therefore not fact-based."*

Macedonia must point out Greece's twisting of ancient history in an attempt

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to deflect attention away from the current situation. 131 countries have recognized Macedonia, including four of the five permanent UN Security Council members. As stated in the Our Name is Macedonia campaign, **"We are winning. We have the power to end this. Stop negotiating our own name"**.

Macedonian Human Rights Movement International (MHRMI) and the Australian Macedonian Human Rights Committee (AMHRC) initiated the Our Name is Macedonia campaign in July 2010, which demands that Macedonia end all negotiations with Greece over its name. The campaign includes billboards throughout Macedonia, ads in print and online editions of major newspa-

pers, television commercials, press conferences, radio interviews and the distribution of hundreds of thousands of flyers throughout the country.

**\*\*Our organizations have consistently denounced the name negotiations and condemned SDSM for agreeing to the "temporary reference" of "FYROM" and subsequently changing the flag.**

**\*\*We condemn SDSM and their media for scare-mongering and claiming that Macedonia must change its name to enter the EU and NATO, or risk collapse.**

**\*\*We demand that VMRO fulfill its promise that it will never change Macedonia's name by immediately**

ending the name negotiations.

**\*\*Furthermore, we demand that Macedonia revert to the original flag and immediately end the acceptance of "FYROM" or "Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia".**

**\*\*Finally, MHRMI and AMHRC call on every Macedonian organization and individual to sign on to the Our Name is Macedonia campaign.**

[www.mhrmi.org/  
our\\_name\\_is\\_macedonia](http://www.mhrmi.org/our_name_is_macedonia)

**Silence is not an option. Our Name is Macedonia.**



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# Racist Letter from Bulgarian “intellectuals” to UNESCO

## Regarding the Macedonian Language, History and Culture

By AMHRC

**A** ridiculous and racist letter (dated 19 January 2011) sent by a group of so-called Bulgarian “intellectuals” to UNESCO begins: *“We, the undersigned bulgarians from Bulgaria, Republic of Macedonia and other parts of the world, also people with different ethnic backgrounds are appealing to you with the request... the appropriation of Bulgarian language, history, culture and their desecration to be stopped”*. Furthermore they claim that *“We insist the Bulgarian language in Republic of Macedonia not to be proclaimed for Macedonian!”*

Moreover the “intellectuals” also claim that *“We are adamant that the truth be told for the whole world to hear. Vardar Macedonia (where Republic of Macedonia occupies today) has always been a geographical term-inseparable part of Bulgaria historically and culturally. The existence of numerous historical facts proves that statement!”* (The grammatical errors etc are printed here exactly as they appeared in the original.)

The content of the letter is not only factually incorrect, but disturbing as it comes from so-called “intellectuals” of a country, Bulgaria, which claims that it is committed to basic human rights principles such as freedom of speech, assembly and association as well as the right to self-identification. The negative attitude the government in Sofia and most of the intellectual elite in the country manifests towards its minorities, especially the Macedonians, appears to be symptomatic of a xenophobia permeating Bulgarian society in general: from the average citizen to the highest

official state levels. Bulgaria has persistently refused to recognize the existence of Macedonians within its borders. This is in line with a popular view held by all segments of Bulgarian society; namely that there is no such thing as a Macedonian nation and that those who call themselves Macedonians (in an ethnic sense, including the Macedonians in the Macedonian republic) are nothing other than ‘lost’ members of the Bulgarian nation.

These racist notions are still ‘taught’ to Bulgarian school children and the result is a perpetuation of Bulgarian chauvinism

minority in Bulgaria lives compactly in the Pirin region and ethnic Macedonians are found in significant numbers in other regions of Bulgaria. From 1944-1948 the distinct ethnicity of the Macedonians in the Pirin region and Macedonian immigrants in other parts of Bulgaria was officially recognised. In 1947 the Bled Agreement between Yugoslavia and Bulgaria was signed regarding cultural cooperation between the then People's Republic of Macedonia and the Pirin region within Bulgaria. This agreement in effect granted cultural autonomy to the Macedonians in Pirin and ushered in a period of cultural renaissance during which the Macedonian language and history were widely taught.



Photo sourced from unescoscience.blogspot.com

This period of cultural autonomy was brought abruptly to a halt in June 1948. From then on the Bulgarian state reverted to its pre-September 1944 position whereby Macedonian history, language and culture were misappropriated and presented as an integral part of Bulgarian national and historical development. This policy of denial and forced assimilation of the Macedonians in Bulgaria has continued to the present day and as a result the number of those willing to declare as Macedonians has significantly reduced or been deliberately underreported.

towards Macedonians which manifests itself by constant declarations, like those in the bigoted letter to UNESCO. Moreover, Bulgaria, an EU member, inflicts upon its Macedonian minority, a variety of human rights abuses. Members and supporters of OMO “Ilinden” - PIRIN (a Macedonian political party and human rights organization operating in Bulgaria – which the Bulgarian state unlawfully refuses to register) have been harassed, beaten, fined and even imprisoned simply for asserting their Macedonian identity.

### Some Basic History

It is well known that the Macedonian

From 1956 onwards the Macedonian nationality all but disappeared from Bulgarian public life, official documents and census figures. The official census of 1956 established that 178, 862 Macedonians (or 63.7% of the total population of the Pirin region) live in the Pirin region. However, the 1968 census only registered 7-8,000 Macedonians in all of Bulgaria at a time when emigration was severely restricted under the Communist

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regime. At the last census held in 2001, 5071 persons declared that they were of Macedonian ethnicity; however the Bulgarian Prime Minister at that time, Simeon Saxcoburgski, quite absurdly, attempted to insinuate that such persons were 'Bulgarians with a Macedonian regional identity'.

The ability of Macedonians in Bulgaria to enjoy their basic human rights is severely limited. Even though they are not subjected to the brutal treatment meted out to them under the Stalinist Zhivkov regime, Macedonians in Bulgaria are subject to significant official and societal discrimination and harassment when they attempt to assert their rights. The Bulgarian state unlawfully refuses to register Macedonian political parties such as OMO-Ilinden-PIRIN. Those who assert a Macedonian ethnic identity encounter discrimination in employment, education and cultural life. The Macedonian language is not taught at any level in the education system. Macedonian human rights activists are subjected to official harassment when attempting to legally and peacefully carry out their activities.

### Bulgarians in Macedonia

The assertions made in the petition regarding the so-called oppression of "Bulgarians" in the Macedonian republic are not in any way borne out by an objective examination of the situation of ethnic minorities in Macedonia. All ethnic minorities in Macedonia enjoy the right to freely express their ethno-cultural identity. The last census in 2002 was held under international supervision and the results were accepted by the EU and the international community: 1,417 persons or 0.073 % of the population identified as Bulgarian. Bulgarian literature and books are freely available in Macedonia and those persons identifying as ethnic Bulgarians are free to form social, cultural and political associations, subject to meeting the appropriate legal requirements. Such organizations include the "Radko" group based in Ohrid and the Bulgarian Cultural Club which

was registered in 2008 and is based in Skopje. Given the free and fair conditions under which the 2002 census was conducted and the right of all citizens in Macedonia to freely determine their own ethnic identity, the claim that ethnic Bulgarians in Macedonia are repressed and not able to freely manifest their ethnic identity are fallacious and without any basis in fact. Moreover, it is absurd for these "intellectuals" to claim that the ethnic Macedonian majority in Macedonia- which numbers 1, 297,981 or 65.17% of the population- is prevented by the authorities from manifesting its "true Bulgarian character".

### Some Linguistic Facts and History

The claims made by the "intellectuals", who *inter alia* remain unnamed, regarding the Macedonian language and their calls for it to be renamed "Bulgarian" are fanciful in the extreme and are a display of extreme racism and nationalist aggression. Several objective differences exist between the Macedonian literary language and the Bulgarian literary language. Even though these differences may not always be observed in all dialects, that does not change the essence of the matter. Such is also the case with the Serbian dialects and their relation to the Bulgarian and Macedonian dialects.

Even at the time of their national renaissance, Bulgarian nationalists and the adherents of the Bulgarian Idea in Macedonia spoke of two dialects or groups of dialects which according to them made up the Bulgarian language-namely, a Bulgarian (or Eastern) and Macedonian dialect. The Bulgarian literary language came to be dominated by the eastern dialects. Nevertheless, due to the insistence of a series of intellectuals, the deliberate aspiration of the state to conquer Macedonia and the growing number of Macedonians in Bulgaria, numerous Macedonian elements and words entered the Bulgarian literary language, such as the verbal noun form *-jki* (*odejki, zboruvajki*) which is expressed in the Bulgarian dialects using the form "*kato*" (*kato hodel, kato govorel*). This

led to the appearance of a dual system of accenting of the same words such that both variants were accepted as literary forms (for example *vino* (wine) with the accent on the first syllable-Macedonian form- and the same word with the accent on the last syllable- Bulgarian form). Until 1944 one extra letter was deliberately retained in the Bulgarian alphabet which had as its goal the reconciliation of another basic difference between the two groups of dialects, namely, the use of *e* words (*e-kaneto*) in Macedonian and *ja* words (*ja kaneto*) in Bulgarian (for example, *mleko/mljyako* (milk), *leb/hljab* (bread), *nekogash/njakoga* (sometimes) etc). Despite the bigger influence of the Macedonian dialects on the Bulgarian literary language and the relatively smaller influence of Bulgarian on the Macedonian language (through the educational system from 1880-1912, 1915-1918, 1941-1944) there exist even more objective differences. They are large enough so that a speaker of one or the other language would immediately be recognised, even by a not very experienced observer. These differences also lead to Bulgarians being able to easily recognize Macedonians who are speaking Bulgarian (even those who have studied it all their life) due to the unusual accent system, the hard pronunciation and the specific language constructions inherent in Bulgarian. The opposite also applies.

The following more basic general differences between the two literary languages can be pointed out:

-The different system of accenting: in Macedonian it is immobile and falls on the third syllable back to front, whereas in Bulgarian it is mobile with the accent often occurring on the last syllable.

-Definite Article. In the Macedonian literary language there are three types of definite article which expresses the relationship of the subject to the object in accordance with the level of knowledge and presence (for example, *mazot* (the

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man), *mazov* (this man), *mazon* (that man) while in the Bulgarian literary language there is only one type of definite article with two forms- complete and incomplete definite article- which differ in accordance with whether one is executing an action or not (for example, *mazhut govori* (the man is speaking), *toj govori sas mazha* (he is speaking with the man).

- In the Macedonian language the double object exists, whereas it does not in Bulgarian.

-Use of e words (*e-kaneto*) in Macedonian vis-a-vis use of ja words (*ja-kaneto*) in Bulgarian.

-The demonstrative pronouns **this** and **that** are very different in Macedonian and Bulgarian: this in Macedonian is *ova* (neuter), *ovoj* (masculine), *ovaa* (feminine), *ovie* (these), whereas in Bulgarian this is represented by *tozi* (masculine), *tazi* (feminine), *tezi* (these), *tova* (neuter). That (far away) in Macedonian is *ona* (neuter), *onoj* (masculine), *onaa* (feminine), *onie* (those -plural), whereas in Bulgarian it is *onova* (neuter), *onzi* (masculine), *onazi* (feminine) and *onezi* (those-plural).

-Verb conjugation differs considerably in Macedonian and Bulgarian, especially when one uses the future in the past tense, the past perfect tense and the conditional tenses.

-The transition of the proto-Slavonic forms *tj*, *dj* into *kj* and *gj* in Macedonian, whereas in Bulgarian they manifest as *sht* and *zhd* (and as *ch* and *dz* in Serbian). For example *svekja* (Macedonian) *svesht* (Bulgarian), *svecha* (Serbian).

-Apart from that and despite the fact that there is a large fund of common or very similar words in the south Slavic languages, they do not always have the

same meaning or sense. Many such examples exist in the Macedonian and Bulgarian languages. For example, the word *vreden* means useful in Macedonian, whereas in Bulgarian it means destructive and *mrsno* which in Macedonian mean oily or fleshy, whereas in Bulgarian it means dirty.

