

MHR REVIEW



MACEDONIAN HUMAN RIGHTS

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Golden Supporters Photograph Yannis Kolesidis AP

WHAT IS OLD IS NEW—THE CASE OF GOLDEN DAWN IN AUSTRALIA

By Dr. Vasko Nastevski

The MHR Review has previously covered the increasing prominence of the so-called “Golden Dawn”. An excellent expose was provided by Pavle Filipov Voskopoulos, who is a member of Vinozhito, (a Macedonian political party struggling for the rights of Macedonians in Greece) in Issue 13 – December 2012. Readers are encouraged to revisit that article. This short commentary supplements that earlier paper by briefly covering Golden Dawn’s newfound topicality in the Australian context.

There have been a number of sensationalist reports appearing in the mainstream Australian media of Golden Dawn’s presence in

Australia.¹ Somehow the fact that Golden Dawn has been ‘here’ since at least 2012 seems to have escaped the attention of most. Golden Dawn’s introduction to Australia and its potential insidious influence was previously highlighted by the AMHRC (and the Jewish Community in Australia).² Their participation at the ‘Greek Independence Day Parade’ at the Shrine of Remembrance on 25 March 2012 and their open manifestation of their ‘Nazi-style salute’ was particularly disturbing. Strangely, no Australian politician at the time saw any need to condemn their presence, even those Australian politicians that attended the same event, which included the Premier of

Victoria at the time, the Hon Ted Baillieu and the then Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Mr Nicholas Kotsiras.

The Golden Dawn was founded around 1985 and significantly developed its activities during the 1990’s, becoming a registered political party in Greece in 1993. Golden Dawn’s establishment within Greek society coincided with the independence of the Republic of Macedonia in 1991. Indeed, its initial focus was on rejecting the use of the democratically chosen name of the Republic of Macedonia.³ Inevitably, their far-right agenda and philosophy would become more apparent. Greek

Helsinki Monitor, a non-governmental organisation concerned with monitoring and reporting on human rights abuses had no hesitation as early back as 2009 to brand the Golden Dawn as being:

*openly neo-Nazi, anti-Semitic, racist and white supremacist [and] have been involved in many violent incidents against migrants, Macedonians ... as well as in desecration of Jewish monuments.*⁴

Yet, it is only very recently that attempts have been made to marginalise the Golden Dawn within Greek society. For a long time it appeared as if Greek society was either indifferent to their existence or more disturbingly, supported some of their actions. As Pavle Filipov Voskopoulos outlines for us in the article mentioned at the outset:

*Greek political parties and the average Greek have similar worldviews and hold onto similar stereotypes. These perspectives have strengthened over the last few decades and today they aggressively manifest themselves via Golden Dawn.*⁵

Not surprisingly, during the 2012 Greek Parliamentary Elections, Golden Dawn received 7% of the popular vote in Greece, which initially awarded them 21 seats.⁶ Indeed, in a disconcerting but sure sign of how well the Golden Dawn had embedded itself in Greek society, they began operating alongside the Greek police. As the Greek Supreme Court has noted:

*... in certain cases, whose number could be higher, members of the Greek police assisted, or in the best case tolerated, members of the organization [Golden Dawn] who were committing criminal offences ...*⁷

Golden Dawn's connection to Greek police and its record of hate and

violence is well known. Amnesty International recently stated that:

*... the Golden Dawn debacle is only the tip of the iceberg. Entrenched racism, excessive use of force and deep-rooted impunity are a blight on the Greek police. Successive Greek governments have so far failed to acknowledge, let alone tackle, these human rights violations by police and on-going impunity.*⁸

Amnesty International go into significant detail on the links between the Golden Dawn and the Greek police in their contemporaneous investigation and report entitled *A Law Unto Themselves: A Culture of Abuse and Impunity in the Greek Police*.⁹

Despite obvious signs of Golden Dawn's presence in Australia as early as 2012, the local Greek Community initially appeared to downplay their activities and influence, suggesting that "Golden Dawn do not appear to have set up a local chapter" or alternatively "it's a small element that is not representative of our community in any sense".¹⁰ However, more recently, and following various reports in the mainstream Australian media and the effective criminalisation of Golden Dawn in Greece,¹¹ the Greek community in Australia has expressed greater concern and even condemnation towards the Golden Dawn. For example, the Hellenic Council has issued a statement in which they have expressed "alarm" regarding reports that "the ultra-right wing Golden Dawn party in Greece claims to have opened branches in Sydney and Melbourne".¹² More recent reports that Golden Dawn Members of the European Parliament are to visit Australia has solicited a further escalation of the rhetoric against them. An example comes from Nicholas Kotsiras, a Victorian Parliamentarian and previous Minister for Multicultural Affairs, who is

reported to have stated:

*I am embarrassed by the existence of Golden Dawn. Golden Dawn does not represent me, it does not represent my family and does not represent the vast majority of Greeks living in Victoria.*¹³

The censure of the Golden Dawn by members of the Greek community in Australia is certainly welcomed. Hopefully the next step will be a similar denunciation of the Golden Dawn platform, especially as it relates to Macedonia. At present, the views held by Golden Dawn regarding Macedonia and the Macedonian people, in which they will 'not accept a name containing the term Macedonia'¹⁴ for use by the Republic of Macedonia, as well as the complete negation of the Macedonian identity, continues to be shared by some members of the mainstream Greek community.¹⁵

Even where the concept of the right to self-determination and self-identification for all Australians is espoused, somehow the translation of these terms to members of the Macedonian Community seems to evade some elements of Greek society. Offensive terms to reference the Macedonian Community, particularly the use of prefixes to "distinguish" the Macedonian Community continue to be used. In one sense, the remnants of such thinking perhaps should not be surprising. As Voskopoulos highlights in his article, this is merely being consistent with aspects of an overarching ideology of Greek nationalism and, these same aspects prevail in Greek society generally and result in the targeting and victimisation of the Macedonian minority in Greece.¹⁶ Awkwardly for those that maintain the denial of the existence and identity of Macedonians, possess views directly aligned with the widely condemned extremist group Golden Dawn.

Whilst the global criticism of Golden Dawn and the rejection of their presence in Australia by the broader Greek community is comforting to an extent, for members of the Macedonian community, it is not just Golden Dawn that is undesirable, but the racist ideology they espouse. Unfortunately, some of the views of Golden Dawn already have a presence in Australia. The formal establishment of Golden Dawn 'chapters' in Australia, from a Macedonian perspective, does not represent anything radically new in Greek society, as the desire to deny the identity and existence of the Macedonian people, is common to both. A case of what is old is new.

Post Script: As readers will no doubt notice elsewhere in this issue, the AMHRC has publically called for the two Golden Dawn representatives to be denied entry into Australia on the basis that they would fail to meet the character test in Australia's Migration legislation. A similar request has been made by others, including from the Greek community.

Indeed, it is interesting to note the original intention of section 501 of the *Migration Act 1958*. This is neatly encapsulated in the Second Reading of the Bill introducing the relevant amendments by the then Commonwealth Parliamentary Member for Calwell, Andrew Theophanous, who outlined that:

*The Minister has put forward a Bill which will give the Minister the power to exclude certain people who have committed offences or whom for several reasons it is undesirable to have in Australia. The kind of person we are thinking about is someone who specialises in preaching messages of hatred and racial tension, someone who wants to promulgate extreme views about violence, or someone who has a criminal record.*¹⁷

To this effect, the Australian Government has refused entry into Australia to David Irving, considered to hold and espouse racist, anti-Semitic views and as somebody who has consistently denied the events of the Holocaust. One wonders whether the Australian Government will eventually take a similar position with the members of the Golden Dawn, who not only deny the existence of a whole people, but openly sympathise with the views held by David Irving. Certainly, Golden Dawn's notoriety stems from their 'messages of hatred and racial tension', they 'promulgate extreme views about violence' and more recently have been dealt with as a criminal organisation. ■

ENDNOTES

¹ See 60 Minutes Report – 'Greek Tragedy' of 10 April 2014, at <http://sixtyminutes.ninemsn.com.au/stories/8828189/greek-tragedy-the-rise-of-europes-neo-nazis>.

² See for example 'AMHRC condemns the presence of "neo-Nazis" at a local community event', 11 April 2011 at http://www.macedonianhr.org.au/wip/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=149:amhr-c-condemns-the-presence-of-qneo-nazisq-at-a-local-community-event&catid=34:-amhrccat&Itemid=50.

³ European agency for Fundamental Rights, 'Racism, discrimination, intolerance and extremism: learning from experiences in Greece and Hungary', Thematic Situation Report, 2013, p.23.

⁴ Greek Helsinki Monitor, Information Related to the Questions by the Rapporteur in Connection with CERD's Consideration of the Sixteenth to Nineteenth Periodic Reports of Greece, Report to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racism and Discrimination (UN CERD), August 2009.

⁵ Pavle Filipov Voskopoulou, 'The Rise of "Golden Dawn" in Greece', MHR Review, Issue 13, December 2012, p.25.

⁶ Rob Cooper, 'Rise of the Greek neo-Nazis', *Daily Mail*, London, 7 May 2012 at <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2140686/Greek-elections-2012-Neo-Nazi-party-Golden-Dawn-want-force-immigrants-work-camps.html>. Their seats were later reduced to 18 following second round elections.

⁷ Findings of Deputy Prosecutor of the Greek Supreme Court at www.capital.gr/News.asp?id=1879846.

⁸ Amnesty International, 'Impunity, excessive force and links to extremist Golden Dawn blight Greek police', 3 April 2014 at <http://www.amnesty.org/en/news/impunity-excessive-force-and-links-extremist-golden-dawn-blight-greek-police-2014-04-03>.

⁹ Amnesty International, 'A Law Unto Themselves: A Culture of Abuse and Impunity in the Greek Police', April 2014, see especially section 2.3.6.

¹⁰ 'Golden Dawn: No Place in Australia', *Neos Kosmos*, 31 July 2012 at <http://neoskosmos.com/news/en/golden-dawn-no-place-in-australia>.

¹¹ Helena Smith, 'Golden Dawn Leader Jailed Ahead of Greek Criminal Trial', *The Guardian*, 3 October 2013, at <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/oct/03/golden-dawn-leader-jailed-nikos-michaloliakos>. See also Alkman Granitsas, 'Far-Right Lawmakers lose cover in Greece', *The Wall Street Journal*, 2 April 2014, at <http://online.wsj.com/news/articles/SB40001424052702303847804579477121827324890>.

¹² Ioanna Zikakou, 'Golden Dawn Branches Out into Australia', *Greek Reporter*, Australia, 18 April 2014, at <http://au.greekreporter.com/2014/04/18/golden-dawn-branches-out-into-australia/>.

¹³ Dan Oaks, 'Golden Dawn: Members of controversial Greek far-right political party to visit Australia', *ABC News Online*, 25 August 2014, <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-08-25/golden-dawn-meps-to-visit-australia/5694960>.

¹⁴ A. Papapostolou, 'Golden Dawn Nixes Name Macedonia', *Greek Reporter*, Greece, 2 January 2013, at <http://greece.greekreporter.com/2013/01/02/golden-dawn-does-not-accept-name-including-macedonia/#sthash.6ixRuPUw.dpuf>.

¹⁵ See Australian Hellenic Council website - http://www.helleniccouncil.org.au/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=73&Itemid=53. See also Australian Hellenic Council, Position Paper, 'Support for the Federal Government's position regarding diplomatic recognition of the FYROM', Prepared by Dr Panayiotis Diamadis, AHC (NSW) Secretary, June 2009.

¹⁶ Pavle Filipov Voskopoulou, above n v, p.26.

¹⁷ Commonwealth, Parliamentary Debates, House of Representatives, 17 December 1992, 4160.



NEWS IN BRIEF

Compiled and Summarized by Mitch Belichovski

On May 29 it was reported by BIRN that **Macedonia has donated** over half a million Euros along with food and other aid items to victims in Serbia, Bosnia and Croatia that were affected by the recent floods. The Macedonian Red Cross noted that EUR260,000 had been gathered through a humanitarian phone line as well as from concerts, events and theatre plays.

On June 3 it was reported by BIRN that a coalition of non government organisations and population experts are demanding a **new census** be undertaken in Macedonia following a failed attempt in 2011. The coalition has launched a campaign called "Census Now" and claims that the census is necessary for the success of regional development policies. While the government has not budgeted for a census this year the last survey showed that 64 per cent of the country was Macedonian and 25 per cent Albanian.

On June 4 BIRN reported that almost all opposition MP's have submitted their written **resignations to parliament**. The resignations followed a string of fraud accusations against Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski who won the controversial April elections. The Macedonian leaders are now contemplating holding new elections for those seats that have been vacated by the opposition.

On June 16 BIRN reported that **Macedonia's economy grew by 3.9 per cent** in the first quarter this year. The achievement is even greater bearing in mind that in 2012, Macedonia saw two consecutive quarters of negative growth as a result of the European debt crisis. The construction sector, which grew by 13.7 per cent during the same period, is seen as the main driver of the current growth rate.