- Despite the objective closeness of Bulgarian to Macedonian (and the other Slavonic languages) there is also a large objective difference. Macedonian and Bulgarian are more different languages than are Serbian, Croatian and Montenegrin or Russian and Belo Russian and at least as different as Russian and Ukrainian, and the Czech and Slovak languages. The claim therefore that the Macedonian language is "Bulgarian" and should be renamed as such is not supported at all by the linguistic evidence.

### Human Rights

Given the widespread human rights violations to which Macedonians in Bulgaria are subjected, it is disingenuous in the extreme for so-called "intellectuals" in Bulgaria to assert that Macedonians do not exist in Macedonia, Bulgaria, Greece or other parts of the Balkans, while at the same time remaining silent on human rights abuses in their own country, especially in relation to Bulgarian citizens who identify as Macedonians.

Bulgaria has signed and ratified all major international human rights instruments and conventions and importantly on 7/5/1999, it ratified the Council of Europe's Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities which states at Article 3:

"Article 3

1. Every person belonging to a national minority shall have the right freely to

*choose to be treated or not to be treated as such and no disadvantage shall result from this choice or from the exercise of the rights which are connected to that choice. 2. Persons belonging to national minorities may exercise the rights and enjoy the freedoms flowing from the principles enshrined in the present framework Convention individually as well as in community with others".*

Thomas Hammarberg, Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe on 9 February 2010, in an official report, at paragraph 52, declared:

*"52. The Commissioner believes that domestic law potentially restricting freedom of association should be precise and its application proportionate to the aims pursued in the context of a democratic society. Regardless of the outcome of the new applications lodged with the Court, the Commissioner considers necessary the establishment by the authorities of an open, sincere and systematic dialogue with all minorities in Bulgaria, including the Macedonian one, in line with the Council of Europe standards. Furthermore, it would send a positive signal to all minority groups if the domestic law, including the Constitution, could be amended in such a way that the rights to freedom of association and assembly enshrined in the European Convention on Human Rights were better safeguarded in practice for minorities."*

The international community and intellectuals in Bulgaria should apply pressure on the Bulgarian government to observe its obligations towards all minorities that exist within its borders and to cease its policy of denial of its Macedonian minority in order to enhance regional stability and peace in the Balkans.





# Australian Macedonian Human Rights Committee (AMHRC)

## Membership Application Form

Formed in 1984 the Australian Macedonian Human Rights Committee (AMHRC) is an Australian based non-government organisation that informs and advocates to governments, international institutions and broader communities about combating discrimination and promoting basic human rights. The aspiration is to ensure that Macedonian communities in Australia and throughout the world are recognised, respected and afforded equitable treatment.

The AMHRC has been involved in the struggle for human rights of the Macedonian people both in Australia and internationally for over 25 years, either directly or through our partner organisations. In addition to taking various politicians to task over their comments and actions concerning the Macedonian people, challenging government policy, defending and promoting the community's interests, the AMHRC has also continued to support our Macedonian minorities in Greece, Bulgaria and Albania through direct funding and other means.

With the issue over the right of the Republic of Macedonia to use its real name reaching a critical phase, there has never been a better time to be engaged or re-engage with the struggle of the Macedonian community for equality and respect. Show your support and become a member of the AMHRC.

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# Greek Evidence on a Distinct Macedonian Identity and Language

By Ivan Hristovski

Politicizing ancient history for modern propaganda purposes is a trademark standard in Greece; especially when one takes into account the numerous unsubstantiated claims about Macedonia. Claims that span from antiquity to the present - a litany of falsifications designed to establish an ideal historiography in support of an absurdity: a 'pure, ethnic Greek Macedonia'.

Anthropologist Loring Danforth asserts with clarity that *"According to the Greek nationalist position (which is rejected by the vast majority of scholars and diplomats around the world), because Alexander the Great and the ancient Macedonians were Greeks, and because ancient and modern Greeks are bound in an unbroken line of racial and cultural continuity, it is, therefore, only Greeks who have the right to identify themselves as Macedonians, not the Slavs of southern Yugoslavia. Therefore, many Greeks deny the existence of a Macedonian language, a Macedonian nation, and a Macedonian minority in Northern Greece."* (Danforth, 2001: 89) Maintaining such myths in Greek society has serious consequences as Danforth confirms *"...the Macedonian minority of northern Greece has been the victim of what could be called 'symbolic ethnic cleansing,' a policy by which the Greek government simply denies the existence of the Macedonian minority in Greece and attempts to assimilate it into mainstream Greek society. In this way, the Greek government seeks to maintain the fiction that Greece is an ethnically pure and homogenous state inhabited exclusively by Greeks."* (Danforth, 2001: 90)

This extreme Greek form of nationalism has created a highly toxic environment of fear, intolerance, racism and violence towards the Macedonians and other ethnic minorities. I shall now quote a sentence from Gerda Lerner's book *Why History Matters*; it succinctly expresses an essential aspect of relations between Macedonians and the Greek authorities: *"Selective memory and the distortion of history have long been powerful tools of oppressive regimes"* (Lerner, 1997: 206). So it is against the grain of Greek selective memory and distortion of history that we consider the following Greek evidence that demonstrates the existence of a distinct Macedonian identity and language.

One of the most outspoken nationalists in support of the *Greek anti-Macedonian struggle* (as the Greek author, Dimitris Litoxou, has termed it) during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, was Ion Dragoumis. Dragoumis, whose family moved from Albania to a village outside of Lerin (in Macedonia)



Ion Dragoumis

in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, was a diplomat, writer, and politician in the Greek government (Dragoumis, 2005). He was also the brother-in-law of Pavlos Melas who perished in Macedonia during the *Greek anti-Macedonian struggle* (1904-1908) and thereafter became a 'martyr' for Greeks. Dragoumis wrote a book titled *Martyrs' and Heroes' Blood* in 1907, in it *"Dragoumis wrote in broad, general categories of 'Greek' and 'Bulgarian'. Yet occasionally, particularly when articulating a detailed ethnographic point, he also spoke of the 'Macedonians of Macedonia' and the 'Vlachs of Hellenism'."* (Karakasidou, 1997: 91) Indeed, Dragoumis argues that *"Macedonian"* is the correct term for the language used by the inhabitants of Macedonia, which the Bulgarians, he says, misleadingly call *"Bulgarian"* (Mackridge, 2009: 301). Peter Mackridge, Emeritus Professor of Modern Greek at the University of Oxford, points out *"In view of Dragoumis' attitude, it is ironic that today Greek officials and Greek linguists refuse to countenance the existence of a Macedonian language"* (Mackridge, 2001: 54).

Indeed, Pavlos Melas himself describes the language of the people in Macedonia as *"Macedonian"* in a letter to his wife (Mackridge, 2001: 48): *".....Pirzas translated emotionally, loudly, and with a lot of passion, as Kottas spoke in Macedonian. The teacher got the children to sing something. We couldn't tell if the language was Macedonian or Greek. All the schoolchildren know how to read and write (Greek), but hardly any know*

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how to speak it...I learnt a few Macedonian words that I say to women and mothers, which pleases them..." (Mela, 1964: 202).

Moreover, the current Greek stance on the Macedonian language becomes totally untenable when one notes the results of the Greek census in 1920, the *Abecedar* episode and more recent UN documents. In the Greek census of 1920, the **Macedonian** language (without any prefixes or suffixes) was listed as a language spoken by some of the population in Greece. Parts of the official census results were published and therefore recognised by the Greek state. They can be found in the General Archives of the Greek state and a copy is provided below:

The *Abecedar* was a language primer prepared due to sharp criticism from the League of Nations on Greece's poor treatment of its Macedonian minority. Athens appointed a three - member commission in the Ministry of Education to prepare a

primer for the schools. "*Abecedar* appeared in Athens in 1925 in the Lerin -Bitola dialect but in the Latin rather than Cyrillic alphabet" (Rossos, 2008: 143). With the new language primer Greece was able to 'prove' that it was complying with the requests of the League of Nations in regard to its treatment of the Macedonian minority. Upon its creation Bulgarian and Serbian objections against the new language primer, were quickly manifested. A Bulgarian representative described the *Abecedar* as "incomprehensible" but the Greek representative, Vasilis Dendramis, "defended it on the grounds that the Macedonian language was 'neither Bulgarian nor Serbian, but an independent language' and produced linguistic maps to back this up" (Rossos, 2008: 143).

"The very fact that official Greece did not, either de jure or de facto, see the Macedonians as a Bulgarian minority, but rather as separate is of particular significance. The *Abecedar*, which actually never reached the Macedonian children, is in itself a powerful testimony not only of the existence of the large Macedonian ethnic minority in Greece, but also of the fact that Greece was under an obligation before the League of Nations to undertake certain measures in order to grant this particular minority their rights." (Andonovski: 1)

More recently, a 1977 UN report from the Third United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names held in Athens demonstrates that in the not so distant past Greece not only recognized the Macedonian language but also

Μακεδονική Macédonienne	Εγγράμματοι..... Sachant lire et écrire...	Άρρενες — Hommes... Θήλειες — Femmes... Σύνολον — Total
	Αγράμματοι..... Illétrés.....	Άρρενες — Hommes... Θήλειες — Femmes... Σύνολον — Total
	Μη δηλωθείσα..... Non déclarée.....	Άρρενες — Hommes... Θήλειες — Femmes... Σύνολον — Total
	Σύνολον — Total .....	Άρρενες — Hommes... Θήλειες — Femmes... Σύνολον — Total
	Εξ ὧν γνωρίζεται καὶ τὴν ἑλληνικὴν..... Total sachant la Grec.	Άρρενες — Hommes... Θήλειες — Femmes... Σύνολον — Total

recognized the Macedonian Cyrillic alphabet as well. Since the early 1990's Greece's stance in the UN towards the Macedonian state has been nothing but hostile and this has involved frighteningly racist attempts to re-name not only the state but also the language. However in 1977 Greece signed a UN document: *Recognizing further that in Yugoslavia the romanization of the Serbo-Croatian and Macedonian cyrillic alphabets has long been employed in official gazeteers and maps* and *Recommends that the systems that are given in the annex to this resolution be adopted as the international systems for the romanization of Serbo-Croatian and Macedonian geographical names in Yugoslavia.*"(E/CONF.69/4: 29) There was no objection by Greece in 1977 to the existence of the Macedonian language!

Notably, in spite of the current official racist state of denial, practically minded businessmen in the part of Macedonia located within the borders of Greece, have at times found it more useful to simply accept reality. For example, in 1977 the Washington Post ran a story on how Greek businesses in Solun (Thessaloniki) had posted signs on their shop windows that Macedonian is spoken: *Alevropoulos's American and Italian blue jeans go for \$33 a pair. They come in all shapes and sizes, as do*

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his Yugoslav buyers. A sign in his window announces that Macedonian, the language of Yugoslavia's southernmost republic, is spoken. The language is now a requirement for all of his clerks. In the large department stores of Glaoudatos and Dimitriadis, price tags are in both Greek drachmas and Yugoslav dinars. Clerks speaking Macedonian are given preference in hiring.

Another interesting testimony making it abundantly clear that Macedonian was spoken throughout southern Macedonia (the part that Greece annexed in 1913) comes from Spirou Melas' *Oi Polemoi 1912-1913* who wrote: *Occasionally, up by chicken-chasing, the cackle, the sounds, all of a sudden a village woman would appear and start to curse in her own heavy (difficult) Macedonian language. The soldiers offered her money, and searched for whom they should compensate for the damages, and also to buy bread, wine, tsipuro, butter, cheese and other eatables. Instead they got in return the same stereotypical answer, that they first heard outside Nausa (Negush) where they met the first slavic speaking villager, who answered us with his head bent down, the answer we got wherever we went, from the outskirts of Thessaloniki (Solun) and all the way to Florina (Lerin), it was the same melancholic answer to all our demands: Nema, there is none.* (1972: 157)

Moreover, Greek sources also prove revealing on the issue of the existence of a Macedonian ethnic identity. In the novel *Life in a Tomb* (1924) the author, Stratis Myrivilis, wrote about the trench warfare against the Bulgarians in World War I and Myrivilis includes a scene in which the narrator is recuperating at the house of a family who live north of the Greek border. After saying something about their language

he tells the reader that "they don't want to be either Bulgar, or Srrp, or Grrts. Only Makedon Ortodox" (Mackridge, 2009: 303). In later editions, Mackridge (2009: 303) writes "Myrivilis excised the last sentence because he no longer felt it to be politically advisable to include it" and that "The novel was banned from 1936 until the end of the Second World War; subsequent editions do not include this sentence."

In 1925, Salvanos, Greek Chief of Staff of the tenth army division in Western Macedonia, wrote a study of

"The latter, he maintained, called themselves Macedonians (Makedones)" (Karakasidou: 129).

By the 1950's, the Greek-Canadian Historian, L.S. Stavrianos, summed up the situation in general in his well known book *The Balkans since 1453*, where he describes the majority population of Macedonia at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century "...as distinctly Macedonian. These Macedonians had a dialect and certain cultural characteristics which justify their being classified as a distinct South Slav group." (1958: 518)



the 'ethnographical composition' of the county Lerin. In it he describes those with a Greek consciousness that was strengthened due to propaganda and those with a Bulgarian sentiment similarly strengthened due to Bulgarian propaganda. Another group he notes, the majority of the people, were indifferent to either nationality and were more concerned with their daily lives.

A common practice developed in early 20<sup>th</sup> century Greek texts, of referring to Macedonians as "Bulgarians". Yet there is also evidence derived from Greek authors, on the inappropriateness of this label. In 1913 a book was published by George Demetrios entitled *When I was a boy in Greece*. Demetrios refers to the local Macedonian movement for Macedonian independence, as the *Macedonian Committee*, throughout his book as well as making mention of the languages he spoke: "I could speak Turkish and the Macedonian dialect as well as my own Greek tongue." (1913: 131) Demetrios further describes these people that spoke this Macedonian dialect as "Being neither Turkish nor Greek, we called them Bulgarian, but their language is not Bulgarian, but the Macedonian dialect, and I found loveable people among them, honest, hospitable, and kind" (1913: 132).

One of the reasons for the application of the Bulgarian label, is no doubt connected to the fact that during the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, many Macedonians attended Bulgarian Exarchate churches (the establishment of Macedonian Orthodox churches was not permitted). At this time, there was

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a struggle between the states of Bulgaria and Greece, to win over the hearts and minds of Macedonians, for the purpose of justifying annexationist desires. The Greek Anthropologist, Anastasia Karakasidou, by interviewing local residents from Guvezna (now called Assiros) in the part of Macedonia today located within the borders of Greece, illustrated how this inter-state power struggle over Macedonia, impacted upon the local selection of labels: "Local residents used proper (though equally unspecified) nouns that referred to national groups such as Ellines (Greeks), Servyi (Serbs), Tourkyi (Turks), and Voulgharyi (Bulgarians). Some, however, especially those whose families came from Gnoina/Palehora, used the term Makedhones (Macedonians) in reference to the Slavic-speaking population of the area prior to 1913. But those who did so insisted unequivocally that such people had a sort of commonality which marked them as somehow different from others. When pressed to clarify such distinctions, Assiriotes overwhelmingly insisted that the local Slavic-speakers had spoken a language similar to yet distinct from Bulgarian. Yet nonetheless, most still referred to them and to the Slavic-speakers in general as "Bulgarians" (Voulgharyi) or "Bulgarian-speakers" (Voulgharophonyi), two broad and politicized labels that date to the ideological and military conflict between Greece and Bulgaria over Macedonia at the turn of the century." (1997: 106)

Yet a Macedonian revolutionary leader, Nikola Karev, from the town of Krushevo in Macedonia, made himself abundantly clear to a Greek journalist in a 1903 interview:

*Are you Macedonian? I ask him.*

**- Yes.**

*And subsequently Greek.*

**-I do not know about this. I am Macedonian.**

*Direct descendent to Alexander the Great? I reply ironically.*

**-Yes.**

(Acropolis, 8 May, 1903 unpublished. See *Tatetradya Tu Ilinden*, by George Petsivas who published the interview in his book.)

Today, perhaps the most important 'Greek' evidence demonstrating the existence of Macedonians in Greece, is derived from the response engendered by the persistent racist denials of the Greek state and its lackeys: "The official Greek claim that no Macedonian minority exists is contradicted by clear and forceful assertions by members of this minority that they do exist and that they are Macedonians and not Greeks." (Danforth, 2001: 91)

**Ivan Hristovski**

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The Washington Post (14<sup>th</sup> June, 1977 page A-17)





# The Beginning of the End

By George Papadakis

*But if  
Boutaris  
and  
Kaminis  
cannot  
provide a  
solution to  
the  
problems of  
the  
Macedonia  
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Greece,  
then who  
can? The  
Macedonia  
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themselves,*

The year which has passed was without doubt one of the worst in the history of the modern Greek state. In the words of Trikoupi (Prime Minister of Greece) uttered more than one hundred years ago, “regretfully, we are bankrupt”; having reached technical bankruptcy under Georgios Papandreou, Papakonstandinou, as well as under Kostas Karamanlis, Kostas Simitis, Andreas Papandreou and other “national benefactors”. More and more people have begun to re-examine the picture they have of the whole system in which they live and are prepared to now “open” many former taboo-topics.

That this tendency is ever so present in a quiet mass of people who do not destroy footpaths or the property of others and who attempt to live in a dignified manner without burdening others, was noted in the recent local elections. Before the elections, almost nobody gave Yiannis Boutaris (candidate for Mayor Thessaloniki/Solun) and Giorgos Kaminis (candidate for Mayor of Athens) a chance of winning – but they did. Their victories have injected some much needed oxygen into Greek society and this has especially been the case for those who are different from the majority, or simply said, support a multi-cultural, multilingual and multiethnic future for this country. From their previous positions, both of the aforementioned elected candidates have encountered the Macedonians in Greece, their history, language and rights. Of course the solutions to the problems of the Macedonians will not come from the Mayors of Thessaloniki/Solun or Athens, however any ‘wind of change’ which tries to get rid of the intolerable policies which have plagued our society is always welcome.

But if Boutaris and Kaminis cannot pro-

vide a solution to the problems of the Macedonians in Greece, then who can? The Macedonians themselves, of course! And how can that happen? By giving an opportunity to Macedonians to be elected to important municipal positions; by giving an opportunity to the Macedonian political standard-bearer (EFA-Rainbow) to participate in the taking of political power in the newly enlarged municipalities in Northern Greece; and finally by giving them an opportunity to actively participate in the struggle for that which they are entitled however which has been denied to them ever since the Macedonian territories were incorporated into the modern Greek state.

A beginning has been made in Ovchareni/Meliti (a village in Lerin County) by a member of the Central Council of EFA-Rainbow, a Macedonian activist and significant financial supporter of the party, Pande Ashlakov (Panagiotis Anastasiadis) who with a large majority was elected the President of Ovchareni/Meliti. It was strange and funny that despite the fact that Pande Ashlakov was part of the PASOK supported electoral list of Olga Mousiou Milona for the Municipality of Florina/Lerin, Mousiou distanced herself from Ashlakov soon after the elections when the well-known media fascists called upon her to publically declare whether she knew that he was a member of EFA-Rainbow!

In responding to a media statement from the Macedonian party, Mousiou, the candidate for the Mayor of Florina/Lerin tried once again to reiterate that her views on this question are “*purely patriotic and Greek and that they are the official positions of the Greek government and PASOK*”. In attempting to justify herself (to whom?), Ms Mousiou revealed that she

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accepted Pande Ashlakov in her list to gain the votes of the large Ashlakov family and their friends. She may have gotten these votes, however elected to the position of Mayor was the regime-favourite and ever so cautious Ioannis Voskopoulos who was careful not to include a single Macedonian activist on his list.

This bizzare - and one might even say crazy – affair continued when the now leader of the opposition in the Municipal Council of Florina/Lerin, Mousiou, “warned” the newly elected President of Ovchareni/Meliti that he will not be able to do as he pleases because the key role will be played by the 33-member Municipal Council, while the new Mayor will be the “final guarantor and executor of the decisions”. In other words, even though in the context of the election campaign Ioannis Voskopoulos was her opponent (and thus an undesired option), Mousiou has now joined forces with him for the purpose of preventing the “enemy” from realising their plans. She therefore prefers to turn against her own list if that is what is required to be a “pure patriot and Greek”. If that is not schizophrenia, I don’t know what else to call it.

What is it that Ms Mousiou, Mr Ioannis Voskopoulos, the secret police (NIS/EYP) and the entire (para)state are afraid of? What could Pando Ashlakov possibly do that would raise so much panic? He certainly does not plan to take Ovchareni-Meliti, Neokazi-Neohoraki, Dolno Vrbeni-Itea, Krushoradi-Ahlada, Setina-Skopos, Zabrdeni-Lofi, Banitsa-Vevi and other villages in his municipality and unite them with the Republic of Macedonia. Nor could he (nor does he want to) declare a revolution against the entire Greek state. In a recent discussion we had, he made it known to me that he would operate strictly within the limitations of the local, state and European laws and that he would exercise all of his legal powers. A combination of Greek and European legislation gives rise to possibilities which are valued not only by the Macedonians but all residents in this municipality. If the ambitious plan of the new President continues, then his re-election is almost certain. Then we will no doubt see the (para)state – which was somewhat asleep during the course of this election campaign – active and relentless.

However there is another parameter to this matter,



GEORGE PAPADAKIS

George Papadakis is a journalist and a member of the Presidency of EFA Rainbow (Vinozito)

which is even more significant. The Macedonians are already acquiring access to the mechanisms of political power. If the experiment which is Occhanreni-Meliti succeeds, then mathematically it is certain that others will also imitate it. Already the neighbouring villages such as Petoratsi-Tripotamos are looking towards Pando, ready to follow his example and cooperate with him. In a few years, we will speak of very different conditions in relation to elections in the Municipality of Lerin or Voden. For the “non-existent Macedonians”, the beginning of the end of the bankrupt policies of the modern Greek state is already here.

Happy New Year.

PS: In all her confusion, the unfortunate Ms Mousiou recognized – for the first time from a Greek politician and despite her relatively low rank – that she recognizes, alongside others, the Macedonian names of the cities and villages of the Lerin/Florina county. Why doesn’t she try a little harder to make the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the state administration aware of these names, so that the entry into Greece of many Macedonians with these names on their passports is no longer denied?

**Special thanks to David Vitkov of the AMHRC for translating this article from Macedonian to English.**

МАКЕДОНСКА ВЕРЗИЈА НА СТ. 31







## OMO "Ilinden" Pirin

### CITIZENS of the EU, Macedonians:

A new census of the population in the Republic of Bulgaria is about to begin. This is an opportunity for us to state honestly who we are and how we feel.

For those of us who feel and self-identify as Macedonians, this is a unique opportunity. An opportunity to state that we are here, that we exist, that we are Macedonians. An opportunity to officially refute the official lie that a Macedonian people, nation and minority do not exist.

We have now been given the chance to speak out and each one of us has an opportunity to tell the truth.

We are loyal citizens, but we are also Macedonians. We are Macedonians, as were our fathers and grandfathers. And we are not afraid to state that. Because we are right. Because that is the truth. Because the right to self-identification is guaranteed by law. Because we have the support of the Bulgarian Constitution, as well as international laws and agreements.

### NO ONE HAS THE RIGHT TO TELL US WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE ARE

At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, in the third millennium after Christ and as a member of the European Union, it is laughable, sad and criminal for someone else to determine who we are.

### IF WE ARE MACEDONIANS-WE MUST WRITE DOWN THAT THIS IS WHAT WE ARE.

Even though, as always, there is no column for "Macedonians" in the census forms, we have the legally guaranteed right to self-identify as Macedonians (Question No 10) in the "Others" column and state that Macedonian is our mother tongue (Question 11)

On behalf of OMO "Ilinden"-PIRIN, TMO-VMRO (Independent), Association of Repressed Macedonians in Bulgaria, Cultural and Educational Association "Nikola Vaptsarov", Cultural and Educational Association "Car Samoil", Cultural and Educational Association "Ilinden", Narodna Volja" newspaper "Makedonski Glas" bulletin.