On June 18 it was reported by BIRN that the Economic Chamber of Macedonia launched an initiative for a joint **purchase of shares in Thessaloniki's** maritime transport hub. Located approximately 70 kilometres from Macedonia's southern border, Thessaloniki is by far the most important sea transport hub for Macedonia. While the tender process conditions are tough the Macedonian companies must purchase at least 7 per cent of the shares currently being privatised to have a say in the ports management.

On June 19 BIRN reported that the **opposition did not show up** as the new Macedonian Government was sworn in before the Parliament. PM Gruevski noted that the new Government is a combination of youth and experience willing to invest their whole energy in the country's progress. The PM also noted finding a solution to the name dispute with Greece as well as promoting

Macedonia's interest abroad high on the agenda.

On June 23 Independent MK reported that the Government passed a set of **measures for the assistance of socially vulnerable categories**, mainly those who have a disability. One measure included free of charge reports for the legalisation of illegal buildings. The Prime Minister noted that the recipients of these reports won't lose their benefits once the buildings have been legalised. The other measures focused around improving the life of persons with a disability or handicap.

On June 23 it was reported by Independent MK that heavy rain has **destroyed the whole agriculture production** across parts of Macedonia this season. Vineyards have suffered the most, however, both tobacco and melon plants have been affected also. Risto Vuckov, a plantation protection expert, stated that "we cannot expect quality grapevine crops as rains and diseases including potash and mildew have ravaged almost all of them."

On June 23 Independent MK reported that Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia are to **open joint embassies** in South America and Africa. The same model was also proposed to Croatia and Slovenia but was rejected as the countries are EU members. Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski has announced that the purpose

of joint embassies is to have common facilities and not a common diplomacy. Some EUR20,000 would be saved annually per shared diplomatic residency.

On June 25 Independent MK reported that the Greek Foreign Minister **Evangelos Venizelos said that Macedonia's name is "not a bilateral issue but a pending international issue."** Post his last visit to Skopje Venizelos agreed with the Macedonian Prime Minister for the negotiation process to intensify according to a Greek Foreign Ministry press release. Also according to Venizelos, the process under the auspices of UN mediator Matthew Nimetz is right and appropriate.

On June 25 it was reported by Independent MK that the North-Atlantic Council, a branch of **NATO, would not be extending an accession invitation to Macedonia** to the upcoming NATO summit in Wales. Macedonia has met the membership criteria but accession has been rendered impossible until Greece lifts a veto over the naming dispute. NATO Secretary General, Anders Fogh Rasmussen confirmed the right to veto remains a privilege of the member states.

On June 27 it was reported by BIRN that the ruling party **VMRO DPMNE has said it is "willing to accept European mediation" in further talks with SDSM, the opposition party,** as the first meeting ended shortly after it began, without success. The opposition's demand for a caretaker government was flatly rejected by the Prime Minister. The ongoing dispute could damage Macedonia's EU and NATO membership hopes.

On June 30 BIRN reported that Macedonian officials will not comment over a leak that revealed an alleged **secret deal which allows the US National Security Agency (NSA) to tap into its internet data-carrying cables.** Macedonia's parliamentary commission tasked with civil control over secret services was unable to comment as it had not yet been formed after the April general elections. According to the leak the NSA is able to intercept huge volumes of private emails, phone calls and internet chats. Croatia, Romania, Hungary and Turkey are also alleged to

have the same kind of cooperation with the US.

On June 30 it was reported by Independent MK that **Greece remains the main obstacle for Macedonia's Euro-Atlantic integration.** In the last press conference within the Greek presidency with the European Union, Chief of Diplomacy Evangelos Venizelos, reported that Greece's accomplishments can be "downsized to various initiatives and not so many important projects." The Minister also reiterated that the name dispute with Macedonia is an "international issue." Following the statements, Athens has again confirmed that Greece will use all available sources within the European Council so that Macedonia is not granted a start date to negotiation talks.

On June 30 Independent MK reported that **Macedonian territory is included in the ISIS extreme five year plan** for global domination. In a map that has been widely shared on social networks, the islamist group has outlined a plan for how they would like to expand their boundaries beyond Muslim-majority countries. With brutal efficiency ISIS has carved out a large chunk of territory between Iraq and Syria. ISIS plans to take control of Balkan states extending its territories in Eastern Europe as far as Austria.

On June 30 BIRN reported that **six alleged ethnic Albanian extremists have been jailed for life for terrorism over the killings of five ethnic Macedonians in Skopje.** According to the charges, the two fugitives, Alil Demiri and Afrim Ismailovic, killed five Macedonians with automatic rifles near Skopje during Orthodox Easter in 2012, while the other five men provided logistical support. In a case that raised ethnic tensions in the country, Judge Ivica Stefanovski called for the court's decision to be received peacefully.

On July 1 it was reported by Independent MK that Macedonia will participate at the EU's frame program for research and innovation called "Horizon 2020." **Macedonia will have at its disposal over the next seven years 23 million euros intended for scientific innovation.** The EU project was signed by the

Macedonian education minister and head of the Directorate-General for research and innovation, Robert-Jan Smits. The cooperation between the EU and Macedonia is not recent, however, the program is expected to help smart, sustainable economic growth.

On July 6 Independent MK reported that **protesters dissatisfied** with the verdict against the life sentence for six defendants in what is referred to as the **"monster case"** have clashed with police in Tetovo. The protest group in Tetovo set off from Yaya Pasha Mosque and chanted abusive slogans against the prosecutor in the trial and the Minister of Interior and also chanted "UCK."

On July 6 it was reported by Independent MK that vandals and hooligans who stoned and injured police officers and damaged the Basic Court building in Skopje during **protests held against the "monster" case verdict.** Six offenders have been brought to court and ordered eight day detention and these six protesters have been transferred to the prison pending their trial. In addition, misdemeanour charges have been issued against nine persons, as well as payment orders.

On July 13 it was reported by Independent MK that **Skopje is the second most polluted city in Europe.** Skopje is found to be at the top, just behind Sarajevo, which leads as the most polluted city in Europe with an index of air pollution of 117. According to a recent analysis by the World Bank shows that 1,350 people a year die in Macedonia as a result of air pollution with fine particles (PM10). The analysis also showed that air pollution costs the economy EUR 253 million per year, or 3.2 percent of GDP.

On July 13 Independent MK reported that an **Albanian historian and proponent of a Greater Albania, Koco Danaj, calls on Albanians to unite and to clean the territories where only the Albanians live, whilst using phrases such as "Macedonia is dead and Serbia is next."** According to Danaj, Macedonia escaped breaking up in 2001 only because the Albanians signed the Ohrid Agreement that was never really accepted. The Albanian historian

believed that all Albanians support his idea. The borders of “natural Albania” should encompass territories of Albania, Kosovo, Macedonia, Serbia, Montenegro and Greece.

On July 15 BIRN reported that **Skopje is stepping closer towards gasification.** Under the terms of the planned agreement, a private partner will have to build and operate the gas grid and will be allowed to reap the profits for the first 20 years. So far Turkey’s Aksoy Energy and CPL Concordia of Italy have passed the next stage in the tendering process and the Macedonian Transport ministry is due to select a winner for the energy project in September. Construction is expected to start early next year which will allow consumers in Skopje to start using natural gas within two or three years.

On July 15 Independent MK reported that the theatre program for this year’s **Ohrid Summer Festival started with a performance of Shakespeare’s “Othello”** by the National Theatre of Bitola’s younger generation of actors and directed by Slovenian Diego de Brea. Katerina Anevska, the actress who is playing the character of Desdemon said “the experience of working with Diego de Brea was precious.” Borce Gjakovski, who performs the leading male role, said that “the scenes in the play demand constant presence by the actors regardless of whether or not they take part in the dialogue between each other. “Othello” was played at the Antique Theatre in Ohrid, one of the venues where the Ohrid Summer festival takes place.

On July 16 it was reported by Independent MK that Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski is not surprised by comments made **by German Chancellor Angela Merkel in which she stated “the unresolved problem between Macedonia and Greece regarding the name and identity is a burden for all.”** The Prime Minister mentioned that the word “identity” is not new to those who are acquainted with the problem. He further reiterated that his party VMRO-DPMNE would not support any initiatives or ideas that deny or bring into question the identity of the Macedonian people, language or nation.

On July 17 BIRN reported that Macedonia’s ruling coalition has gained a green light from parliament to press on with **constitutional changes** which include defining marriage as a strictly heterosexual union. Some non government organisations have criticised the controversial change, for instance the Woman’s Alliance said that “this would mean that discrimination against same sex couples will be set in stone.” However, socially conservative politicians and religious leaders back the amendment. VMRO-DPMNE legislator Vlatko Gjorcev said it would ensure that no one tampers with the “centuries-long tradition in Macedonia” of marriage.

On July 18 it was reported by BIRN that the **Macedonian Government plans to establish a tax haven** that will encourage wealthy corporations to move their operations to Macedonia. Financial experts have broadly welcomed the plans on the grounds that they will boost employment in the financial and legal sectors. The decision has won a mixed response, however, as the former police minister Pavle Trajanov declared “I doubt we will gain any benefit and that that financial conditions in Macedonia will improve.” Prime Minister Gruevski insisted the plan will not attract criminal money, but will boost employment. To expedite matters, the Government said it will soon propose a draft law on the matter.

On July 31 Independent MK reported that a message conveyed by mediator, Matthew Nimetz, that identity is not negotiable, has provoked strong reactions in the public. This announcement came on the back of German Chancellor Angela Merkel’s comments suggesting that identity is also at stake on the negotiation table. An international law expert, Janev Igor, believes that Merkel’s statements had no background or as speculated by some, are related to collective conspiracy. He further pointed out that the name is a legal identity within the international law thus cannot be perceived separately but as part of the national identity.

On July 31 it was reported by Independent MK that Greek online media has suggested that the revival of international interest in the name issue is a

factor that can speed up developments. Again following Matthew Nimetz’s unsuccessful visits to Skopje and Athens the Greek side is reassuring its allies and partners that the European and Euro-atlantic integration of Macedonia does not solely depend on the name issue, but the country also needs to meet a number of other criteria. **The Greek media said that Athens once again made it clear it would not accept a name with a geographical qualifier before “Republic”, but only before “Macedonia” and it has to be the name for all uses.**

On July 31 Independent MK reported that a German MP, Heinz-Joachim Barchmann, stated that **“Greece is not ready to negotiate and ignores the demands from other European countries to end the name dispute and allow Macedonia to continue its European path.”** While Barchmann noted that Matthew Nimetz’s 20 year long mediation experience is more than enough to solve the issue, “it would have pleased him greatly if Nimetz’s recent visit to Skopje and Athens had brought something new!” The MP also stated that during his visit to Athens in March this year he got the impression that Greece is reluctant to continue talks and allow Macedonia to continue walking on its European path.

On August 5 BIRN reported that **Macedonians top the list of foreigners applying for Bulgarian citizenship.** “This grants them easier access to EU countries” said Sofia’s embassy in Skopje. Although the total number of Macedonians who have gained Bulgarian citizenship has not been revealed, unofficial estimates put it somewhere between 40,000 and 100,000 since 2001. Out of some 7,800 applicants who filed requests for citizenship this year, 3,900 were from Macedonia. Unlike Bulgaria, citizens of EU candidate country Macedonia have free tourist access to most EU countries but no right to work there.

On August 5 Independent MK reported that the **Macedonian Ministry of Finance issued denationalisation bonds.** The bonds worth EUR 10 million will be used as compensation of denationalisation rulings for the period January 1-31, 2014.

According to the ministry the citizens can use the bonds prior to their maturity, for stocks and shares in companies owned by the Agency for Privatisation among others. The Ministry of Finance has thus far issued 13 emissions of denationalisation bonds totalling EUR 324 million.

On August 8 Dnevnik reported that on a new YouTube video **Greek soldiers and members of special artillery units are shouting offensive slogans** such as “we will drink the blood of the Turks, Skopjans and Albanians” and “St Sofia will be Greek, we will occupy Asia Minor” as well as “we will tear off the head of any Turk we come across” during recent joint military exercises in Cyprus with the Cypriot Army. There has been no official reaction to date from the Greek Defence Minister.

On August 11 it was reported by Independent MK that the Macedonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs summoned the Greek Ambassador to Macedonia, Teoharis Lalakos and presented him with a **note of protest regarding the last activity**

of the Greek Army Special Forces during a joint military exercise with the Army of Cyprus. The Foreign Ministry requested for the Greek authorities to take urgent measures for condemning such phenomena and trends that are not in the spirit of European values. In addition, a note of protest was also handed over to Ambassador Lalakos **against the practice of putting stickers on Macedonian vehicles over the MK code** on the licence plates.

On August 12 Independent MK reported that **Greece has not responded to any of the protest notes** sent by the Macedonian Government after the incidents which took place at the Greek-Macedonian border or on the territory of Greece involving Macedonian citizens. Minister for Foreign Affairs Nikola Poposki, noted that while in diplomacy, the practice is to respond to the notes or react in a certain way, even a lack of response after so many reactions is an answer in itself. According to him, such behaviour leaves room for concern because it is not conducive to promoting European values in the region.