ATTENTION: If you are not asked about your ethnicity- ask about it yourselves; don't allow your self-identification to be called into question in any way and make sure that the census takers write down your answers in pen and not in pencil. If you experience any problems or irregularities contact the nearest branch of **OMO "Ilinden" Pirin** or contact us by email at [ratevski@hotmail.com](mailto:ratevski@hotmail.com)

### Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union Article 21: Non-Discrimination

Any discrimination based on any ground such as sex, race, colour, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, language, religion or belief, political or any other opinion, membership of a national minority, property, birth, disability, age or sexual orientation shall be prohibited.

### Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria

Article 5. (4) International agreements, which have been ratified in accordance with constitutional norms, duly proclaimed and have entered into force in the Republic of Bulgaria, form part of the internal law of the country. They have priority over those norms of local legislation which are found to contradict them.

### National Institute of Statistics

Instruction for Completion of the Census Form

Question No 10: Persons who are taking part in the Census are to determine their ethnicity on their own.

Question 11: Persons who are taking part in the Census are to determine what their mother tongue is on their own. Census takers are to note the responses as declared by the person providing them.



# THIRD CENSUS IN BULGARIA FOLLOWING THE FALL OF COMMUNISM

*By Stojko Stojkov, OMO "Ilinden" Pirin*

## Dreams

It seems ironic to me that the day I have sat down to write about the census in Bulgaria, is March 3. Just two days have passed since the end of the census. Today is a national holiday in Bulgaria. March 3 – the day when the preliminary (it never entered into force) Treaty of San Stefano was signed. It is a treaty without legal and real meaning; however it carries huge mythical weight. It is a burden from which the Bulgarian state cannot free itself. The dream of Macedonia; a dream in which there is no place for Macedonians, much like in the census itself.

It has always been difficult for those who have wanted to spoil this dream. This is because such people consider themselves to be Macedonians and because they recognise that such persons do exist. Their protest is like a screech in the dream; a screech that nobody wants to hear. But I will return now to reality.

It is a well-known fact that in the censuses of the last seven decades in Bulgaria, the Macedonian minority is present. The exception to this was the last census of the Zivkov era in which no minorities existed, as the totalitarian dream had been achieved having established a single Bulgarian socialist nation. However in the other censuses, Macedonians existed. The numbers varied from 5,000 to 187,000 depending on how dangerous it was to declare oneself a Macedonian. That which is not widely known is that despite this fact, a separate Macedonian category has never been allowed in any census in Bulgaria. However even without a separate category and without permission, in opposition to the threats and bans, and in the face of the dissatisfaction of the authorities, the Macedonians have somehow succeeded in fighting for their place in the various censuses. This is a fact which does not trouble Bulgaria as it continues to negate our existence.

## Measures

The advent of democracy in Bulgaria 20 or so years ago gave birth to many hopes among us Macedonians too. There was an especially high hope during the time of the first post-communist census in 1992. However our hopes were dashed. I remember an atmosphere of panic and threats was present in the local media at the time of that census. There were alarming reports in the media that in some villages in Pirin Macedonia (the village of Ilindentsi was cited, but there were others



too), up to 80% of the inhabitants declared themselves Macedonians. Furthermore, in cities such as Sandanski and Petrich, the number of persons declaring themselves Macedonians was between 20-30%. These figures were reported like there was an outbreak of some kind of epidemic and thus the authorities were called upon to take measures. And what were they asked to take measures against? Against the right to free self-identification. Evidently measures were indeed taken. In place of preliminary results which were expected to show at least 50,000 Macedonians, in the end officially only 10,807 persons declared themselves Macedonian. Years later the emblematic anti-Macedonian figure and recent government minister, Bozhidar Dimitrov, having been asked in an accusatory manner by an observer, about how it is possible that there were even 10,000 Macedonians included in the census results, said that had measures not been taken, the figure would have been 45,000. The Macedonians in Bulgaria know all too well the different types of measures that were taken by the authorities in this regard.

Later in 2001, the measures taken were even more successful. There was even a staged public and media investigation against the political party, OMO "Ilinden" PIRIN for disseminating informational flyers during the census period. With that, a climate of fear was created, unfavourable for free expression. The 2001 measures were repeated and expanded.

And this is what they entailed:

1. Creating an atmosphere of fear and uncertainty before and during the census.
2. Sending out public signals that Macedonian self-identification is considered an anti-Bulgarian and anti-state act.
3. Manipulation during the census, including:
  - Recording a person's ethnicity as "Bulgarian" without asking them.
  - Not recording a person's ethnicity at all.
  - Using a pencil to record answers.

*(Continued on page 48)*



(Continued from page 47)

- Persuading census officials that there cannot be or there should not be declarations of Macedonians recorded.
- Administrative recordings made in absence of a person.
- Pressuring state employees to change their census questionnaires and in place of Macedonian, declare their ethnicity to be Bulgarian.

Emblematic of the last point was the example of the mayor of the village of Kromidovo, Petrich County, Borislav Filatov, who was compelled to change Macedonian to Bulgarian on the census form in order to maintain his position as mayor.

### Deja vu

This somewhat long introduction is required to understand what exactly is going on in this third “democratic” census because the same tactics are being employed as in the past.

It all began during the trial census conducted in September 2010. The experts from the National Statistical Institute (NSI) applied the principle of self-identification of the citizens at the previous censuses and in accordance with European standards, included a separate “Macedonian” category in the possible answers for the ethnicity question on the electronic questionnaire.

The reaction: a vicious media campaign, the tendering of the resignation of the Director of the NSI (the resignation was not accepted), the dismissal by the Prime Minister of five senior public servants (three with the rank of assistants) from the NSI, as well as the public appearance of the government Minister, Bozhidar Dimitrov on the national television station, BTV, where he openly rejected free self-identification, insisting that it should be limited and in accordance with “scientific criteria”. Therefore a most unfavourable atmosphere was created in which the government sent a very clear message that self-identification as a Macedonian is unacceptable and is punishable; a message which put not only citizens in a very difficult situation, but also the census officials who, through the dismissal of some of their colleagues from the NSI, received a clear warning.

This forced Macedonian organisations in Bulgaria to issue a categorical declaration in which some essential conditions would have to be met in order for them to recognise the census results:

1. To include a separate “Macedonian” category in the questions on ethnicity and language.
2. The government to condemn the statements of Minister Dimitrov and publically guarantee free self-identification in the census.
3. To reinstate the five dismissed NSI officials.

In addition to these conditions other arguments were presented to the authorities including irregularities in past censuses and how they can be avoided on this occasion. There was not a single response to the letters sent to the various Bulgarian authorities (including most importantly to the Prime Minister and the NSI), nor were any of the conditions fulfilled. As a result the number of organisations supporting the aforementioned declaration increased. The final list included: the United Macedonian Organisation “Ilinden” PIRIN, the Society of Repressed Macedonians in Bulgaria, TMO VMRO – Independent, the Macedonian Christian Brotherhood “St Elijah”, the Cultural Society “Nikola Vapsarov”, the Cultural Society “Ilinden”, the Cultural Society “Tsar Samoil”, the newspaper “Narodna Volja” and the publication “Makedonski Glas”.

In the immediate period prior to the start of the census, Macedonian organisations disseminated 25,000 informational flyers calling upon people who felt Macedonian to freely and without fear, self-identify as such in the census. In opposition, there emerged the nationalist political party VMRO who via the local media, threatened to take the authors of the flyer before the Public Prosecutor, while the informational campaign itself was characterised as a provocation and an offence. This news was reported on the front pages of newspapers and so the unfavourable atmosphere to freely self-identify was “refreshed” once again, just prior to the census.

Adding to this was another incident. On 31 January 2011, the day before the start of the census period, the Macedonian publication “Makedonski Glas” with a circulation of 2,500 copies was confiscated at a printing house. To date, no reason has been given for this scandalous act and violation of the freedom of the press. The confiscation itself was conducted in an illegal manner by persons who refused to produce an official written order, refused to identify themselves and did not issue a document noting the confiscation. Instead, they decided to arrest employees in the publishing house and held them for questioning for a whole day in the local office of the Ministry of Internal Affairs in Blagoevgrad.

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## Nobody is Allowed to Take Responsibility

To date there has been no response in relation to the official complaints lodged with the authorities. The Ministry of Internal Affairs denies any involvement in the incident. The Public Prosecutor is still to give an answer. The only thing that is known at this stage from the oral statements of the confiscators is that they are members of Bulgarian State Agency for National Security.

Having in mind that this edition of the publication was dedicated to the census and that it was confiscated just a day prior to the start of the census period, the reason for the confiscation is clearly evident. The method is well known to us – in 2009 the Bulgarian authorities did the same thing to the election campaign material of the Macedonian political party in Greece, Rainbow (Vinozito). Having had the material printed in Bulgaria, the party's campaign material was confiscated on the Bulgarian side of the Bulgarian/Greek border. The material was never returned. Evidently we are talking about a pre-existing criminal practice in which the Bulgarian authorities literally steal advocacy materials from Macedonian organisations.

This was yet another clear signal of what the position of the state is in relation to the rights and efforts of Macedonians to express themselves as they feel. This official position was once again confirmed with the activation of the national television station which broadcasted a five hour program on 7 January 2011, just a week before the start of the census data collection from domiciles (the electronic census lasted until 9 February 2011), in which it was “proven” the Macedonians do not exist; everyone is Bulgarian.

Even with the confiscation (perhaps ‘robbery’ would be a more accurate word) of the publication, the abnormal conditions that had been created by the state meant that it was always going to be difficult for the Macedonian organisations to recognise the results of this census. However the manner in which it was conducted, the large number of manipulations and irregularities recorded during the census period once again confirmed the basis for not recognising the census results.

## A Census the Bulgarian Way

A more detailed report on this is currently being prepared. However enough material already exists to draw the following conclusions:

1. The census was held in an atmosphere where the official and publically expressed position of the state that the Macedonian minority (as well as the Macedonian nation, Macedonian language, history, etc) does not

exist.

2. The census was held in a decades long established atmosphere in society which views self-identification as a Macedonian as national treason, disloyalty, an anti-Bulgarian and anti-state act.
3. The census was conducted with the Bulgarian government publically expressing a negative position in relation to identification as a Macedonian and rejecting the right to self-identification.
4. The census was conducted in an atmosphere where fear and mistrust prevailed among the Macedonians and uncertainty among the census officials in the field.
5. The contents of the census questionnaires, each having a unique serial number, including data such as personal identification number, address, place of work etc creates a basis for citizens to seriously doubt the guarantees of anonymity, as well as fearing an eventual misuse of the data.
6. There is no transparency in the way in which the census results are processed, nor is there any control over the process in which the final results are collated etc.
7. A number of irregularities were noted during the census period, including:
  - The refusal of census officials to record persons as Macedonians. There was even a case where the census officials threatened to come back with the police and issue a fine to the citizen who “refused” to take part in the census.
  - Filling in the census questionnaire with a pencil.
  - Attempts to manipulate citizens by telling them that there was no place to record them as Macedonians because there was no separate “Macedonian” category.
  - Attempts to skip over questions relating to ethnicity and language. These questions are voluntary and if there are not filled in it is assumed that the citizen did not wish to identify.
  - The administrative collection of data in the absence of the person in question (especially in villages).

And so, what kind of results are we to expect from such a census? One thing is certain – they will be unrealistic and minimal with respect to the Macedonians. Bulgaria has missed an opportunity to face the truth and to free itself from a burden of lies. Instead it wishes to continue the San Stefano dream.

*Stojko Stojkov*

МАКЕДОНСКА ВЕРЗИЈА НА СТ. 50





# Трет попис во Бугарија по падот на комунизмот

Стојко Стојков од ОМО „Илинден“ ПИРИН

## Соништа

Иронично ми изгледа што денот во кој седнав да пишам за пописот во Бугарија е токму трети март. Само два дена се поминати од крајот на пописот. Денес во Бугарија е националниот празник. 3 март – денот кога е подпишан прелиминарниот и никогаш не влезен во сила Санстефански договор. Договор без правно и реално значење, но со голема митска тежина. Оптеретување од кое бугарската држава уште не може да се ослободи. Сонот по Македонија. Сон во кој место за Македонци нема. Исто како и во пописот.