On August 26 BIRN reported that **ethnic Albanians brawled in the Macedonian Parliament**. According to a DUI legislator, Artan Grubi, the fight broke out after an MP from DPA, Orhan Ibrahim, accused his rivals from the DUI of not taking care of their Albanian constituents. To back up his claim, he said that the ethnic Albanian village of Lipkovo still has no drinking water, even though the artificial lake next to it supplies water to the nearby town of Kumanovo. Confrontations between MP's using fists are not unusual in the Macedonian parliament.

On September 10 it was reported by BIRN that **another ethnic Albanian from Macedonia was reported killed in Syria**. The news of twenty-three year old Xhelal Samakova came after parliament last week rushed through amendments to the criminal law to bring jail sentences for Macedonians fighting with parliamentary organisations abroad. According to Albanian-language media Xhelal was fighting with a rebel group against the regime of Syrian President Bashar al Assad. ■

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Letters



1/8/2014

Dear SBS,

On Shane Delia's Spice Journey - Turkey S1 Ep1- Ottomania - Food Fit For Sultans, which aired on 31 July 2014 on SBS 1, a map was shown at the beginning of the program which purported to show Turkey and the neighbouring region. That map included a mythical Greater Albanian state which had swallowed up the Republic of Macedonia and parts of the Republic of Serbia and the Republic of Montenegro.

As you would be well aware, Albania does not share a border with Bulgaria. Its eastern border is with Kosovo, the Republic of Macedonia and Greece. By allowing this map to be shown the producers of this program have caused serious offence not only to me and my family, but to the Macedonian community in Australia, especially as there are Albanian parties and organizations which claim a large part of the territory of the Republic of Macedonia as part of a putative Greater Albania and regularly publish maps of this desired Greater Albanian state.

SBS and the producers of this program owe the Macedonian community of Australia a public apology which should be aired prior to the next episode of Mr Delia's program. In addition, a current map of the region showing the Republic of Macedonia within its current borders should also be displayed before or during the airing of the next episode.

Yours sincerely

Dr Chris Popov
Executive Member
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21 August 2014

Dr Chris Popov
Executive Member
Australian-Macedonian Human Rights Committee Inc.

By email: cpopov@netspace.net.au

Dear Dr Popov,

I refer to your emails of 1 August and 8 August regarding the map shown at the beginning of Shane Delia's Spice Journey on 31 July (Episode 1). As you have pointed out, the map did not represent the region between Albania and Bulgaria correctly.

SBS apologises for this oversight as we understand the importance of correctly referencing country borders and names.

On receipt of your email SBS and the production company took immediate steps to remove the episode from its catch-up service, SBS On Demand, and to make corrections to the map before Episode 2 went to air on 7 August. A corrected version of the map was used in Episode 2 (Map 1 - attached). SBS then made a decision to focus the graphic in on Turkey and to remove most of the references to the surrounding countries. The corrected versions of Episode 1 and Episode 2 were made available on SBS On Demand.

By the time Episode 3 was due for broadcast on 14 August, SBS had received corrected versions of the map for all episodes. These maps will be used for episodes yet to air, and for all future broadcasts. For example repeat broadcasts of Episode 1 will show the following map (Map 2 - attached).

I have asked the Head of Commissioning, Alison Sharman, to raise this matter with our commissioning editors to ensure that all production staff and external production companies are aware of the importance of correct referencing in maps and graphics.

Thank you for bringing this matter to our attention as we appreciate the opportunity to make this correction.

Sincerely,

Todd Loydell
Head of Government and Regulatory Affairs
SBS Corporate Affairs

A story still growing: We thought six billion was a lot of stories to tell... until the world population officially clocked seven billion, and we re-set our sights on a brand new number. Seven billion stories (and counting) might seem like a big ask, but if anyone's up to this task, it's SBS, the world's most multicultural broadcaster, attuned to the diverse needs of a growing nation.

Seven Billion Stories and counting...

Attachment

Map 1: Shane Delia's Spice Journey – Turkey (Episode 2, 7 August 2014, SBS ONE)



Map 2: Shane Delia's Spice Journey – Turkey (Episode 1 corrected)



Seven Billion Stories and counting...

OMO "ILINDEN" PIRIN—LETTER TO EU PARLIAMENTARIANS

Response to a letter circulated to European MPs by Angel Dzambaski, ultranationalist member of the European Parliament—29 July 2014



It is sad indeed that the European Parliament contains ultranationalists such as the representative of VMRO-BND, Angel Dzambaski, who is known in Bulgaria for his racist statements regarding Roma and the insults he has directed against Macedonians. It is therefore no surprise that he is abusing his new position in order to spread hatred and disinformation in the European Parliament. According to him there are no Macedonians in Macedonia which has “historically always been predominantly populated by Bulgarians”. This same person, not surprisingly, also denies our existence as Macedonians in Bulgaria.

Why are we paying any attention to a person with such a primitive world view? Because Dzambaski's statements, even though they emanate from an ultra-nationalist, in essence reflect the views and thoughts of the majority or almost all Bulgarian European MPs. His letter, if nothing else, serves as a good example of the extreme, irrational nationalism which is displayed in Bulgaria vis-à-vis the Macedonians, irrespective of whether they live in Macedonia or Bulgaria.

We have always stated that we respect and support the rights of all minorities, irrespective of their size and, in that regard, the rights of the Bulgarian minority in Macedonia. If the discrimination that Dzambaski speaks of did in fact exist in Macedonia, we would protest against it as we consider that all discrimination is impermissible and something that should concern us. Fortunately, however, the status of Bulgarians in Macedonia is not as Dzambaski describes it. Proof of that is the fact that not one international human rights organization has noted any discrimination and mistreatment of Bulgarians in Macedonia.

It is for this reason that we have come to the unavoidable conclusion that what we are confronted with is a sick fantasy typical of Bulgarian nationalists: namely, given their conviction that Macedonians and a Macedonia nation do not exist, they justify the absence or scarcity of a Bulgarian consciousness in Macedonia by pointing to an invisible reign of terror which exists only in their minds.

We are convinced that each and every

minority in Bulgaria would give a lot to be able to enjoy the opportunities and rights which the law provides for minorities in the Republic of Macedonia. In Macedonia not only is the Framework Agreement (which in Bulgaria exists only on paper) implemented consistently, but every minority which comprises 20% of the population in either the whole country or in a municipality obtains the right to have its language treated as an official language at the corresponding level of government, as well as certain special rights contained in this same Agreement.

In contrast to the mere five minutes of news in Turkish on one television station in Bulgaria, in Macedonia there is one television station devoted entirely to minorities, as well as a series of programs supported by the state on other television and radio stations, etc. While in Macedonia education to secondary school level is carried out in the language of the minorities, in Bulgaria the study of one's mother tongue is provided as an optional subject for only three minorities and even then text books have still not been provided for this

purpose. In this regard, we need not mention the political representation accorded at the national and local level to minorities in Macedonia.

It is pathetic that the representative of a country such as Bulgaria, which treats its minorities in such a negative fashion and in which recent governments held the official view that no minorities exist in Bulgaria, should speak so arrogantly and insultingly of a country like Macedonia. It would be much better if Dzambaski and the remaining Bulgarian MPs were to go to Macedonia and learn how minorities are respected and have their rights safeguarded, rather than making provocative and insulting statements about Macedonia, as has been their practice to date.

The difference between Dzambaski and the remaining Bulgarian MPs is not one of substance, however he is more sincere and open in what he says, while the others understand very well that by making such similar absurd statements they will compromise not only their inhumane cause and primitive ideology, but themselves as well in the eyes of their colleagues. This is precisely why those other MPs try to conceal their politics of negation under the guise of slogans deemed more acceptable in Europe. An example of that is the insistence on "joint celebrations" of important historical events with which they seek to impose Bulgaria's national mythology on Macedonia. It is not by chance that Bulgaria does not want any other country to attend these events apart from Macedonia and Bulgaria and has never to date sought the holding of joint celebrations with any other neighbouring country, except Macedonia. It has not done so because its demand is inspired by intentions which are neither humane or European; namely the desire to present the history of Macedonia as Bulgarian, as part and parcel of the continuing Bulgarian anti-

Macedonian campaign which began during the time of the Communist dictatorship and to deny the existence of a Macedonian nation, language, history, minority, etc, regardless of the fact that it did in fact recognise them in the past. Dzambaski's letter is a perfect illustration of this approach.

Moreover, the slogans employed by Bulgarian Euro MPs as part of their rhetoric in the past decade are equally fallacious and delusional. They speak of "good neighbourliness", but take that to mean the obligation on the part of Macedonia to satisfy every Bulgarian desire and whim; they complain about an alleged anti-Bulgarian campaign by the Macedonian media, when what they demand in essence is for the Macedonian government to interfere with the freedom of media outlets and to prohibit them from highlighting the dire situation of the Macedonian minority in Bulgaria or to publish articles and reports critical of Bulgaria (this is precisely what constitutes an "anti-Bulgarian campaign" for them). The same applies to the absurd matter of the "theft of history" (by which they mean the non-acceptance of Bulgarian national mythology regarding Macedonia), through which, in reality, they demand, under the pretext of an alleged defence of the historical truth, to forcibly curtail the right to freedom of thought and academic research in Macedonia for the benefit of their national dogmas. They seek a new treaty of good neighbourliness with Macedonia which includes the demand that Macedonia renounce its right to defend the Macedonians in Bulgaria and agree to a process of non-reciprocity to its own disadvantage.

By taking advantage of its position as a member of the EU, Bulgaria has forgotten about the support provided by Macedonia for its membership of the EU and has attempted to impose extraordinary and anti-democratic conditions on Macedonia: namely,

that she exercise political interference in the area of freedom of the press and other media, freedom of speech and thought, interfere in free academic research, relinquish any opportunity and right to defend the rights of the Macedonian national minority in Bulgaria and to agree to relativise the existence of its own nation.

We would like to bring to your attention the fact that Bulgaria, a member of the EU, herself violates the rights of minorities. The Macedonian minority in Bulgaria is still denied and the registration of Macedonian organizations has been rendered impossible, despite numerous verdicts of the European Court for Human Rights. Moreover, self-determination as a Macedonian in Bulgaria is still treated as an act of national treason and Macedonians are still the objects of unpunished hate speech, sometimes at the highest official levels of government. We appeal to you to consider and examine our predicament, to defend our rights as Macedonians in Bulgaria, as European citizens who are discriminated against and humiliated by European authorities, instead of heeding the arguments of ultranationalists and people such as Dzambaski whose views are not only highly retrograde, anachronistic and racist but a serious threat to the values which European institutions are founded on.

On behalf of the Macedonian national minority in Bulgaria OMO "Ilinden"- PIRIN, member of the European Free Alliance. ■



IN RESPONSE TO THE TRIUMPHALIZING OF IGNORANCE

By Dr. Stojko Stojkov, Translated by Dr. Chris Popov

To the Bulgarian media & the Macedonian media 19 August 2014

The self-proclaimed expert on the Macedonian Issue, Bozhidar Dimitrov, in his open letter to the Bulgarian media, entitled "On the occasion of the speculations in Skopje regarding the names 'Macedonia' and 'Macedonians'", presents some of his own views, mixed as they are with a large quantity of delusions and ignorance, which are truly astonishing to a good student and disgraceful and inexcusable for a man who has pretensions to being an academic. Of course, there is nothing surprising in all that for specialists in the field, however I am not writing this for him, but for his regular victims-Bulgarian readers.

According to Dimitrov: "From the seventh century BC to 148 BC Macedonia was the name of an ancient country whose territory was located entirely within the territory of

present-day Northern Greece", a claim with which he obviously wants to serve Greek needs in the dispute with Macedonia. . However, he does Greece a disservice simply because this claim does not reflect the truth. The territory of that State even before the time of Phillip the Macedonian encompassed large parts of the territory of today's Republic of Macedonia (the regions of Strumica, Gevgelija, Pelagonija ...), and from the time of Philip to the demise of the Macedonian state –almost the entire territory of today's Republic of Macedonia.

He claims that "World academic opinion considers almost unanimously that the Macedonians were one of the Greek tribes (such as the Spartans, Thebans, Athenians)" - but in fact, world academic opinion is divided on this issue. However, before sending Dimitrov off to read the works of overseas authors, I would recommend that he read what prominent Bulgarian authorities, such as

Academician Gavril Katsarov and Professor Veselin Beshevliev have written on the matter - both argue that the ancient Macedonians were not Greeks.

Further on Dimitrov obviously believes the fact that the Greek language was the official language in the Roman province of Macedonia (of which he believes there were three, even though there were never more than two) is some type of argument that is relevant to the issues raised, forgetting (of course, if he knows at all) that that language was the official language in Thrace, as well as in Asia Minor etc and that this has very little to do with the spoken language of the population. In that regard, he claims that during the Roman period, the concept Macedonians lost its ethnic content, apparently forgetting that a little earlier he claims that there was no such thing.

Dimitrov also displays a lack of education in relation to the Middle

Ages. His assertion that the terms "Macedonia" and "Macedonians" disappeared from Macedonia at that time is not true - they continued to be encountered on that territory and especially in Salonika, even though the creation of the theme of Macedonia in Thrace (not in the 6th century as Dimitrov misleads, but at the end of the eighth century!) led to more frequent use of these terms/concepts in Thrace. His claim that there were Bulgarians among the population of Macedonia is manipulative - up until the thirteenth century the term Bulgarian in Thrace was not encountered at all and even after that time was an extreme rarity. For some reason he considers that "Macedonian" was an "official title" of Basil II, who was not called or known by that name- that was the nickname of his grandfather Basil I and "Macedonian" was never a "title". Dimitrov remembers to point to the creation of a theme called Bulgaria after 1018 with its centre in Skopje (and including territories mostly in present-day Macedonia, Serbia and Albania), however, obviously he is not in any position to notice that at the time when this theme existed, and generally during the period of Byzantine rule, academic sources do not mention "Bulgarians" in Thrace and Moesia.

He is confused in regard to the Ottoman period, arguing that all people considered the population in Macedonia to be Bulgarian, which is simply not true (but that's what happens when a person reads selected convenient sources). Well, maybe he is not aware of existing documents which show the existence of a Macedonian proto-nationalism in the 18th and 19th centuries, however, he should know a little more about the more recent period and not shamelessly mislead people that "Macedonianism is the brainchild of Serbian political thought. And, more specifically, of the Serbian politician Stojan Novakovic." This is totally

false! Let me just remind Bozhidar Dimitrov of one (and there are a lot of them) document for which he for the last fifteen years has owed the Macedonian magazine "Macedonian Sonce" one million lev; namely, the article by Petko Slaveikov of 1871 (18 years before Novakovic!), in which he not only describes in detail Macedonian national consciousness, but even introduces the concept "Macedonist"¹

I understand that he is uninformed and not well-read, however if Bozhidar Dimitrov no longer wishes to be an uninformed writer in Bulgarian historiography, it's time for him to begin to read. Given his current level of understanding, it is ridiculous for him to make observations and to lecture whomsoever. Otherwise, he will continue to show himself up- something which (to his credit) he does on a large scale.

And let me in conclusion paraphrase the words of Bozhidar Dimitrov: At various times the terms "Bulgaria" and "Bulgarians" have meant quite different things, sometimes not having anything in common.

But is this really the reason and an argument to deny the Bulgarian nation, as Dimitrov does with the Macedonian nation?! And for us to create hatred today because of different interpretations of what happened a hundred, a thousand or more years ago....

Assistant Professor Dr. Stojko Stojkov. Translated from Macedonian by Dr. Chris Popov of the AMHRC. ■

1. In 1999 Bozhidar Dimitrov stated that he would give one million Bulgarian leva- about 500,000 euros- to anyone who produced a document showing that the population of Macedonia was Macedonian and not Bulgarian before 1944. The Macedonian newspaper "Makedonsko Sonce" immediately produced such a document; namely an article written in 1871 by Petko R.

Slaveikov, the Bulgarian awakener, poet and director of the Bulgarian propaganda drive in Macedonia, for the Makedonia (Constantinople) newspaper entitled "The Macedonian Question,". In this article he revealed the existence of the Macedonian movement and question. He explained that the problem was not new, that they had begun to hear about it more than 10 years ago and that it had not been taken seriously by the Bulgarians. More recent conversations with certain Macedonians had revealed that it was not "a matter of just empty words, but an idea which many wanted to give concrete form to in real life". He stated that "it was difficult and saddening for them to hear such talk as the matter was very delicate, especially given the situation they found themselves in ". He added that "today the matter is out in the open, due to the carelessness of one of our comrades and we are therefore obliged to report on the situation"

Three years later, the Bulgarian Exarch sent Slaveikov to Macedonia to inquire about growing sentiment against his church. In February 1874, Slaveikov reported from Salonika that the Macedonian people wished to develop independently of the Bulgarian Exarchate. He informed him of the intention of the people of Voden to break their links with the Exarchate and to establish the Ohrid Archbishopric as an independent Macedonian church. Slaveikov expressly confirmed the dissatisfaction in Macedonia with the Bulgarian church by pointing to the resistance to Eastern Bulgarian speech in literature"and at the same time "the formation of the idea of stressing the local Macedonian dialect as a literary language and the creation of a Macedonian church hierarchy". Slaveikov feared that the Macedonian struggle for cultural, church and educational independence would not be able to be eliminated which led him to ask the Russian ambassador to Constantinople, Count Ignatiev, "to visit Macedonia and personally tame passions"

When Dimitrov was presented with Slaveikov's 1871 letter by the editors of Makedonski Sonce"he reneged on his offer to pay one million leva and called them "simpletons". He has continued making the offer since 1999, as he refuses to accept any document presented by Macedonians as authentic.

AMHRC CONDEMNS MANU'S INTENTION TO MARK ILINDEN TOGETHER WITH BAN

Melbourne, Australia—July 3, 2014

In May 2014, the head of MANU, Academician Vlado Kambovski, stated that this leading Macedonian academic institution intends to mark the Macedonian national holiday, *Ilinden*, together with the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (BAN). The stated intention is for “working groups” to be formed so that academics from both sides can discuss the problems they are faced with in an attempt to break down the political barriers which exist between Macedonia and Bulgaria. During his visit to Macedonia, the head of BAN, Stefan Vodenicharov, made the following statement: “interpretation of historical events must be based exclusively on the facts. The facts must be examined and the arguments heard, so that no one can interpret history as he or she wishes. Academics must talk about history, not politicians. For that purpose we agreed to form working groups which will discuss precisely the problems we are face with.”

The Australian-Macedonian Human Rights Committee does not have any objection to more intensive cooperation and contacts between MANU and BAN and the carrying out of joint projects and academic studies; however this can only take place under one specific condition. Such collaboration must be based on the recognition and respect of a distinct Macedonian identity,

language and culture by BAN. The official view of BAN and the Bulgarian state is that Macedonians are Bulgarians and that the Macedonian language is a dialect of Bulgarian. Consequently, Vodenicharov’s abovementioned statement does not offer any hope that BAN’s views have changed or will change in the near future. On the contrary, the abovementioned statement clearly indicates that the starting point for BAN in any working groups to be formed will be that “Macedonians are Bulgarians” and that BAN will attempt to “reach an understanding” on the basis of this “historical fact”.

We consider the holding of meetings of such working groups on the day or around the day of the Ilinden Uprising with interlocutors such as academics and historians from BAN to be extremely naïve, offensive and against the interests of the Macedonian people and state. We ask ourselves whether MANU also intends to hold talks with the Greek Academy of Sciences about the character of the Balkan Wars of 1912-13 or about the persecution of the Macedonians in Aegean Macedonia in an attempt to “reach an understanding” and to display “a European approach” when seeking to resolve other contentious matters? We

condemn all forms of collaboration with BAN on sensitive matters such as Macedonian identity, language and history until such time as this



Ilinden Memorial in the Republic of Macedonia

Bulgarian institution publicly recognizes the Macedonian nation and language.

Even more worrying is the alacrity with which Macedonian President Gjorgje Ivanov proposed to Bulgarian president Plevneliev that the Declaration of Good Neighbourliness signed between Macedonia and Bulgaria in 1999 be transformed into a Treaty of Good Neighbourliness. As is widely known, by means of this declaration, the then government of Ljupcho Georgievski renounced the constitutional obligation to defend the rights of the Macedonians in Bulgaria and at the same time agreed to use the formulation “the Macedonian Language according to the Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia” in the text of the declaration, thereby allowing the reality of the Macedonian language to be called into question.

Recently, Bulgarian president Plevneliev, having been emboldened by the concessions made by MANU

and President Gjorgje Ivanov, proposed to President Ivanov that this year there be a joint celebration of Ilinden and moreover, firstly in Bulgaria and then in Macedonia. This insidious proposal is but a continuation of the decades-long Bulgarian attempts to show that “Macedonians are Bulgarians” and is based on the principle of “one people in two states”. Acceptance of the Bulgarian offer to jointly celebrate the national day of the Macedonian people would, in the current circumstances, also mean the acceptance of the negationist Bulgarian view that there exists neither a distinct Macedonian people or a Macedonian language. Therefore, the Australian-Macedonian Human Rights Committee appeals to the Macedonian government and the president of Macedonia to unconditionally reject the offer to celebrate Macedonia’s national and state-building public holiday together with Bulgaria. Such a joint celebration could only be contemplated if

Bulgaria recognizes the Macedonian people and language in the Republic of Macedonia and the ethnic Macedonians in Pirin Macedonia and other parts of Bulgaria.

We appeal to the authorities in the Republic of Macedonia to firmly defend Macedonian identity and language and reject all attempts to change the name of the country and Macedonian identity, language and culture, instead of making concessions in an attempt to gain Bulgarian support for its integration into Euro-Atlantic structures. In conclusion, we would like to stress that the most basic European and civilizational value and inviolable right is to foster in a dignified manner one’s own identity and culture as the basis for equitable collaboration and integration into the world community.■

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AMHRC CALLS UPON AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT TO DENY GREEK “NEO NAZI” GROUP MP_s ENTRY INTO AUSTRALIA

Melbourne, Australia - August 27, 2014

The Australian Macedonian Human Rights Committee (AMHRC) is deeply concerned about reports that European Parliament MPs from the Greek political party *Golden Dawn*, Eleftherios Synadinos and Georgios Epitideios, are set to visit Australia in October in order to “raise funds and increase awareness among Greek-Australians” according to a statement by *Golden Dawn's* Australian representative.

At present, the *Golden Dawn* political party has no less than 18 members in the Greek Parliament and 3 seats in the European Parliament. The party preaches an openly “neo-Nazi” platform, promoting the supremacy of the Greek nation and hatred of others. According to a report submitted by the *Greek Helsinki Monitor* (an Athens based human rights organisation) to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racism and Discrimination (UN CERD), *Golden Dawn* is “openly neo-Nazi, anti-Semitic, racist and white supremacist and have been involved in many violent incidents against migrants, Macedonians ... as well as in desecration of Jewish

monuments” (See full GHM submission here: <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cerd/cerds75.htm>).

In the Greek Parliament, MPs belonging to the *Golden Dawn* party frequently refer to Macedonians as “Gypsy-Skopians” (a highly offensive term of abuse) and call for the destruction of the Macedonian state. On the 4th of June 2009, *Golden Dawn* members forcibly disrupted the launch of a Greek-Macedonian dictionary in Athens by the ethnic Macedonian political party in Greece, *Ouranio Toxo* (EFA-Rainbow Party), threatened the participants, damaged equipment and destroyed promotional materials. The party regularly threatens and harasses activists belonging to Greece’s Macedonian minority, deeming them to be a “traitorous fifth column” simply because they demand respect for their basic human rights.

While such manifestations of intolerance and racism may be acceptable to *Golden Dawn* supporters and more widely to certain elements within Greek society itself,

they have absolutely no place in Australian society.

The AMHRC calls on the Minister for Immigration, the Hon. Scott Morrison MP, to take action to prevent the abovementioned *Golden Dawn* MPs from visiting Australia for the purpose of disseminating their racist propaganda. Under Section 501 of the *Australian Migration Act 1958*, the Minister has the power to refuse entry into Australia of persons who do not meet the character test as defined in the Act. We strongly believe that no sitting MP in the Greek or European Parliaments belonging to the *Golden Dawn* party or any office bearer of the *Golden Dawn* party would meet the character test requirements as defined in subsection (6) of Section 501. Namely, we believe that there is strong evidence to support the view that in the event that any such person as described above were allowed to enter or remain in Australia, they would:

- (iii) vilify a segment of the Australian community; or
- (iv) incite discord in the Australian community or in a segment of that community; or
- (v) represent a danger to the Australian community or to a segment of that community, whether by way of being liable to become involved in activities that are disruptive to, or in violence threatening harm to, that community or segment, or in any other way.

The AMHRC also appeals to all community organisations in Australia, especially those of the Greek and Jewish communities, to join this call from within the Australian Macedonian community for the abovementioned European Parliament *Golden Dawn* MPs and indeed all *Golden Dawn* MPs and representatives to be denied entry into Australia. ■

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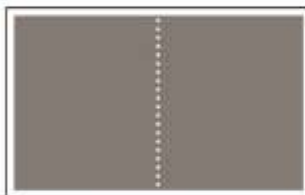
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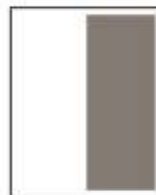
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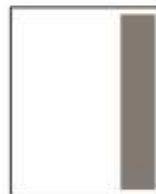
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Victor Bivell

MY ADVENTURES IN DARKEST EUROPE

By Victor Bivell

Many citizens of Western countries such as the United States, Canada and Australia believe that their country has a good relationship with Greece, yet Greece regularly denies US, Canadian and Australian citizens entry into its borders, and has done so for many years. The people who are denied entry are those who originate from northern Greece but are of ethnic Macedonian, not ethnic Greek, ancestry. Thus the basis for the discrimination is race.

This practice is common. Over the past 50 years there have been thousands of incidents where people of ethnic Macedonian background have been denied entry into Greece. This Greek Government policy is one which most people, as they find out about it, invariably find abhorrent, and it has rightly been criticized over many years by all of the world's major human rights organizations.