Тешко било овде секогаш за оние што сакаат да го расипат овој сон. Било затоа што сами се сметаат за Македонци, било зашто признаваат дека такви има. Нивниот протест е како крик во сонот. Крик кој никој не сака да слушне. Но да се вратам кон реалноста.

Добро познат факт е, дека на пописите во последните 7 децении во Бугарија македонското малцинство го има. Со исклучок на последниот попис од ерата на Живков во кој малцинства едноставно немаше бидејќи беше постигнат тоталитарниот сон и изградена единствената бугарска социјалистичка нација. На сите останати - Македонците ги има. Бројки кои варираа од пет илјади до 187 000 во зависност од тоа доколку беше безопасно да се запишеш Македонец. Тоа што не е широко познато е дека и покрај овој факт на ниту еден попис во Бугарија никогаш не била допуштена графа Македонец. Но и без графа и без дозвола и наспроти забраните и заканите, наспроти незадоволството на власта Македонците некако успеваа да се изборат за место во пописите. Факт кој ни најмалку не ѝ смета на Бугарија да го негира и порекнува нашето постоење.

## Мерки

Доаѓањето на демократијата во Бугарија пред дваесетина години роди големи надежи и меѓу нас Македонците. Особено силна надеж имаше за време на првиот постоталитарен попис во 1992 г. Но попусто. Се сеќавам на атмосферата на паника и закани што се појави во локланите медиуми за време на тој попис. Алармни известувања во

медиумите дека во некои села во Пиринска Македонија (се цитираше селото Илинденци, но и други) до 80 % од луѓето се пишуваа Македонци. Дека во градови како Сандански и Петрич бројката на луѓе што се декларираат како Македонци е меѓу 20 и 30 %. Се наведуваа овие бројки како известувања за епидемија и се повикуваа властите да се преземат мерки. Против што? Против слободата на самоопределување. И очигледно овие мерки беа преземени. Наместо очекуваните според овие првични податоци барем 50 000 Македонци на крајот официјално беа декларирани 10 807. Гдини подоцна емблематичната антимакедонска фигура и доскорошен министер Божидар Димитров пред обвинување на гледач како воопшто е дозволено во резултатите на пописот да има цели 10 000 Македонци ќе одговори дека ако не биле преземени мерки тие ќе биле 45 000. А колку и какви мерки беа преземени тоа сите Македонци во Бугарија добро го знаат.

Подоцна во 2001 г. мерките беа уште поуспешни. Дури беше инсценирана јавна и рекламирана во медиумите истрага против партијата ОМО „Илинден“-ПИРИН заради ширење на летоци за време на пописот. Со тоа се создаде една неповолна за слободно изјаснување атмосфера на страв. Мерките преземени во 1992 г. беа поново применети и проширени.

А еве во што се состоеја тие.

1. Создавање на атмосфера на страв и несигурност пред и за време на пописот.
2. Испраќање на јавни сигнали дека македонската самоопределба се разгледува како антибугарски и антидржавен акт.
3. Манипулации за време на пописот
  - Запишување на луѓето без да ги прашуваат како Бугари
  - Незапишување на национална припадност
  - Запишување со молив
  - Убедување на запишуваните дека не може или не треба да се пишат Македонци
  - Административно запишување во отсуство
  - Притисок врз луѓе во администрацијата да направат промена во своите пописни картони и наместо Македонци да поправат на Бугари.

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За последното емблематичен беше примерот со началникот на село Кромидово, Петричко, Борислав Филатов кој после пописот од 2001 г. требаше постфактум да смени Македонец со Бугарин во пописниот лист ако сака да си ја зачува позицијата.

## Déjà vu

Овој малку долг вовед е потребен за да се сфати она што се случуваше на овој трет „демократски“ попис. Зашто на него се повтори истата шема.

Се започна уште на пробниот попис во септември 2010 г. На него стручњациите од Националниот статистички институт (НСИ) водејќи се од самоопределбата на луѓето на предходните пописи и од европските стандарди имаа ставено подграфа Македонец во пописниот електронски формулар.

Реакцијата беше – остра кампанија во медиумите, оставка на директорот на НСИ (одбиена), отпуштање од работа директно од премиерот на 5 врвни службеници (тројца со ранг на заменици) од НСИ, како и јавен настап на министер Божидар Димитров по една од националните телевизии – БТВ каде тој отворено ја оспоруваше слободата на самоопределување и инсистираше дека таа треба да се ограничува според некакви научни критериуми. Се создаде една многу неповолна атмосфера во која владата имаше испратено многу јасна порака дека самоопределувањето како Македонец не се прифаќа и дури се казнува, порака која ги ставаше во многу непријатна ситуација не само попишувачите, но исто така и попишувачите, на кои примерот со отпуштањето на службениците од НСИ представуваше многу јасна опомена.

Тоа ги принуди македонските организации во Бугарија да изелзат со категорична и јасна декларација во која поставија неколку задолжителни услови без чие исполнување тие нема да ги признаат резултатите од пописот.

1. Да се стави графа Македонец во пописот
2. Владата да се ограда од изјавите на министер Димитров и да гарантира јавно слободата на самоопределување
3. Да се вратат на работа петмината отпуштени.

Кон тоа беа додадени подробни аргументи како за

нарушувањата извршени во претходните пописи така и предлози како да се избегнат при сегашниот попис. На ниту едно од писмата до различни бугарски власти (вклучително до премиерот и до НСИ) не беше одговорено, ниту пак беше исполнет било кој од посочените услови. Во резултат непосредно пред почетокот на пописот бројката на организации-подржувачи на спомнатата декларација се зголеми. Еве го и нивниот финален список: ОМО „Илинден“-ПИРИН, Друштво на репресираните Македонци во Бугарија, ТМО ВМРО независна, Македонско христијанско братство „Св. Пророк Илија“, Културно просветно друштво „Никола Вапцаров“, КПД „Илинден“, КПД „Цар Самуил“, весник „Народна волја“, билтен „Македонски глас“.

Во јануари непосредно пред пописот македонските организации поделија 25 000 летоци со повик луѓето што се чувствуваат Македонци сами и без страв да се самоопределат какви што се чувствуваат. Против тоа во локланите медиуми беше направена мала кампанија во која националистичката партија ВМРО ни се закануваше дека ќе ги даде инициаторите на обвинителството, а извршеното се карактеризираше како провокација и пре-стап. Оваа вест се објавуваше на првите страни. Така неповолната за слободна самоопределба атмосфера беше „освежена“ уште еднаж пред самиот попис.

Следеше нешто што дури и Бугарија не си го има дозволено веќе 10 години. На 31 јануари, во денот пред да започне пописот беше конфискуван македонскиот билтен „Македонски глас“ во тиража од 2 500 примероци од печатницата во која се печатеше. Никаква причина за овој скандален акт на нарушување слободата на печатот до денес не е дадена. Самата конфискација е извршена на незаконски начин, од луѓе кои одбиле да покажат заповед, одбиле да се представат, одбиле дури и да дадат документ за конфискацијата, но за сметка на тоа ги уапсиле печатарите и ги држеле и испрашувале цел ден во зградата на МВР во Благоевград.

## Никој не смее да превземе одговорност

Од поднесените по случајот жалби и до ден денешен нема резултат. Министерството на внатрешните работи негира било какво учество во

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случајот. Обвинителството се уште нема дадено одговор. Единственото познато засега од усни изјави на конфискаторите е дека тие се припадници на бугарската Државна агенција за национална безбедност.

Имајќи во предвид дека овој број на билтенот беше посветен на пописот а беше конфискуван во денот пред пописот да стартира, причината за овој акт мислам е сосема очигледна. Методот е веќе познат – го применија бугарските власти спрема предизборниот материјал на „Виножито“ – запленил на бугарската граница и држен додека поминат изборите во Грција. И никогаш не е вратен. Очигледно станува збор за една веќе воспоставена криминална практика во која бугарските власти најбуквално крадат агитациони материјали на македонски организации.

Ова беше уште еден јасен сигнал за тоа каква е позицијата на државата спрема правото и настојувањето на Македонците да се изразат такви какви што се чувствуваат. Оваа официјална позиција беше уште еднаш потврдена со анагжирање на националната државна телевизија со петчасова емисија на 7 јануари, недела, ден пред да започне попишувањето по куќите (до 9 февруари течеше електронски попис), во која наголемо да се докажува дека Македонци нема. Сите се само Бугари...

Дури и без случајот со конфискуваниот (а поточно кажано заграбениот) билтен поради ненормалните услови создадени од страна на државата тешко дека овој попис ќе можеше да се признае од страна на македонските организации. Но начинот на кој беше спроведен, големиот број манипулации и нарушувања забележани за време на неговото спроведување уште еднаш ја потврдија основаноста на позицијата да не се признаат резултатите на пописот.

### Попис по Бугарски

Подобен извештај за тоа сеуште се спрема. Но и сега веќе има доволно материјал за да се направат неколку генерални констатации.

1. Пописот се одржа при официјална и јавна позиција на државата дека македонско

малцинство (но исто и нација, јазик, историја и сл.) не постојат.

2. Пописот е спроведен во една од децениите создавана општествена атмосфера која гледа на самоопределбата како Македонец како на национално предавство, родоостапништво и антибугарски и антидржавен акт.
3. Пописот е спроведен при јавно демонстриран негативен став на владата спрема идентификацијата како Македонец и негирање на правото на самоопределување.
4. Пописот е спроведен во атмосфера на страф и недоверба кај Македонците и на несигурност кај попишувачите.
5. Содржинаата на пописните картони со извонредниот број детајли вклучувајќи матичен број, адреса, работа и сл. создаваат основа за сериозна недоверба кај граѓаните за гаранцијата за почитување на анонимноста, како и страв од евентуална злоупотреба со податоците.
6. Не постои прозирност за начинот на кој ќе се обработуваат резултатите ниту контрола врз процесот на обработка и добивање на финалните резултати.
7. Забележани се бројни нарушувања во време на пописот како следните:
  - Одбивање на попишувачите да ги запишат луѓето како Македонци. При еден случај дури и се заканиле дека ќе се вратат со полиција и ќе наложат парична казна поради „одбивање“ на човекот да се попише.
  - Пополнување со молив.
  - Обиди за манипулација со попишувачите дека нема каде да ги запишат како Македонци поради немање на графа „Македонец“.
  - Обиди да се заобиколат прашањата за етничка припадност и мајчин јазик. Овие прашања се доброволни и доколку не бидат пополнети се смета дека човекот одбил да се самоопредели.
  - Административно попишување на отсутните (особено по селата).

И така – какви резултати треба да очекуваме од еден таков попис? Едно е сигурно – нереални и минимални во однос на Македонците. Бугарија ја испушти шансата да се соочи со вистината и да се ослободи од товарот на лагата. Сеуште повеќе сака да си ги сони санстефанските соншта.