Although political circles in the USA, Canada, Australia and other countries with expatriate Macedonians from northern Greece know about this practice, no government has been prepared to take up the cause. The Australian Government, for example, is well aware of the practice, but does nothing about it, neither in terms of putting pressure on Greece to change its policy, nor to assist affected individuals.

The basis for Greece's behaviour is its 1912 invasion of half of the territory of Ottoman Macedonia during the First Balkan War and its later annexation of this territory, which at the time was overwhelmingly peopled by people of non-Greek ethnicity - including Macedonians, Turks,

Bulgarians, Albanians, Vlachs, Jews, and many others.

Greece has "pacified" this multi-ethnic territory through a long term Hellenization program that has included massive population "exchanges" with Turkey and Bulgaria, and policies of economic underdevelopment combined with ruthless political suppression that have seen many tens of thousands of the local inhabitants migrate to the USA, Canada, Australia and elsewhere.

The Greek Civil War in 1945-49 and the associated Macedonian Freedom War in Aegean Macedonia (northern Greece), where many local Macedonians gave their support to autonomy or independence from Greece, saw many more local Macedonians leave their homeland, some as political refugees, some in the aftermath as economic refugees.

Many of these Macedonians have never been allowed to return, even over half a century later. Over this entire period the Greek government has consistently and assiduously practised a policy that has denied many Macedonians the right to return to their birthplaces, even for short family and social visits.

The Greek Government has excluded three types of ethnic Macedonians: refugees from the Greek Civil War including over twenty thousand children who were evacuated for safety reasons, human rights activists who are of Macedonian background and have campaigned for human rights for the remaining ethnic Macedonians in

northern Greece, and Macedonians who on their passports have their place of birth, such as their village, under its Macedonian name instead of the newer Greek name.

Many of these Macedonians, particularly in the first two categories, have been placed on a “black list”. The existence of this “black list” has been well known for decades, and I had cause to wonder if I too was on the list when my wife and I planned to visit northern Greece as part of our honeymoon in October 1996.

Both my parents, my grandparents and all of my forebears as far as I am aware were from the village of Neret. After the Greek invasion and annexation, the village was given the Greek name of Polipotamos. My parents left their village for Australia in 1955 and in due course became Australian citizens. They spent the rest of their lives in Australia and never returned to their village, even for a holiday. My wife and I planned to spend two or three nights in Greece and to visit the village, which is less than 20 kilometres from the border with the Republic of Macedonia.

I had previously visited the village for a day in 1988. But at that time I still had a Greek surname and was not politically active. By 1996 I had published three books in English on human rights in northern Greece - *What Europe Has Forgotten: The Struggle of the Aegean Macedonians*; *The Rising Sun in the Balkans: The Republic of Macedonia*; and *Macedonian Agenda*. My publishing business, Politecon Publications, was also the Australian agent for the 1994 Human Rights Watch report *Denying Ethnic Identity: The Macedonians of Greece*.

At the time I was well aware that there was a possibility that I was on the “Greek Black List” and so I took several precautions to minimize the possibility of arousing Greek hostility at the border.

For example, I knew through my human rights work that any literature or symbol related to “Macedonia” or to the “Republic of Macedonia” would attract the attention of the Greek border guards and would probably be confiscated or damaged. In many instances such literature had been reason enough for the border officials to deny the bearer entry into Greece.

I had brought to Europe examples of my three books plus a fourth, a translation into English of the novel *Black Seed*, which at the time was newly printed but not yet released. I left all these books in Bitola, the last town before the Greek-Macedonian border, with the sister-in-law of a fellow Australian human rights campaigner. I will never forget our meeting that morning where we had coffee and I handed over all the copies of my books for safe keeping. I had come half way around the world, from Sydney to London, Paris, Rome, and Skopje, but now, to enter Greece, the so called “cradle of Western civilization”, I had to leave my books at the gate. I had a sense that I was leaving enlightened Europe behind and was truly about to enter an intellectually and morally dark country.

Soon after on that morning, October 24, 1996, my wife and I arrived at the Greek border. We pulled up at the border crossing in our rented car and entered the building. We were the only people there at that time except for the Greek officials. The official looked at our passports and after some anxious moments on my part he finally motioned for us to move onto the baggage inspection area a few metres further along the counter. However, no one was in attendance there and after we had been waiting for about a minute the official, who looked as if he had been inputting our data into his computer, suddenly called out “Australie” and motioned for us to come back.

Another official arrived, a woman, and the first official began asking me a number of questions about myself, my parents and my grandparents.

It transpired that the computer held quite a few personal details about me such as my parents' names and where they had lived in Greece. I found this out because the border guard who spoke English asked me the names of my father and mother, the names of my father's mother and father, my father's place of birth, the Greek surname under which he left Greece, and my parent's village. He did this, he said, to cross-check that I was the same person on the computer list.

When they specifically asked “Where was your father born?”, I answered “Florina”, the Greek name for the Macedonian town of Lerin which is the town closest to my parents' village. At that point the eyes of the two officials met, as if to say “He is one of them (a local Macedonian)”.

The man said my details, such as date and place of birth, matched the description of someone on his computer. This person also had a very similar name to me. The name he gave was my Greek surname - the name the Greek Government gave our family when they replaced Macedonian surnames with Greek surnames.

I was born in Australia, and had an Australian passport with my new Australianized name, having changed my surname from the Greek in 1992, yet the computer was able to make a match.

He also asked if I had tried to enter Greece in 1995, which I had not, but it transpired that that could have been the date when the entry onto the list was made.

My wife and I were then asked to step into the back office. Inside the room there were two more officials. I took one to be the manager of the

checkpoint and the other to be a secret service agent or detective type. There was further questioning - in English as I speak no Greek - about my parents and grandparents, and why I wanted to enter Greece.

I was honest in all my answers, explaining that my wife and I were on our honeymoon and wanted to visit my parents' village for just two or three days and would then leave Greece.

However, they said that my name was on a list and I could not enter Greece. My wife could enter, but not me. I was forbidden. I asked why many times, but they would give no reason.

my forebears are known to have lived.

On our way back, the Macedonian official at the Macedonian checkpoint could sense my state of mind and when I told him that I was not allowed to enter Greece he turned and spent some long moments staring towards the Greek border. Barely an hour after leaving my books behind, I was back at my friend's sister-in-law's place to pick them up.

My wife and I returned to the Greek border post the next morning but the officials confirmed that they had been in contact with Athens and that I was forbidden to enter Greece.

ancestral homeland and wonder which dot was our village.

Back in Australia, I made an effort to find out the reason. I faxed a letter to the US Embassy in Athens, but received no response. I telephoned the Greek Ambassador in Australia, but received only a lecture on why "Macedonia is Greek". I telephoned a head official of the European Union mission in Australia but he was pompous and did not want to hear about my issue. I wrote to the human rights organization Greek Helsinki Monitor in Greece and while they were sympathetic they said they could not assist and suggested I contact the



Bivell's passport as stamped by the Greek border official on 24 October 1996

The border officials said I was on the list and therefore they could not allow me to enter.

As I had done nothing wrong, and had given them total cooperation and truthful answers to all their questions, I asked that they fax to Athens to check whether there had been a mistake and whether I could enter Greece. They said they would.

Meanwhile they stamped my passport with the Greek word "AKYPON" which translates into "forbidden" or from my point of view "banished".

My wife and I had to turn back, deeply disappointed that at this most important time in our lives we could not visit the village where my grandparents and parents grew up and the only place on Earth where any of

The previous evening I had rung an uncle in Lerin and he and his wife met us at the border coffee shop and we had coffee and a long chat. My uncle spoke to one of the Greek officials, who came over and spoke to me in Macedonian. He knew that I had changed my "Greek" surname, and also that I had been involved in a Macedonian human rights organization in Australia, leading me to believe that such information about me may be on file in Athens. Although he was friendly, he could not assist me.

And so it transpired that the closest I got to the village was a week later on the plane from Rome to Sydney, which by coincidence or luck flew over northern Greece and I could for some minutes look down on my

Australian government. I had already contacted the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs, both by letter and telephone, and in the end received a bureaucratic form letter saying that it was up to Greece who they let into the country and that I may be again denied entry in the future. The response was very unhelpful and disappointing. A couple of years later I tried again, this time writing to the Australian prime minister, John Howard, but was given the same bureaucratic brush-off.

The only official recognition of my experience came through a friend in Perth who unknown to me notified the Helsinki Watch office in Macedonia. This led to an official acknowledgement in the 1997 Annual Report On Greece by the International Helsinki Federation for Human

Rights. This reads:

“On 24 October 1996, Victor Bivell, an Australian citizen, was denied entry to Greece. He and his wife were on their honeymoon and wanted to visit the village of Victor Bivell’s parents for a few days. Bivell is the manager of Pollitecon Publications (Australia) which has published or distributed books about the Macedonian minority in Greece.”

With no official explanation for why I was not allowed in, I can only speculate about the reason and try to draw inferences from minimal data. I believe I was not allowed into Greece for one or more of several reasons: the books I have published that deal with the lack of human rights for Macedonians in northern Greece, my involvement with the Aegean Macedonian Association of Australia which made numerous human rights submissions to the Australian Government, that I was a spokesperson for the Macedonian community in Australia in 1994 when recognition of the Republic of Macedonia by the Australian Government led to the arson of a number of Macedonian churches and other property in Australia. I also believe there may be a connection with my publication of the book *The Rising Sun in The Balkans: The Republic of Macedonia*, which was authored by the Turkish International Affairs Agency. The publication of this book in May 1995 coincides with one of the dates mentioned by the border official which is possibly the date my name was put on the list. And over the years I have noted especial sensitivity by some Greeks to this book based on its Turkish authorship.

Another observation. I believe that my name was passed onto the authorities in Greece from someone in Australia, as the name on the computer list was my Greek surname, not my Macedonian name, nor my Australianized name that I had been

using for several years up until then and under which I had undertaken all my human rights and publishing activities.

I may never know who gave my name to the Greek authorities in Athens, nor the reason my name was put on the list. This is because Greece implements its policies against Macedonians in secret. It publishes no information and gives the victims no right to freedom of information or other avenue for redress. A second reason is because the European Union and the governments of the United States, Canada, Australia, United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy and other countries in Europe allow Greece - decade after decade - to practise these policies.

Keeping locals away from their homeland is a form of ethnic cleansing, and in my understanding of ethics, such inaction makes these countries and these governments de facto accomplices to these policies. This is made worse because some of these countries are signatories to the treaties that recognized Greece's annexation of 51 per cent of the territory of Ottoman Macedonia; they are among the countries that "gave" half of Macedonia to Greece, or more precisely allowed it to keep its military spoils. There are numerous international treaties that helped form the shape of northern Greece such as the 1913 Treaty of Bucharest, the 1920 Treaty of Sevres and the Protocol Concerning the Protection of Minorities in Greece, and the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne. But a condition of Greece keeping its war spoils was that Greece respect its ethnic minorities - which it has never done.

Australia was one of the signatory countries to the Treaty of Sevres and the Protocol on the Protection of Minorities that oblige Greece to protect the interests of inhabitants “who differ from the majority of the population in race, language or

religion”. Australia’s hand that signed the paper was former Prime Minister, Andrew Fisher. Obviously Australia’s signature, and the signature of a man who had been Australian Prime Minister three times, like the treaties themselves, are worth, well, what is a polite word for nothing? That is also how much the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs does to meet these treaty obligations.

As for the European Union, by coincidence before leaving for Europe on that trip I read a report that the EU was providing funds to Greece and that some of that money would be used for computers to improve border security. So it could be that the EU unwittingly funded the computers that were and still are used for ethnic cleansing.

Any one of the reasons I mentioned above could have been sufficient to have my name put on the banished list. For example, my books highlight the fact that Greece does not have, and has never had, a policy of multiculturalism. That since Greece annexed half of the Ottoman province of Macedonia, its policies for dealing with its newly acquired ethnic minorities, including the Macedonians, have been denationalization, assimilation and ethnic cleansing, and that these policies are still practised today to the extent that Greece denies the very existence of the Macedonians, and restricts the expression of their culture. In Greece today the Macedonian Orthodox Church cannot operate freely, there are no Macedonian language schools, no Macedonian language newspapers, no Macedonian television programs, nor even a Home of Macedonian Culture despite a ruling by the European Court of Human Rights that it allow such a Home. Macedonians who agitate for these essential human rights are discriminated against and persecuted, as documented by the US State Department, Amnesty International,

Human Rights Watch and many other organizations.

And if any of the hundreds of thousands of Macedonian migrants who fled Greece for the safety of the wider world, or their children, show signs of Macedonian consciousness instead of Greek consciousness, or become active for human rights - as I have done with my books - they are put on "the list" and denied entry to their place of origin. It is estimated that at least several thousand Macedonian-Australians have been banished in this way; alongside an unknown number of Macedonian-Canadians and Macedonian-Americans, among others.

Having experienced this policy, I now see clearly its brutal nature. As I sat in the back room of the border guards' office, the realization sank in that I would not see the village I had waited for years to see. I would not visit our few remaining relatives, I would not see our elderly relatives for a last time, I would not walk down the same streets where my parents and grandparents had played as children, nor see the homes where mum and dad lived before and after their marriage.

I felt that there was now a part of my self, of my history, even of my own heart, that I could not reach. In those moments, as I sat in the back office with these new feelings, I realized what it can mean and what it can feel like to be a victim of ethnic cleansing.

Yet the average person, in the popular mind, in the popular understanding, has no real grasp of what ethnic cleansing 'Greek style' really is. Since 1913, the Greek government has done everything it could to depopulate the Macedonians and repopulate the region with Greeks. But forcing or encouraging the local population to emigrate is only the first stage of ethnic cleansing. The next stage is to stop them from returning. And, if

necessary, the third stage is to stop their children from returning. Unfortunately the English language does not have a word for this 'later stage ethnic cleansing', this 'long term ethnic cleansing', this 'multi-generational ethnic cleansing', but I have seen it and felt it and it is this that has denied me access to my parents' village, my parents' ancestral homes, and my roots as a human being.

In my life this Greek government policy is one of the closest things I have encountered to evil.

No person or country has a right to deny a human being these things. Faced with such a reality, I have responded by increasing my commitment to fight this inhumane policy until it is changed. On returning to Australia in late 1996 I immediately launched my newest human rights book, the first English language translation of the Macedonian novel *Black Seed*, which is set on one of the island prison camps of the 1940s where the Greek fascist government tortured Macedonians, communists and other undesirables.

In early 1997 I set up the first web site for my publishing business which immediately gave the books and the message a global reach. The web site continues to grow.

Since *Black Seed* I have published another nine human rights books, bringing the total to thirteen. Among them is *A Girl From Neret*, which I believe could be the first book published about our village. It was authored by a Perth mother-daughter team. The mother is a Macedonian child refugee from our village who was a contemporary of my parents.

As I was born in Australia I did not want to return permanently to Greece. My simple desire was to visit my parents' village for a few days. If I cannot have that, if I cannot do such a simple, normal everyday human thing, then I am more determined than

ever to fight this cause until the Greek Government stops practising these brutal and dehumanizing policies, recognizes its ethnic minorities and respects their rights as people.

To achieve this outcome it is important that those countries that signed human rights treaties with Greece ensure that Greece fulfils its obligations, and that so called "friends" of Greece such as the governments of Europe, USA, Canada and Australia exert pressure on the Greek Government to change its policies. Until now these countries have been part of the problem. With friends like these, Greece, in its 180-odd years since independence, has become a human rights basket case - a country practicing a form of social totalitarianism where the dominant force is not a dictator but the dual ideologies of an ultra-nationalistic Hellenism and an ultra-nationalistic form of Greek Orthodoxy. This must change.

Greece needs true friends, not accomplices. Ironically, and although it does not know it yet, Greece's most worthwhile friend may yet prove to be Macedonia, because when the Macedonians finish with Greece, Greece will have been transformed - kicking and screaming all the way - from a morally and intellectually backward nineteenth century nationalist state into a modern, open and multicultural society that respects all of its ethnic and religious minorities.

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RADICAL ISLAMISM AND ALBANIAN JIHADISTS IN SYRIA

By Tom Vangelovski

While the vast majority of Albanians in Macedonia follow traditional Sunni teachings, radical Islamists from Salafi and Wahhabi movements are making slow, but steady inroads into both the Albanian and the Macedonian Muslim communities. To begin with, it is important to point out a few common misconceptions, including the tendency to conflate Islam (the religion) with Islamism (a radical modern political ideology based on Islam). Islamism has also often been falsely equated with Muslim fundamentalism, Muslim traditionalism and political Islam, all of which refer to very different things. As background, Islam has two major sects: Sunni Islam and Shia Islam. Within Sunni Islam, there is a subsect known as Salafism. Salafism seeks to follow a literalist, strict and puritanical interpretation of Islam in the tradition of Ibn Taymiyyah (1263-1328). The vast majority of radical Islamists stem from Salafism, though one should note that not all Salafis are militant extremists. However, Salafists generally condone violent jihad as a legitimate Islamic effort to build an ideal society free from western influence and control. As a consequence, many Salafists have become a part of radical Islamist movements. Wahhabism grew out of Salafism, based on the interpretations of Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wahhab (1703-1791), an Islamic scholar based in the Arabian Peninsula, who was influenced by Ibn Taymiyyah. Wahhabism sees the majority of Muslim sects as heretical and advocates for the purging of impurities, innovations and practices considered idolatrous. It also advocates violent jihad as a legitimate means of spreading both the Islamic faith and Islamist rule.

Radical Islamists began targeting Muslims in Macedonia during the Bosnian war with the influx of mujahedeen fighters into the Balkans; however, this has accelerated since 2001. Wahhabis from Saudi Arabia have infiltrated the Albanian community both at the grassroots level and within the official hierarchy of the Islamic Religious Community (IRC), headed by Sulejman Rexhepi. Wahhabis have set up a small but committed network of followers, particularly among younger Albanians and Macedonian Muslims across Western Macedonia and the capital Skopje. They have also taken control of up to five key Mosques in Skopje and possibly control others in rural areas of the country, particularly those built with Saudi funds.¹

While Sulejman Rexhepi and his followers have resisted what they see as illegitimate foreign influence in the past (becoming victims of physical attacks and anonymous death threats), reports indicate that Rexhepi has made peace with them and allowed them to maintain their positions within the official hierarchy of the IRC.² Nevertheless, tensions continue and have erupted into violent confrontations between Sunnis on the one hand and Salafis and Wahhabis on the other. Many of the IRC's Imams continue to call on him to confront key Wahhabi leaders such as Zenun Berisha and Ramadan

Bilal Bosnic



Albanian Jihadists in Syria - Source - Serbianna



Islamist Protests in Skopje



Ramadani, and their followers, and remove them from the Mosques they have taken. Rexhepi, seemingly powerless, has at various stages appealed to the Macedonian Government, the Albanian political parties and foreign diplomats to assist the IRC against the Islamists; however, none have provided any assistance.

Macedonian Muslims have also been targeted by extremist groups, particularly by Wahhabis and the Pakistani branches of Tablighi Jamaat.³ There are increasing reports of young Macedonian Muslims from the Struga region receiving scholarships to study in madrassas in Pakistan and Saudi Arabia and identify new recruits from among their communities. Locals report that these men are then funded to act and dress in accordance with Wahhabi tradition and to ensure their wives do the same.⁴ Indeed, long beards and Wahhabi-style dress were unknown in Macedonia prior to 2001, but are becoming increasingly visible not only among the Macedonian Muslim community in Struga, but among Albanians in Gostivar, Tetovo and Skopje. Reports claim that these men receive between €200 and €500 per month, with those involved in distributing Islamist literature, DVD's and other promotional material receiving up to three times that amount.⁵ It is quite common to find Islamist material promoting violent jihad, suicide bombings and the killing of 'non-believers' openly sold at market stalls in the streets of Struga, Gostivar, Tetovo and Skopje. Much of the material appears to have been translated and published into Albanian, with some literature on offer in Arabic and Macedonian.

Ethno-religious conflict and violence have been very prominent since the Wahhabi infiltration of the IRC leadership in 2010. It is suspected that many of the violent protests over the past few years, and particularly those relating to the Vevčani carnival in 2012, the Lake Smilkovo executions in both 2012 and earlier this year, and

the Oktisi confrontations from last year, were organised by Islamist groups. Protests organised in Skopje have urged people to gather at the Yaya Pasha Mosque in Cair,⁶ one of the Mosques in the hands of Wahhabi groups, from where the protesters are organised and undoubtedly potential converts are enticed through the use of seemingly nationalist causes.

More concerning is the frequent reports of Islamist cells in Macedonia, though many of them are difficult to corroborate. For example, in 2005 a PROXIMA (an EU police mission to Macedonia) officer revealed that a sleeper cell with approximately 100 foreigners was taking refuge in the Jablanica mountain range on the Macedonian-Albanian border, near the mainly Macedonian Muslim-populated villages of Oktisi and Labuništa.⁷ The officer noted that they were being assisted by the local Macedonian Muslim population. Macedonian security officials have also claimed that jihadist training camps once operated near the villages of Lešnica (Kičevo), Šipkovica (Tetovo) and surprisingly Tri Vodi (Stumica).⁸ The same sources claim that there is an existing camp that acts as a staging post for recruits off to Syria located between Jažnice (on the border with Kosovo) and Kačanik in Kosovo.

Islamists have also recruited a significant number of fighters among the Albanian and Macedonian Muslim communities for foreign conflicts. In 2010, Macedonian security officials claimed that up to 50 volunteers had been recruited to fight in Afghanistan over the previous decade.⁹ This trend appears to be increasing substantially, considering the size of the Muslim population of Macedonia. While it is difficult to ascertain accurate numbers and diverging estimates have been floated, reports suggest that up to 300 Albanians and Macedonian Muslims from Macedonia have joined opposition groups in Syria, mainly the Islamist groups Islamic State and the al-Nusra Front,¹⁰ with up to nine

having been killed.¹¹ Of the most worrying is perhaps the case of Sami Abdulahu, who died in the summer of 2013 participating in an attempt to seize the prison in Aleppo, Syria.¹² Abdulahu was an Imam who received his degree from the madrassa in Kondovo, near Skopje. There have long been suspicions that the Kondovo madrassa has been linked to radical Islamists. This raises questions in relation to his training at the Kondovo madrassa and whether it influenced his radicalisation.

Reported motives for entering the Syrian conflict vary, and again it is difficult to determine their accuracy. According to Serbian police sources, not all fighters are motivated by jihadist beliefs. Some also appear to be motivated to fight in Syria through simple adventurism and purely financial purposes.¹³ Albanians that have been arrested and questioned by Kosovo police claimed their agreed salaries were \$65 per day, while others have suggested that the jihadists receive up to €5,000 per month.¹⁴ Many of these jihadists have also been connected to the Balkan wars, particularly the KLA in Kosovo and the NLA in Macedonia. Ivan Babamovski, former chief of the Macedonian State Security Service and retired professor from the Security Faculty in Skopje, claims that "foreign militants who join the rebel fighters [in Syria] are Wahhabis, veterans and members of paramilitary organisations".¹⁵ According to media reports, at least some of those that have gone to Syria have been identified as former members of the NLA who participated in the 2001 war,¹⁶ and some analysts concur, pointing out that the NLA *Imre Elezi* Brigade consisted of foreign and local Islamists.¹⁷

Certainly, many Albanians in Macedonia see the presence of foreign Islamic influences as a threat to their own traditional version of Balkan or Ottoman Sunni Islam. For their part, the IRC and its leader, Sulejman Rexhepi, have strongly and publicly denounced the idea of Muslims from

Macedonia fighting in foreign wars. They have called on their followers to support the IRC, its traditional form of Balkan Sunni Islam and interfaith tolerance. Arben Xhaferi, former leader of the DPA, considers the influence of foreign Islamists as an attempt to 'Arabise' the faith of the Albanians:

It is absurd that Wahhabis should come here and demand, in the name of Islam, that we live and dress like them...Albanians will not allow foreigners of any kind to tell us our customs must be abandoned and our behaviour determined by Islamic totalitarians. We have our own history, our own culture, and our own Albanian model of Islam".¹⁸

Islamism is not widespread across Macedonia, but its adherents have demonstrated that they are persistent and that they are advancing their objectives and increasing their numbers. It remains to be seen how influential they will ultimately become within the Muslim community, but even as it stands, their presence is dangerous and has already caused violent confrontations within the Muslim community and between the Christian and Muslim communities.