Стојко Стојков

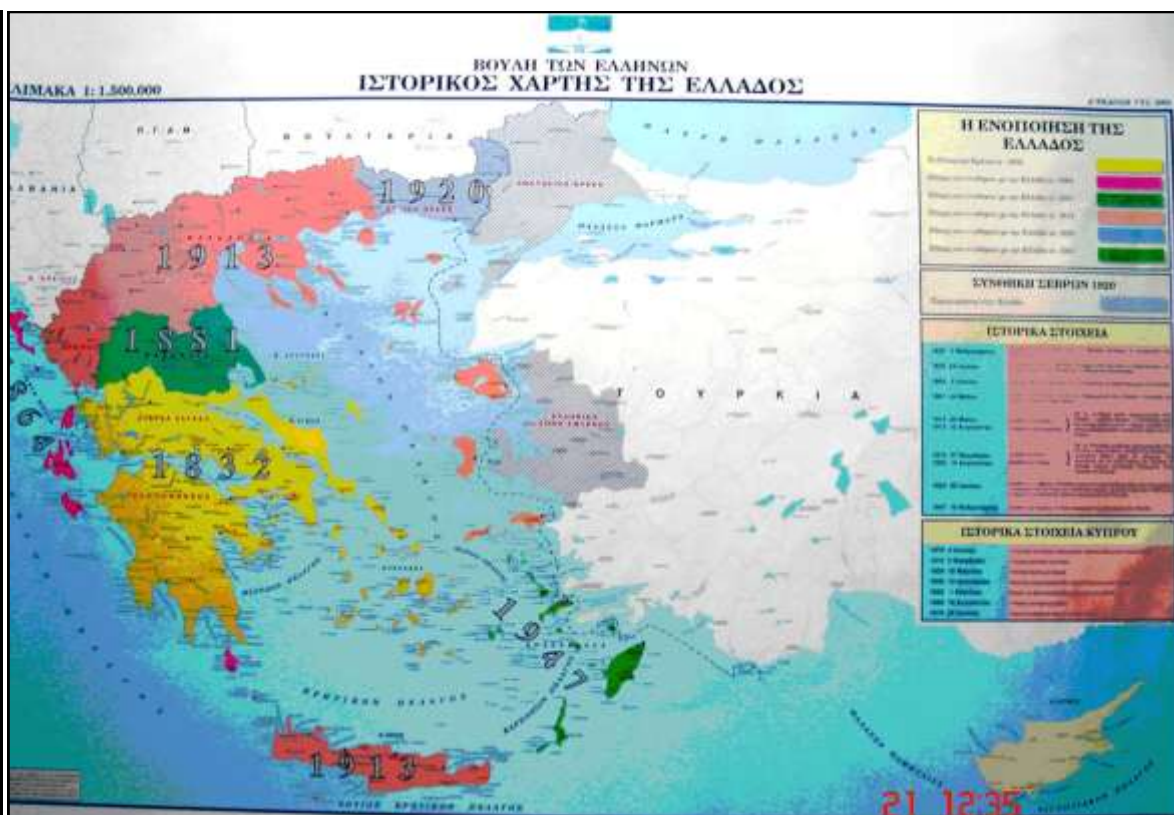
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# Hypocrisy in the Pursuit of “Sacred Claims”: Greek State Policy in Southern Albania

By David Vitkov

A map officially published by the Greek Parliament in 2000 with the inscription in Greek of “N. Epirus” (Northern Epirus) in the territory of southern Albania



It might come as a surprise to the neutral observer to learn that Macedonia is not the only country towards which Greece has adopted an aggressively nationalist foreign policy. Apart from Bulgaria (relations are good for now ... and for obvious reasons relating to Macedonia) Greece has problems with all of its neighbours. Greco-Turkish hostilities have been present since the formation of the Greek state itself and tensions continue to simmer today in the background. However a lesser known dispute involves Albania and the Greek “sacred claims” to the territory known to the Greek state and na-

tionalists alike as “Northern Epirus” i.e. the southern part of Albania. This territory is largely viewed as “unliberated” and as such the ultimate goal is to ‘reunite’ it with the part of Epirus in Greece. The means to achieving this end: exploiting the population of southern Albania under the guise of ‘protecting’ the Greek minority.

## Self-identification and the recent scandal involving the Greek Consul in Korcha

The issue of whether to include questions on ethnicity and language in the upcoming census in

Albania has been the subject of a hotly contested debate in the country and beyond. Naturally, minority groups in Albania want the opportunity to exercise their right to freely declare their ethnicity and indeed an accurate assessment of the size of Albania’s minorities is long overdue. Although the Albanian government has pledged in the past to address the issue, the Council of Europe has noted that there is a “reluctance to include a question on ethnic belonging in the census questionnaire. This is because of a presumed risk that some people might fraudulently claim a given

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ethnicity – in this case Greek – in view of the advantages supposedly deriving from affiliation with that national minority, particularly in terms of cross-border contacts” (AO Albania, 2008: 10). To give this observation some context, the Greek state has been granting Greek citizenship to ethnic Greeks from southern Albania and to other Albanian citizens, predominately with an Orthodox religious affiliation in the “Northern Epirus” region, who, of late, have begun to make declarations of “Greekness”. Greek citizenship carries with it many benefits such as the right to live and work anywhere in the European Union as well as access to Greek state pensions where applicable. This is especially attractive to people who live in poverty and in areas without much economic prosperity or prospective. In a report issued by the Defence Academy of the United Kingdom, British writer and Albanian affairs analyst, Miranda Vickers observes that, “[c]onfusingly, Vlachs often claim to be Greek to get Greek passports and visas, and there has also been a high rate of ‘conversions’ of Muslim Albanians to Orthodoxy as a result of economic pressures. Given the urge by many to escape Albania at all costs, it would certainly be tempting to claim Greek consciousness” (Vickers, 2010: 1). Thus Greece has been actively pursuing a strategic policy to ‘increase’ the size of the Greek minority in “Northern Epirus”.

The English edition of the Melbourne based Greek newspaper, *Neos Kosmos* recently reported that the “Greek Consul in the southern city of Korytsa (Korçë), Theodoros Oikonomou-Kamarinos was recalled to Athens in disgrace after mentioning at a meeting celebrating the twentieth anniversary of the founding of the ethnic Greek political party OMO-NOLA in that city, that this region is referred to as Northern Epirus” and that “your grandfathers were Greek”” (*Neos Kosmos*, 7 March 2011). In fact, the Consul went further than what this newspaper reported, claiming, “Yes, Vlachs are Greeks. Greeks, don’t be afraid of the census, proclaim your real origin.” (SEE Times, 21 March 2010) As expected, this diplomatic incident made media headlines in Albania and the matter became the subject of heated public debates.

To briefly illustrate the magnitude of the scandal involving the Greek Consul in Korcha, can one imagine a situation where the Consul of the Republic of Macedonia in Thessaloniki/Solun visits the town of Florina/Lerin and addresses a gathering of the political party of the Macedonian minority in Greece, EFA-Rainbow (Vinozito), declaring “this region is referred to as Aegean Macedonia” and “your grandfathers were Macedonians.”? The Greek uproar would be deafening...“Skopian irredentism”...demarches and doubtless the expulsion of the Macedonian

consul would soon follow.

In relation to the scandal in Albania, there were calls for the Greek Consul to be declared *persona non grata*, while Greek nationalists ‘naturally’ applauded his ‘bravery’. In Australia, *Neos Kosmos* emphatically demanded to know, “Why should Greece attempt to prohibit use of the term “Northern Epirus” thus denying to its people, the right to self-identification?” (*Neos Kosmos*, 7 March 2011) Although on these two points (possibly for the first time) we are in basic agreement, the statement cannot be read by most Macedonians without an ironic chuckle. While it calls for self-identification for the Greek minority in Albania, *Neos Kosmos* refuses to recognise the right of self-identification of the Macedonian community in Australia, in Greece and beyond by using racist terminology such as “Skopian” and “Slav Macedonian” in their articles (very much like the Greek state itself). It should be clear that these terms are not ones of self-identification. Moreover, it is interesting to note how Greeks are comfortable in using a term such as “Northern Epirus” however are quick to condemn the use of “Aegean Macedonia” and “Chameria” (a term used by Albanians for the coastal part of Epirus in Greece), labelling them “irredentist”.

However Greek nationalists can rest easy because Theodoros

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The text below the photo proclaims: "The 'Ion Dragoumis' of Northern Epirus: Theodoros Oikonomou-Kamarinos, the Greek Consul of Korcha"



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Oikonomou-Kamarinos has retained his post in "Northern Epirus". Athens demonstrated its 'disapproval' of the Consul's comments by briefly recalling him to Athens for consultations and then re-posting him to Korca! Moreover, this is just the tip of the iceberg in what has been a decades-long policy by the Greek state to claim (or 'reclaim' in its eyes) the part of southern Albania which it refers to as "Northern Epirus" (the southern part having of course already been "liberated" by Greece in 1913).

### Greece's "sacred claims" on "Northern Epirus"

Greek designs on southern Alba-

nia were ominous from the time of the formation of the Albanian state, with the declaration in 1914 of an "Autonomous Republic of Northern Epirus", subsequently "annexed" by Greece. Albania regained control of the area in the subsequent decade however Greece claimed the area again during the 1940s, only for it to be returned to Albania at the end of World War II. The Greek claims continued during the Cold War. In 1960, the Prime Minister of Greece, Georgios Papandreou Senior emphatically declared in the Greek Parliament that: *"What all Greek Governments need to know is that the Northern Epirus issue continues to exist. And what should be forbidden down the ages, is the denial of our sacred*

*claims. With regards to Northern Epirus, these claims are sacred and indelible"* (Neos Kosmos, 7 March 2011).

The rhetoric was transformed into specific policy stipulations following the fall of communism in Albania. In 1991, the Prime Minister of Greece, Konstantinos Mitsotakis (the one who in 1995 admitted that the problem with the Republic of Macedonia was not over its name, but with the Macedonian minority in Greece) demanded of the Albanian government a host of rights for the Greek minority in the country. While the issues were indeed legitimate from a human rights perspective, the hypocrisy of the Greek state was outrageous: *"The Greek families that left Albania during the communist regime (1945–1991), should be encouraged to return to Albania and acquire their lost properties"* (meanwhile the Greek government continues to refuse to return citizenship and property to Macedonian refugees from "Greek" the Civil War of 1946–1949); Albania should allow *"the functioning of Greek language schools"* (Greece has and continues to refuse Macedonian language education in Greece); *"the Greek minority should be allowed to found cultural, religious, educational and social organisations"* (just two years prior to this statement, in 1989, a cultural association called the Home of Macedonian Culture was denied registration by Greek authorities –

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and despite repeated attempts and a favourable European Court of Human Rights judgement remains unregistered to this day; the same applies to Turkish minority associations in Greece) (Heuberger et al, 1996: 74).

The official policy of the Greek state today is much the same under the grandson of Georgios Papandreou Senior, the current Prime Minister of Greece. According to the website of the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *“There is an indigenous ethnic Greek minority in Albania dating back to the 7th century B.C.”* However this staggering and ridiculous 2,700 year old claim is overshadowed by the double-standards that Athens displays when it laments the fact that *“there are no reliable statistics on the actual size of the minority, since no official census with ethnic criteria has been conducted to date, although this is one of the commitments to the European Union.”* Again, the hypocrisy here is quite remarkable: while the Greek state demands questions on ethnicity and language in the census in Albania, at home it excludes such questions from its own census. In other words, *“European standards”* for Greeks outside of Greece, yet total denial and repression of minorities within Greece!

### Legitimate human rights concerns in Albania

There are of course legitimate hu-

man rights concerns in Albania with respect to ethnic, cultural and linguistic minorities in the country which should not be dismissed. Albania, a party to the Council of Europe’s Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (which Greece has refused to ratify), has undertaken certain obligations with respect to minorities within its borders.

The implementation of the Framework Convention is periodically monitored by a committee of experts, known as the “Advisory Committee” (AC). In its most recent Opinion on Albania, the AC noted that the *“Albania has made efforts in order to enhance the implementation of the Framework Convention”*, however *“[m]ore resolute action is however required in order to make substantial progress in the field of minority protection”* (AO Albania, 2008: 2). There is no question that Albania needs to improve the situation given that, as the AC has found, *“persons belonging to the Greek minority who live outside the districts of Gjirokastër, Sarandë and Delvinë and persons from the Macedonian minority, some of them Muslims, who live outside the districts of Korçë (municipality of Ligenas) and Devolli (municipality of Vernik) cannot assert the same rights as persons from the same minorities living in the aforementioned districts”* (AO Albania, 2008: 13).

However this is not to say that minorities do not have rights in

Albania. In comparison to countries such as Greece, Albania can be said to be ‘progressive’ with the status of the Greek minority in the country appearing to be the most advanced. As Vickers points out, *“Albania’s Greek minority have historically had many just grievances against Albanian governments, but today the most important human rights issues have now been addressed”*. Indeed, the AC notes that *“[w]ith the exception of the Greek minority, no teacher training is available in the languages”* (AO Albania, 2008: 30) while *“in 2005 the National Radio and Television Council granted two licences for a radio station and a radio and television station, respectively, broadcasting in Greek.”* (AO Albania, 2008: 25) Despite these advancements, the situation is not perfect and it goes without saying that more can and should be done to address the legitimate concerns of all minorities in Albania.