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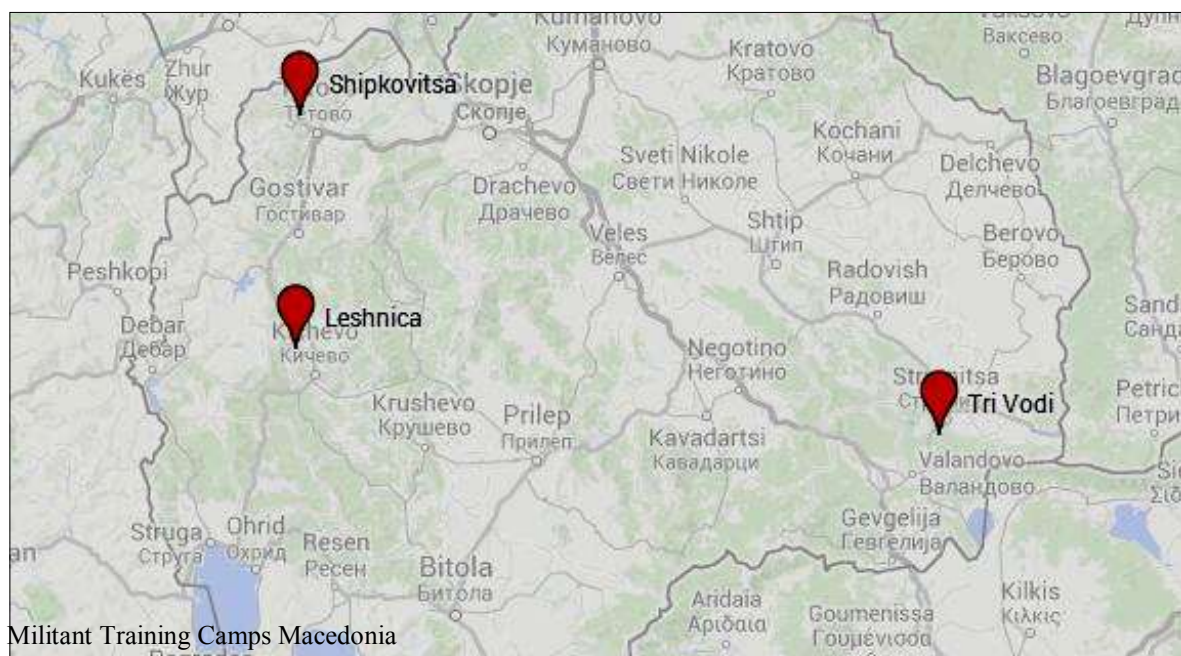
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Militant Training Camps Macedonia



Museum on Lake Ohrid

HOW DISAPPEARING VILLAGES AND URBANIZATION ARE CONTRIBUTING TO SOCIAL PROBLEMS IN MACEDONIA

By Victor Sinadinovski

Introduction

The village lifestyle in Macedonia is disappearing. As of eight years ago, over 450 villages had less than 50 residents, of which 100 of those had less than 10 residents and another 150 were empty.¹ To put these numbers in perspective, Macedonia has about 1700 villages.² Considering that most low-populated villages are inhabited by the elderly, we can assume that one-fourth of Macedonia's villages will soon be extinct.

This trend is not unique to Macedonia. In Serbia, one-fourth of its villages are extinct and another third are predicted to vanish in less than fifteen years. Bosnia and Herzegovina's villages only house one-fifth of its population.³ In Bulgaria, 650 villages have less than 50 inhabitants, with 100 villages having become extinct in two years.⁴ The United States has over 4,000 ghost towns⁵, Spain has nearly 3,000 empty villages⁶, and China lost 1.1 million villages between 2000 and 2010.⁷ Villages are dying.

Most villagers in Macedonia have moved to cities and larger towns in Macedonia. Between 1994 and 2006, Skopje grew by 200,000 residents.⁸ In the past 60 years, Bitola more than doubled in size⁹ while Tetovo tripled its population.¹⁰ Others have moved to cities abroad. They depart for many reasons: economic opportunities; poor water, sewage and waste collection facilities; crumbling roads; poor public transport; absence of modern stores and schools; and limited access to communications technology.¹¹



Museum in Podmocani

Stereotypes of villagers and beliefs that agricultural lifestyles inhibit one from achieving significant success, along with perceptions that urban areas offer happiness through material possessions, also play a substantial role in village depletion.

Consequences

Empty villages and enlarged cities go hand-in-hand¹² and have serious consequences for Macedonia. The main consequences include cultural extinction and environmental degradation. These two cannot be separated from one another. Anthropologists emphasize that a fundamental aspect of culture revolves around the way human societies interact with their environment.¹³ Disrespecting nature will undermine our culture, and abandoning our land-based culture will lead to more destructive tendencies towards nature.

First, dead villages will wipe out traditional Macedonian culture and urbanization will mold us into a homogenous world culture. Aspects of traditional Macedonian culture include, but are not limited to: folk music, dances and myths; ceremonial traditions; cuisine; clothing; dialects; and our land-based living methods. This culture is an essential aspect of Macedonian identity.

Proponents of urbanization argue that cities provide people with unfettered access to ideas, cultures and economic opportunities. However, this is dubiously associated with a more fulfilling life and it disassociates Macedonians from pivotal sources of Macedonian culture. Americans, who exemplify urbanization and modernization, are “anxious, stressed, depressed, and fat.”¹⁴ No one can seriously argue that those qualities are fulfilling. Furthermore, city life does an injustice to the knowledge generations of our village ancestors’ passed down. Macedonian customs and traditions evolved with other elements of Macedonian culture and

land. Removing most aspects of a culture render the parts of culture one purports to practice difficult to understand because one is doing so without the context of other cultural aspects. Valuable life knowledge is lost.

Instead, urbanites are fed tidbits from a variety of cultures that are incomprehensible when merged. Urban areas offer samplings of different cultures and ideas, not an immersion in any particular culture. In Skopje, you can dress in Asian-made clothes and drive a German car to listen to English music while eating American-styled pizza next to an Italian café.¹⁵ In which European city can you not do this, and in which major European cities are people behaving much differently? The culture of materialism and dabbling with the elements of other cultures has become a homogenized culture.

The state of music in Macedonia also demonstrates cultural erosion. Macedonia’s traditional music coincided with daily life. For example, Rodna Velichkovska published a work containing over 100 harvest songs and wrote that these songs were “closely related to everyday work of the humans...[and] satisf[ied] the spiritual and aesthetic needs of the community as a whole.”¹⁶ The city does not produce music that coincides with daily life because no one wants to (or can) make songs about lawyering or accounting or engineering with much emotional appeal. Macedonian traditional music has emotional appeal because nearly everyone within the community could relate to it. Today, in Skopje, one can hear anything but Macedonian folk. And while one hears Macedonian folk in Ohrid, it is usually to appease and please tourists.¹⁷ Furthermore, much of today’s traditional music is being played with non-traditional instruments, like synthesizers, keyboards and electric guitars.¹⁸

Abandoned villages and urbanization

also destroy linguistic diversity. Each village speaks differently from the next. Local dialects become extinct when villagers move to the city. When I visited my father's village, a villager told me that most Macedonians in the Diaspora usually speak the dialect better than remaining villagers. Villagers hardly use their dialect because while they might live in the village, many work in larger towns and cities where standard Macedonian or the city dialect is used.

This article cannot cover all the customs and traditions that will be altered or lost. However, Skopje

To meet energy demands, Macedonia has been on a damming conquest. There are at least 24 large dams in Macedonia.²⁰ Recently, plans existed to build two hydropower plants in Mavrovo National Park, and 100,000 people signed a petition against such a decision,²¹ and there are also protests to stop dam construction in Vratnica because it would destroy the river and surrounding environment.²² The many impacts of damming include blocking fish migration, changes in water temperature, dissolved oxygen levels, altering habitats, depleting sediment in rivers (which leads to

characteristics. Cities in Macedonia and abroad crave Macedonia's abundance of minerals. "In the period from 1999 [until] 2009, more than 300 concessions were issued for initiating detail geological researches either for already active mines or mines in the phase of final researches or reactivation."²⁶ In eastern Macedonia, Russia is investing 150 million Euros in copper mining,²⁷ and the hills of northeastern Macedonian are home to fights for its 1.86 million ounces of gold.²⁸

Moreover, factories manufacturing



Church in Mavrovo Lake

weddings have become Westernized; Macedonian folk tales and myths are replaced with Turkish soap operas; and meals are increasingly bought and not homemade. These are the direct results of urbanization and the dying village lifestyle, and they suggest that Goce Delcev's view of the world as being a cultural battleground between the peoples are just as relevant today, and possibly more so, than during the Ottoman times.

Second, cities are unsustainable and lead to unprecedented environmental destruction. A city needs to pool resources from outside its boundaries in order to sustain its energy, food, and materialistic demands.¹⁹ The effects on rural populations are devastating.

erosion) and limiting ground water accessible to plants.²³

Other alterations to the land are mounting. Although the government is giving larger subsidies to Macedonian farmers, which has resulted in a 30% increase in arable land in Pelagonia,²⁴ Macedonia lost 35,000 family farms between 1994 and 2007.²⁵ Large businesses are now converting more natural land into farms while many family farms cannot compete with their presence. Additionally, more land is used to raise animals and food for animals because urbanites are eating meat more often than their village ancestors. Macedonia's mountains are also being stripped of their beauty and

goods primarily for cities create intolerable air pollution for both villagers and urbanites. Also, the waste created by city-initiated overconsumption finds itself ravaging hillsides, where 210,000 tons of waste (30% of Macedonia's total waste) is illegally dumped.²⁹ One report indicates that "all air, water and soil are severely contaminated, [and] even protected Lake Ohrid suffers from eutrophication, due to waste water inflow."³⁰ These environmental pitfalls are partly why Macedonia is witnessing increases in cancer and has the 36th highest cancer rate in the world.³¹

Abandoned villages and urbanization have also distanced humans from

nature. When one is removed from the land, one loses an understanding of the importance and workings of the natural world. Thus, one is less likely to respect nature and therefore more likely to not be concerned about environmental pollution and destruction. The further people stray from nature, the more likely they are to ignore environmental consequences.

Macedonia has three national parks: Pelister, Mavrovo, and Galicica. Their creation may seem like a good idea for those who want to protect nature. But they are not. They signal that nature is a temporary playground – it is a place for 'non-natural' humans to enjoy recreation and peaceful getaways. The idea of national parks suggest that Macedonians are not a part of nature and only occasionally should immerse themselves in it. Contrarily, villagers do not need national parks – they interact with nature daily, whether they are planting seeds, fishing, collecting blueberries, chopping wood, swimming in rivers or hunting in forests. Villages respect the land because the land is their life; cities destroy villagers' lands and set aside some land that only can be used for play.

False Solutions

On the surface, it seems that some simple and obvious solutions may work. However, I would like to place caution on a few of these. First, pumping money into villages to make them mini-cities will not reintroduce traditional Macedonian lifestyle into the villages. Second, some infrastructure is necessary, but excess infrastructure threatens village lifestyle because what makes villages unique and preserves their existence is a lack of easy connectivity and accessibility to large urban areas. It is one fight to keep the villages populated and another to keep them diverse.

Third, tourism will not effectively sustain villages. It may work for regions that urbanites find appealing,

but these benefits are temporary and apply to few villages. Fourth, museums educate us about our cultural history, but they do not actively promote the daily practice of our culture. Fifth, villages becoming specialized in a particular occupation or crop is ineffective and dangerous. Our village ancestors were self-sufficient. A specialized economy will primarily serve the cities' interests. Villagers will lose critical self-sufficiency skills and become dependent on a city-centered economic system.

Solutions

A first real solution is to redefine wealth. Instead of defining wealth only by money and production of goods, other factors, such as the health of individuals, communities and nature, equality, freedom, and the strength of personal and community relationships, should be included.³² This would allow individuals and

regions to determine their wealth and worth through a broad and relevant perspective, not through a narrowly tailored definition. As an anti-coal mining activist once said about rural life: "It was a hard life, but here I was equal to everybody. I didn't know I was poor until I went to the city and people told me I was. Here I was rich."³³

Second, an education campaign about the importance of sustainable living and self-sufficiency will create a positive perception of agricultural and village lifestyles. It will also help create sustainable cities. In addition, children should not be required to attend school beyond the elementary level; rather, such institutional education should be discouraged and education through living sustainably and becoming self-sufficient, apprenticeships, and adolescents pursuing their own interests should be encouraged.

Village with Many Houses and Few People



Third, Macedonia should decentralize governmental powers. A village should control issues that solely or primarily affect it. This will allow the culture of a village to evolve in its own direction and at its own pace. A regional government will exist to regulate issues between villages, and a national government will exist to regulate issues between regions, if those entities cannot resolve or manage certain issues themselves.

Fourth, the Diaspora could lead in one of two ways. First, we could move back to a more traditional village lifestyle in Macedonia. Second, we could incorporate sustainable living and self-sufficiency in our lives here while immersing ourselves in the daily practice of our traditional culture. Both options allow us to lead by example.

The above are not methods to uphold our modern and accepted interpretations of wealth, education, governance, and self-sufficiency. They are initiatives that will allow Macedonian culture and nature to survive and thrive.

Conclusion

Successfully curing Macedonia's ills depends on how Macedonians answer two questions: a) do we want to preserve our culture or do we want to practice our culture; and b) do we want to preserve nature or do we want to live in nature? Only when our values are in line with both practicing our culture and living within nature can we begin to implement the above solutions. Only then can we rebuild our villages as communities that exemplify Macedonian culture and protect the natural environment.

Perhaps urbanization cannot be countered. A sky-rocketing world population and corporate materialism controlling and manipulating our perceptions seem to give us little choice. Yet, never in history have cities existed without strong villages. Is that a risk Macedonians are willing to take? More than many countries,

Factory Pollution in the Background



Macedonia does have a say in the matter. Macedonia's population is hardly growing, with a growth rate of 0.16% per year,³⁴ and plenty of resources in rural Macedonia can sustain Macedonia's needs and splurges. Materialism and consumerism are not as rampant as in other countries, and villages still have the basic infrastructure necessary to maintain them.

It is true that cultures can and do evolve. Survival, in many cases, is dependent upon the ability to adapt.³⁵ Sometimes cultures willfully change in order to survive, and they usually only shed themselves of that which is hindering survival while maintaining everything else that works. Other times, however, cultures change not based on any perceived need for survival, but because they perceive that the change will make life easier.³⁶ These changes are based on short-sightedness and a misperception of what a new lifestyle can offer. Promises of a better and easier life accompany a money-oriented and consumeristic society, and the vast majority of cultures are opting for this homogenized culture. Yet, individuals are becoming increasingly depressed, stressed and incapable of self-sufficiency beyond earning a paycheck. Further, people are ignoring

how this new culture is havocking nature and biodiversity.