In relation to the census issue, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe (CoM) declared that the lack of “free self-identification” was an “issue of concern”. In the 2009 adopted Resolution on the implementation of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities by Albania, the CoM noted that, *“Reliable statistical data concerning national minorities in Albania is still lacking. Collection of data on ethnic affiliation in the next census is needed but there is a reluctance to do so by the au-*

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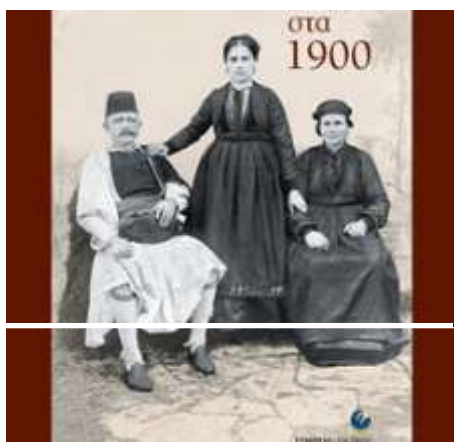


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thorities. Conversely, data on ethnic belonging is reported to be collected when issuing birth certificates for persons belonging to some minorities without full respect of the principle of free self-identification” (Resolution CM/ResCMN(2009)5). As such the CoM recommended that the Albanian government take measures to “address the current lack of data on ethnic belonging notably by including a question on ethnic affiliation in the next census while respecting the international standards on personal data protection, including the

regard to the “presumed risk that some people might fraudulently claim a given ethnicity” (i.e. Greek) is not unfounded as previously demonstrated, however this cannot legitimately be used as an excuse for excluding such a question from the census (AO Albania, 2008: 10). In this connection, the AC has made a useful recommendation to the authorities, suggesting that “the census should not be regarded as the sole means of obtaining data on the country’s ethnic composition. While the census results undoubtedly are necessary and play an important role, they could be sup-

must contribute to this by abandoning its “sacred claims” to “Northern Epirus” and ending the host of entitlements and benefits that it awards to Albanian citizens declaring a “Greek” ethnicity. Such a move will go a long way in allaying the concerns of the Albanians who “see every move by Athens and the Greek minority leadership as part of an ulterior plan to Hellenise southern Albania.” (Vickers, 2010: 8). Therefore, given that the Greek state is part of the problem, it must also contribute to creating the necessary conditions for Albanian government to support self-



**“The life of the Vlachs in 1900” by Asterios Koukoudia.** On 28 October 2009, a Greek national holiday, the Greek Liaison Office in Bitola invited members of the town's Vlach community to an exhibition of photos from the book

principle of free self-identification and ensuring that this principle is also respected when issuing birth certificates” (Resolution CM/ResCMN(2009)5).

Indeed Albania, like all European states, has an obligation to allow its minorities the right to declare their ethnicity in the national census. The state’s concerns with

plemented by sociological surveys and other studies on minorities, including at local level” (AO Albania, 2008: 10). Additionally and indeed most importantly, it should be recognised that under the current set of circumstances, the conditions for free-self identification in the Albanian census are not solely created by the Albanian state. Greece for its part

identification in the census, which will result in an accurate measurement of the size of the various minorities in Albania.

### A warning for Macedonia

The case of Greek policy in southern Albania should also serve as a warning to the Mace-

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donian government in relation to being wary of the possibility of future Greek claims on the southern part of the Macedonian state. In fact there is already Greek state activity in these areas, predominantly in places such as Bitola, where the Greek Liaison Office (Greek diplomatic offices in Skopje and Bitola do not have the rank of Embassy and Consulate respectively) have been hard at work in attempting to sway members of the small Vlach population in this town to declare themselves "Greek". The Liaison Office has been strategically and symbolically posited in the old Vlach neighbourhood of Bitola. The Greek state has sponsored book promotions demonstrating the "Hellenic" nature of Vlachs in towns such as Bitola in Macedonia, awarded scholarships and no doubt issued passports to some

just like in southern Albania.

Furthermore, as publically admitted by the Greek Foreign Minister in 2008, the Greek state also funds Greek language classes in Macedonia. In responding to a parliamentary question by Kostas Aivaliotis of the ultra-nationalist LAOS party on the "Greek minority" in the state of Macedonia, Dora Bakoyannis was quick to dismiss the notion of a "Greek minority" (for fear of triggering a bilateral debate on the issue of the Macedonian minority in her own country), however she did point out that "*people speaking Greek in Skopje, Bitola, Gevgelija, Pehcevo are organised in associations which the Greek government supports and assists through the Liaison Offices in Skopje and Bitola*" (Momirovski: 2008). This is yet another display of hypocrisy: the Greek state funds Greek

language education abroad for foreign citizens but refuses to fund minority Macedonian language education in Greece for its own citizens!

Therefore as was the case more than 100 years ago in Macedonia, the Greek state appears to be actively pursuing a thoroughly groundless irredentist agenda; its goal this time: the "liberation" of the remainder of "Ano Macedonia" i.e. "Upper Macedonia", comprising of towns such as "Monastiri" (Bitola), "Prilapos" (Prilep) and "Gevgeli" (Gevgelija).

And who says that history does not repeat itself, especially when "sacred claims" are concerned?

**By David Vitkov**

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## Twenty Eight Thousand Children I

More than twenty eight thousand children  
Torn from loved ones' arms  
Wrenched from breaking hearts  
Gathered in groups together  
To travel, they do not know where

Family members seeing them off  
Too quickly, having to tearfully head back  
One last look, trying to identify their own  
Hearts aching, feet stuck  
They watched the sad group, in darkness disappear

Back home, to what is not a home  
Grief upon grief  
How much can one endure?  
Young men and women lost at war  
Now 1948, children aged under 15, gone  
Despair, excruciating pain  
Impossible to describe

Shrrr! Said the new mother  
An orphaned infant in her arms  
No more crying now, during night we travel  
Not be seen, captured  
To hide from the aeroplanes, bombs that fall  
We will be your mothers, stay close to us  
Hold hands with the younger, my clothing,  
your siblings, each other

Crossing creeks, rivers, boarders  
Trudging over mountains, difficult terrain  
Bewilderment on faces, fear in their hearts  
Macedonian children, crying for their mothers,  
grandma, sisters and brothers

For weeks they walked on empty stomachs  
Tired, unwashed, cold, wet, scratched-  
A piece of bread would be so good!  
Wondering where they will be sent  
Wishing they had a short rest  
Heads full of lice, clothing torn, foot ware lost-  
A piece of bread, would be so good!

## Where Are We Going? II

They said it was for their own good  
Must be taken away  
From shootings, bombings,  
starvation, their families and homes  
Over twenty eight thousand Macedonian children  
Many never before away from home

Fear in their eyes  
Tear tracks down their cheeks  
Hungry, confused, homesick  
Wishing they were home  
Suffering someone else's war  
The fascist monarchist  
and Greek communist,  
Greek Civil War

Eventually they were scattered across  
Eastern European countries:  
Romania, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Hungary, other  
Child refugees, some separated from siblings  
Living in camps, dormitories,  
in children's homes-

Despite promises, when safe they will be returned  
Many were never to see their families again:  
Towns, villages, ancestors' graves, homes-  
Unwelcome despite their innocence  
Not permitted, to cross Greek borders  
Not permitted, to return back home

## Lita Grakini

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*Lita Grakini is a proud and very active member of Tasmanian's  
Macedonian community and was recently inspired to express  
herself on the tragedy of Macedonian Detsa Begaltsi*







PHOTOS PROVIDED BY JILL DANIELS



# Patriarchy and the Australian Macedonian Community

By Velika Thomev

## The Challenge

Writing an article about patriarchy and the Australian Macedonian community turned out to be quite challenging. It became clear to me that gross generalisations and easy accusations would not create any positive discussion or debate, change, or put it on the agenda of the Australian - Macedonian community. As someone who was introduced to feminism in an Australian/Western

context, it would have been a bit too easy to go down the path of denouncing my own ethnicity as far more “backward” and sexist than the Australian culture I'm submerged in. However, internalised racism is a common feature of ethnic minorities. This concern resurfaced when I asked non-Macedonian friends about ideas for the article and they all assumed I'd be really ruthless on the Australian – Macedonian community for being sexist, before they had even asked what my take on it



Suffragettes – England 1908

was. This article is in no way an academic or an 'objective' piece but is one based on personal lived experiences and upon the experiences of some others that I have been made aware of anecdotally. I don't make any absolute truth claims, but these are my understandings of situations and I hope they strike a chord with readers. This magazine generally sticks to matters of political human rights that are focused more specifically on the name issue that Macedonia faces; so this is a divergence from that but is an important part of not only that struggle, but of moving forward as a community more broadly. I dedicate this article especially to my Babi and also to all my female relatives – mum,

aunties and cousins.

It is also important to note that I was asked to write this article because of an accidental meeting with the editor of this magazine, not because I have any personal previous history with the committee, or with Macedonian affairs in Australia. However, at the same time, I think it is a very positive move of the committee to want an article written on patriarchy, as it shows a desire to be self critical and reflective and I am very glad to have this opportunity.

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I am a 24year old Australian born, ethnic Macedonian woman, whose ancestor's migrated to Australia from Aegean Macedonia. I feel my connection to the Australian – Macedonian community is quite distant and also being from Aegean Macedonia, means to me that I have a heavy sense of loss in relation to the culture of my grandparents and parents because it no longer exists in the ways they have described. I have little connection with my Australian–Macedonian peers; indeed my interaction with the older generations has been much more substantial. Growing up for the most part with very few Australian-Macedonian peers (in regional Victoria) I deliberately did not identify as Macedonian to my non-Macedonian friends for a long time, because I felt a sense of shame at being a 'wog', which was combined with a desperate desire to not be noticed as even slightly different. Some research has revealed that my decision to distance myself from the Australian – Macedonian community is a common one made by the offspring of 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> generation immigrants who want to escape “non-Western” family rules and social norms that seem have been designed to suffocate one's existence; as well as wanting to not be perceived as different by mainstream peers, for fear of xenophobic reactions.

### Definitions and Contexts

My definition of patriarchy is that it is a broad word describing a system of social hierarchy and oppression that is based on gender and maintaining heteronormativity. Heteronormativity, generally, is where men and women are the only genders, with any divergence seen as either a sickness or abnormal, and where men and women have specific, set roles attached to their gender that are seen as the natural and only order of things. It is also where sexuality is predetermined and everyone is considered heterosexual (only interested in the 'opposite' gender). In Patriarchy men have public roles – where they work outside of the home, and women private ones – they work at home and are unrecognised and unpaid. Men are the theoretical and/or practical heads of the household and have at least some degree of control of their family, on a sliding scale from chivalry to total control of all the women and also of younger men in the family. Women are seen as property of the men – passed

from father to husband, and are seen as being 'less' human than men. This is a very crude explanation of a patriarchal system which can oppress and operate in ways far more subtle than direct and vocalised misogyny (women hating), but it can be a useful place to start. It is important to note that females are just as important in maintaining patriarchal structures. Forms of Patriarchy have always existed (and continue to exist) in both modern Western and pre-Modern or non-Western societies. It is a systematic form of oppression and social hierarchy that can be viewed as intersecting with racism, classism, homophobia and other forms of oppression that are based on identifiers of what separates us, rather than what we have in common.

### From the Macedonian Village to the Australian Metropolis

Although I initially imagined a scathing piece on Australian–Macedonian patriarchy, I soon came to think that there are not any particularly glaring differences between patriarchal cultures of societies that fall within the orbit of a broadly conceived Modernity, and none that really stood out to me as specifically 'Macedonian'. In this broad category of patriarchal cultures I also obviously place the dominant 'Australian' culture. While it is true that women hold offices of great power in Australia and there have been dramatic advances in certain forms of equality in the last fifty years, there is still some way to go before equality could be declared practically 'real' and before people are seen as possessing value, in and of themselves. I have decided that patriarchal culture is less about ethnicity and more about the inter-generational transmission of values that create gendered oppression. It is also clear that the oppressive forces are simultaneously within us and our actions and are also perpetuated by the state and broader society.

Macedonian culture was under the influence of the Ottoman state for 500 years (stretching back from 1913) and was governed in a very patriarchal structure with the male having the 'final say'. In some significant ways and in some families, part of that has been retained in Australia under the name of Macedonian 'culture'. The rigid gender

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roles were often transferred in the move to Australia, where they then combined with the strong influence of the new culture of Western Capitalism; or put more simply: the desperate desire for money making and other forms of capital (such as houses) and social competition. Though I will here note that this desire for capital and social competition was not newly developed upon arrival in Australia; these aspirations were already part of Macedonian culture, though I think it is correct to say that the new forms made available by the Australian context, for the pursuit of these aspirations, intensified the desire for them.

None-the-less, this change created quite a dilemma for the rigid gender structure, as substantial aspects of the system of life under which the understandings of gender roles had been developed, had vanished. The subsistence farming, village community life, agrarian rituals, oral traditions and skills that had been structurally useful, were now mostly superfluous. Instead were the bright lights and unfamiliar sounds of factories, technology and the anonymity of a modern city; alongside the traumatic separation from one's homeland culture. The trauma and Australian xenophobia encouraged attempts to maintain the 'old ways', though generally these attempts have failed. This transition was not 'smooth' and did indeed involve some painful re-drawing of boundaries. Nevertheless Aegean Macedonian culture in Australia has been diluted by the surrounding mainstream culture and also by the advances of feminists here (though it is important to note that in present day Macedonia, similar advances, in terms of women, have also occurred).

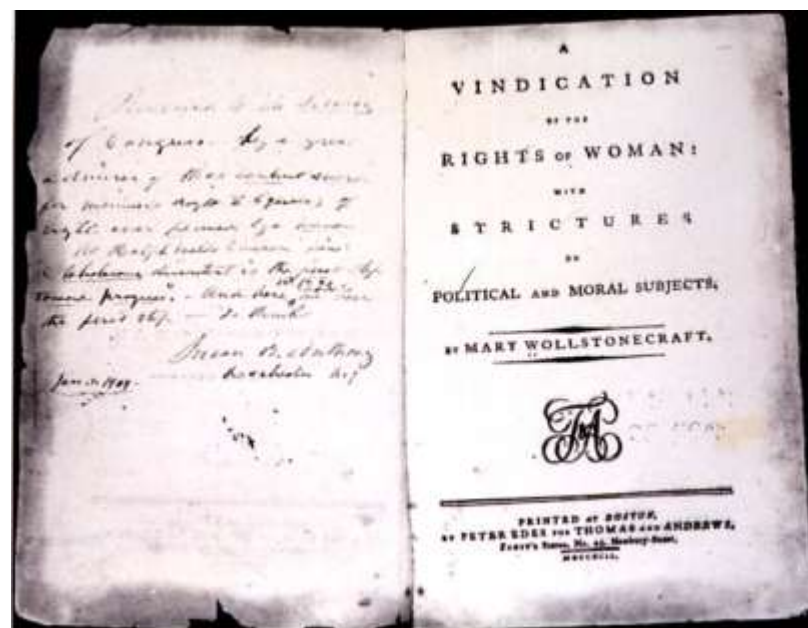
### **'Navigating' the Macedonian and Australian Cultural Divide**

As indicated, the cultural transmission of gender roles as 'objectively natural' has some extremely harmful consequences. The traditional way in which women are often regarded as men's property (exemplified in the Macedonian language by the way that a woman can be referred to by her husband's first name with the suffix -itsa, eg. Giorgi's wife is Giorgista and loses her name) suggests a strong tradition of oppressive fathers and hus-

bands. Thus it was common for women in Australia to be pulled out of school very early in order "to make money for the family", while the boys were allowed to run the course of their education. It is also sadly common that women are forced to choose between male relatives, or to change their lifestyles or be kicked out of home or disowned.

The way I understand the maintenance of 'culture' in the face of racism is that ethnic groups will keep to themselves (or be driven to, through structural racism) and try to hold on to whatever elements of their culture that they can. The combination of the foreign English language of the host country and its xenophobic dominant culture meant that Macedonian immigrants relied on each other and their village and family connections to survive. Also the post WWII immigrants were not given language classes or assistance and were generally viewed, merely as a source of labour. The racism and classism that Macedonians faced have perhaps quite 'naturally', led to an insular community. 'Tolerance' is a very popular catchword in Australia and it does not imply the embracing and treasuring of 'other' languages and cultures. This then meant that Macedonians held on to particular traditions, especially around gender roles and strict family control, not only because these were seen as shortcomings of the dominant Australian culture, but also because they were viewed as a useful defence mechanism against xenophobia.

### **Frontice Piece 1792**





## The Keeping of *Some* Traditions

For some people, tradition is a word with positive connotations; a throw back to 'better' times. However many 'traditions' can also be quite negative too. Rather than teaching grandchildren the language, cooking, handicrafts or trades of the old country, the focus has been on maintaining a severe degree of control over their personal lives. This in part is a reaction to being the subject of racism and for a long time doing the thankless menial jobs in Australian society and not wanting children to be discriminated against because of that. Among other things, it has resulted in a sustained and overblown focus on the importance of various traditions to do with social forms like marriage, or who one is allowed and *not allowed* to interact with and the constant need to strictly obey older members of the community. In my view, these have been combined with an intensification of social competitiveness and desire for money. This transformation or loss of a rich cultural heritage is quite sad as I have none of the skills that my grandparents had (knitting, singing folk songs, dancing Macedonian ora, sewing, handicrafts, brewing, drying food, baking bread, pickling, growing food, rearing animals, understanding seasons and weather and so on and so forth), but instead have been bestowed with an array of social anxieties about money, keeping a clean house, neat and gender appropriate appearance and getting married to the *right* person.

## Human Rights

Human rights are a way of understanding all humans as equal and are a valuable way to frame political arguments in order to give them legal legitimacy. In the Macedonian community human rights have become a way of framing the battle over naming rights in a way that can be understood internationally and in a manner that gives the struggle broader legitimacy, because of the fact that it is located within a pre-existing legal framework. Human rights often focus on political rights to do with the freedom to associate and to organise political resistance etc. This reflects the period in which they were first systematically broached, that is during the transition from the old

royal European absolutist order to that of the Modern democracy. It also reflects a continued focus on the 'public' sphere, a sphere that has often been a pointedly 'male' sphere of dominance.

Human rights also are generally about an individual's rights before the government and within society, such as discrimination in workplaces and in public places. In particular, 'freedom from' rights, in relation to the state, remain important; as the state, in order to maintain a stable existence, has a degree of interest in controlling our personal lives.

However, the public sphere focus is not justified, as these are rights desired by most people in the 'private' sphere of home and family as well – freedom from oppression, freedom of association and freedom from violence. Yet in the context of the family, they are more likely to be discussed under the Domestic Violence act. This distinction between public rights and the rights of people as members of a family is slowly being bridged and coming under the same paradigm; I think this is a positive development that will challenge the cultural hegemony of Patriarchy by increasing the ability of women to assert themselves and undo various forms of domestic oppression.

The issues Macedonians face and have faced because of their ethnicity in Australia (and worldwide) such as racism and classism, tend to bind together everyone in the community against those oppressive forces. This leads to a situation where other forms of oppression within the community, such as the very obvious gender based oppression, become invisible because the other battles are fought jointly by the genders. In other words, there is a tendency to avoid focusing on internal conflicts, in order to avoid the risk of further fracture in a community that already possesses serious divisions as a result of external assault. Consequently, women are under recognised, underrepresented and their stories are silent. However, this needn't be the case, as I believe that together we are more similar than different and if we really make the effort to *listen to* each others stories and experiences, we can grow together.

***Velika Thomev***



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### **OLD AND HAPPY – DRAMA FOR POSITIVE AGEING**

The Australian Macedonian Theatre of Sydney, in partnership with the Australian Macedonian Centre for Welfare Services, has staged for the Macedonian community the latest theatre production called **Old and Happy**.

**Old and Happy** is directed by the prominent Australian Macedonian director **Stefo Nantsou** actor and playwright and produced by **Zoran Lozevski**, who is well known for his work in the film production and promotional industry. **Dushan Ristevski**, the play's author, is an award-winning poet and playwright who in his body of literary work consistently address current social issues.

**Old and Happy** celebrates the highs and lows of all senior citizens and in particular is a creative response to the needs of the ageing Australian Macedonian community. The play abounds with hilarious antics, humor and positive messages that can be enjoyed by people of all ages.

Through their stories, songs and interactions the characters of **Old and Happy** show the positive side of ageing and how one can be motivated to develop new enthusiasm for life's purpose regardless of one's age. The characters' personal stories paint a picture of limitless possibilities when maintaining a positive attitude and a healthy lifestyle.

The ageing Australian Macedonian population carries a higher risk of physical and emotional apathy resulting from migration experiences and the individual expectations of community members themselves. Research conducted by the Department of Human Services, shows that the physical and social activities are the most significant means whereby individuals can influence their own health and functional abilities as they age.

Eighteen actors have been engaged in the staging of the play including Vasko Sribnovski, Sonja Zengovska, Kiril Mirceski, Peco Zengovski, Mitra Nedanovska-Neskovska, Tatjana Todoroska, Spasia Ogrenovska, Ildiko Kasa, Maria Kochovska, Vlade Sazdanov, Javorka Kotevska, Ilija Sazdov, Mena Ristevska, Ana Dimovska, Ivan Ristevski, Alexandra Siljanovska, Tode Pashovski and Hristina Strezovska.

The play will be shown at the following locations:

- Rockdale:** **Friday, 8 April, 7.30 pm:**  
**Sunday, 10 April, 11 am,** "Ilinden" Macedonian Cultural Centre, 65 Railway Street Rockdale.
- Richmond:** **Saturday, 9 April, 7.30 pm,** Richmond School of Arts, cnr. West Market St. & March St., Richmond
- Bankstown:** **Friday, 15 April, 7.30 pm,** Bankstown Polish Club, 15 East Terrace, Bankstown.
- Port Kembla:** **Saturday, 16 April, 7.30 pm,** Port Kembla Leagues Club, 4 Wentworth St., Port Kembla.
- Cabramatta:** **Sunday, 17 April, 3 pm,** Polish White Eagle Hall, 45 Bareena St. Cabramatta/Canley Vale.

For further information please contact Mena Ristevska on 0425231336





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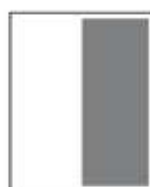
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**Double Page Spread**



**Full Page**



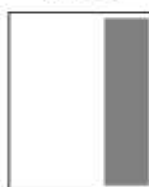
**1/2 Page (vertical)**



**1/2 Page (horizontal)**



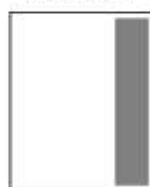
**Business Card**



**1/3 Page (vertical)**



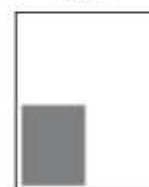
**1/3 Page (horizontal)**



**1/4 Page (vertical)**



**1/4 Page (horizontal)**



**1/4 Page (corner)**

**And if you don't have any existing material to use for your advertisement, we can make one up for you at no extra charge!**

**For more info or to make a booking, please contact:**

**Chris Terpos**  
Marketing Manager | AMHRC  
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**Special Thanks:** Con Christov for his technical assistance

## ABOUT THE AMHRC

Established in 1984 the Australian Macedonian Human Rights Committee is a nongovernmental organization that informs and advocates to governments, international institutions and broader communities about combating discrimination and promoting human rights. Our aspiration is to ensure that Macedonian communities and other excluded groups throughout the world are recognised, respected and afforded equitable treatment.

## RELATED ORGANISATIONS

The AMHRC is part of an international Macedonian network that spans Australia, North America and Europe, including:



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