If the Macedonian village lifestyle in particular disappears, and if Macedonia is so polluted and stripped of its resources that it becomes indistinguishable from other natural areas, then distinctly Macedonian characteristics will also vanish. At that point, the only difference between Macedonia and other countries is a name. But what is the point in fighting for a name if everything that name once represented no longer exists? If Macedonia's culture and landscape become virtually indistinguishable from that of Greece, America, China and Nigeria – if Macedonia resembles all other countries, what is the point of struggling for Macedonia?

Victor Sinadinoski

Editor's Note: This article has put forward some very challenging viewpoints, in relation to various taken for granted assumptions in the mainstream of modern Western culture.

We hope it will inspire some responses. Anybody who is interested in responding, whether positively or negatively, may write to the editor of this Review by emailing to info@macedonianhr.org.au ■

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"НИКОЈ НЕМА ПРАВО ДА ПРЕГОВАРА ЗА МОЕТО ИМЕ!"

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

- Ако се промени еднаш, дури и билатерално, насакаде ќе биде променето
- Дали сакате да бидеме 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 основани 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 ПОСТОЯНИ 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 ПОЗИЦИЈИТЕ 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 лажеше 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 пракаме јасна порака дека ќе го промениме името
- **Мораме да престанеме да преговараме за нашето сопствено име!**

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

- Дали би требало американската сојузна држава Грузија (на англиски *Georgia*) 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.

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НАШЕТО ИМЕ Е МАКЕДОНИЈА

MACEDONIAN FOLK POETRY

By Dr. Michael Seraphinoff



Kuzman Shapkarev

Macedonian folk poetry has ancient roots and is represented in hundreds of beautiful, moving folk songs. Their themes span history from ancient times to recent times. They include the lyric and the epic, the ode to joy and the tragic lament. They contain almost all of the elements we associate with fine poetry, the epithet, the rhyme, the repetition, the metaphor, the simile, and more. And fortunately, we have a substantial body of such folk songs preserved from past generations due to the diligent collecting of foreign scholars such as Vuk Karadzic, Stefan Verkovic and native born collectors such as Kuzman Shapkarev, Marko Cepenkov and Konstantin Miladinov, and others in more recent times.

Konstantin Miladinov, in his remarkable collection of Macedonian folk songs, published in Zagreb in 1861, (a collection with the inappropriate title, due to the times and a portion of the contents, *Bulgarian Folk Songs*) summed up the essence of what makes these songs meaningful in his introduction to that collection:

"Folk songs portray the intellectual development of a people and reflect its life. In songs a people shows its feelings, in them it immortalizes itself and its feats of old, in them it finds its spiritual food and sustenance; thus, in happiness and sadness, at weddings and dances, at harvest and grape gathering, at embroidering and spinning, in fields and forests, it pours forth songs as from a rich spring. Therefore we can say that a people is always a great poet."

This rich tradition in Macedonia cannot be divorced from the daily life of the Macedonian people. It developed out of the age old agrarian village life of the people. Songs about work, love, marriage, birth, death, nature and the supernatural, and foreign servitude and resistance to foreign oppression, almost always in the context of village life, abound.

The beauty and imagination of so many of these works of the anonymous folk creator over the ages is readily apparent. Take, for example, this excerpt from the Miladinov collection, translated into English by Macedonian scholar, Tome Sazdov:

*The young fairy was out dancing,
was out dancing on the mountain.
Her mother-in-law called to her:
"Oh dear fairy, daughter-in-law,
leave your dancing, come home
quickly
for your baby boy is crying."
"Mother-in-law, Oh dear mother!
I will send a ewe for milking,
to suckle my dear baby boy;
I will send a gentle shower,
to bathe my darling baby boy;
I will send a gentle zephyr,
to sing a lullaby to my baby boy."*

Although it is true that we cannot experience everything we desire in life, and I am a great believer in the value of fine literature to provide a window into a wondrous world beyond our direct knowing, there is no substitute for direct experience, whenever possible. It may be possible to enjoy a folk song, for instance, that lets us imagine the white slopes of a majestic Macedonian mountain range and tragic history that once unfolded there, but without direct experience of such places, our imagined experience of what the song describes is impoverished.

There is a beautiful Macedonian folk song (I encourage you to look up the version sung on internet youtube by the group Belo Platno) with the following words:

Што се бели, горе Шар планина?
Да л' је снегче, ил' је бело стадо?
Нит' је снегче, нит' је бело стадо.
Да је снегче, би се растопило,
Да је стадо, би се растурило.
Веч тој беше Милкино чадорче,
Под чадорче болна Милка лега.
Брата и гу Турци заробили,
Заробили, пај га обесили.

The presenters tell us that this is a song from the village of Štrpce on the Šar Mountain that forms the border between Kosovo and Macedonia. The song begins with the use of Slavic antithesis, a figure of speech

frequently used in Slavic folk songs, when the folk singer asks himself:

*What is so white atop the Šar Mountain?
Is it snow, or a white flock?
Neither snow, nor a white flock,
If it were snow, it would melt,
If if it were a flock it would flow around.
That is Milka's tent
in which Milka is grieving and
mourning for her brother,
whom the Turks captured,
Captured and hung."*

No doubt, one can take some pleasure in this song if one has at least seen pictures of snow and of white flocks of sheep grazing on a picturesque Macedonian mountain, or better yet, stood somewhere in the shadow of such a mountain and gazed up at the sight of it in wonder. Better yet, after a delicious meal with some of Macedonia's delicious sheep milk cheese, work some of that off on a good walk on some village or mountain trail. Nowadays, even in Macedonia, Eco-tourism is growing in popularity. It involves opportunities to engage in activities that put the tourist in close connection to wild nature and the rural countryside.

Worldwide, humanity is becoming ever more divorced from the natural world, the one that village folk often know so intimately. Today some 90% of us live in urban centers. Access to the countryside is far more limited than it once was, and with modern transport most of us don't even have to walk much further than to and from our car each day. In such a world, organized efforts to reconnect to rural life and the natural world make perfect sense. Check the possibilities in Macedonia at some of the following ecotourism websites: [gomacedonia](http://gomacedonia.com), [travel2macedonia](http://travel2macedonia.com) and [whereismacedonia](http://whereismacedonia.com).

I was privileged even before the advent of ecotourism, back in the

spring of 1975, to accompany my uncle and cousins when they moved their sheep from a winter pasture in Lower Polog, in the Vardar River valley in the Tetovo region, to the mountain meadows of the Shar Planina. Uncle Stole, at that time, in cooperation with an Albanian partner and his family, maintained a flock of some hundred sheep.

We stayed in a bachilo, a shepherd's hut, with walls of field stone and a corrugated metal roof. We slept on heavy woollen blankets on beds of woven tree branches and maintained a wood fire in the center of the hut with a cauldron of boiling water for milking purposes. We ate tender young onion greens with bread, and salted mutton, and the milk of the sheep in a variety of forms, as yogurt, as fresh cheese curds and as soft and hard cheeses.

Various family members would come and go on horseback, leading donkeys that brought in supplies and transported wooden barrels of cheese down to the valley below to sell at the pazar. Besides uncle Stole and cousin Zhivko I remember a somewhat slow witted man named Manol, who was often the butt of jokes. And I remember Refik, a rather proud young man who wore traditional woollen shepherd's pants and carried a traditional wooden staff and a simple shepherd's flute with him when he went off to tend the flock of sheep. He was friendly enough with Uncle Stole, but he viewed me, the Amerikanets, with a bit of suspicion.

Uncle Stole and his son, my cousin Zhivko, seemed to have very good relations with their Albanian family partners. Most of my cousins were wary and distant with Albanian neighbors. Uncle Stole did not share their frequently negative view of Albanians. He remarked to me one day, that they were more trustworthy than many of our own as partners, and

that their sober, industrious ways had also earned his respect.

When I wasn't asked to help with chores, I was free to roam the mountain. With a sturdy staff in my hands to ward off wild creatures or more likely the big, strong Shar Planinets guard dogs that every shepherd on the mountain had by his side, I set off on long hikes on the mountain trails. From the top of the mountain I could see the city of Tetovo, and from other vantage points I could see the distant town of Prizren, over in Kosovo.

So much on the mountain agreed with me, the fresh mountain air, the clean cold water from little springs and brooks, the picturesque mountain meadows and forests and the grand vistas that afforded long distant views of the countryside. And the ancient ways still practiced by the shepherds- that included long distance calling to fellow shepherds far off on the mountain at sunset- I can still hear my uncle calling a long, drawn out: "Eeeeeeh, morriiii Muraaaat!" That would then be answered by a far off echoing call from a distant, lonely shepherd in some other hut with an accompanying flock of sheep and dogs.

Should we lament the passing of these old ways, practiced for some ten thousand years or more by our Neolithic farmer ancestors in the Balkan lands? Nowadays, even in Macedonia, and even in the villages, I am more liable to encounter young people dressed in jeans and colorful shirts sporting company logos, armed with cell phones and never too far from their electronic devices. It is the way of the world. I certainly can't turn back the clock, nor, if I thought about it very much, should I want to.

Yet, there are certain things that I would urge the young to hang on to from our cultural past, that are not meaningless relics or quaint artefacts, but timeless, meaningful pleasures and occupations. These would include a walk in the mountains, the taste of nature's bounty in a handful of fresh wild blackberries, the call of the mourning doves at dawn and dusk, and so many other eternally satisfying connections to the natural world. And some old ways of human devising: the oro, the sound of the traditional kaval flute, and Macedonian folk poetry in lovely old songs such as the one I have quoted above. Even far from the source, we are all nowadays just a mouse click away on the Internet with YouTube access to some of the most beautiful works of our folk heritage. If you haven't listened to the song I cited, try it now: <https://m.youtube.com/watch?sns=fb&v=mLNpe4jYzxs>. Then shut down all of your electronic devices and take that walk in the wild. ■

Dr. Michael Seraphinoff



Marko Cepenkov



Germanos Karavangelis Supporting the Ottomans against Macedonians

GREEK PROPAGANDA TRIANGLE: ATHENS—BITOLA—KOSTUR (1900-1903)

By Dr. Dimitar Ljorovski Vamvakovski

The government in Athens finding itself under pressure from the heightened activities of Greek nationalist elements in Ottoman Macedonia and the Kingdom of Greece, as well as the "surprisingly" rapid development of the Macedonian revolutionary movement, felt compelled to adopt a more forceful approach to the Macedonian Question. The Kostur Metropolitan, Germanos Karavangelis, in his memoirs, observed that as a result of Greek propaganda activities in Macedonia and the alleged "mass killings of Greeks ... the interest of public opinion in Greece began to awaken".¹ Greek propaganda circles in Ottoman Macedonia, backed by nationalist circles² in Greece, on their own initiative, began to organize the struggle against the Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (MRO). A national propaganda triangle was created: namely, Athens-Bitola-Kostur, which by taking the initiative to coordinate

amongst themselves, began devising ways to draw up plans for organized action against the Macedonian revolutionary movement.

In Bitola Ion Dragoumis, in particular, was engaged in working towards the achievement of Greece's "national goals". He, in November 1902, was appointed secretary of the Greek consulate in Bitola, a position which allowed him great freedom of action. Alongside his everyday duties, Dragoumis researched the reports of consul, Kjuze Pezas, which were sent to the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Through them he arrived at a realistic assessment of the factual situation in the Bitola Vilayet and, as he himself wrote, "the rapid loss of control"³ of the Greek propaganda effort over events there. Heightened activities on his part were recorded from March 1903⁴, a period when he began to

intensively "mobilize" on behalf of the Greek secret services, "priests, teachers, doctors,"⁵ that is, anyone whom he considered suitable for waging the struggle for "the salvation of Hellenism" in Ottoman Macedonia.⁶ Soon he formed the organization "Amina" (Defence), which operated exclusively in the areas inhabited by Greek, Vlach or Greckified populations in southern Macedonia.

It was intended that the city of Bitola would be the centre of the Organization. In fact, Dragoumis's intentions were as follows: the focus of the Greek struggle would be in Macedonia and by virtue of that very fact the government in Athens would skilfully avoid the pressure of the Ottoman authorities; that is, it would enable it to refute accusations of direct Greek government involvement in events in Ottoman Macedonia. The organization created by Dragoumis resembled more an association of mutually unrelated groups, isolated in certain populated places without any mutual coordination. These groups often consisted of only a few members recruited personally by Dragoumis. Under the constitution, the purpose of "Amina" was not to fight against Ottoman rule, but for the "national protection" and alliance of Greek municipalities.⁷ Furthermore, it was envisaged that Greek elements in Macedonia would be armed, that information would be collected about the activity of the MRO and that Greek armed detachments would begin their operations.⁸

The next element of the Greek propaganda triangle for the conduct of operations in Ottoman Macedonia was located in Athens. After the end of the Greco-Turkish War (1897) and the failure of "Etniki Eterija"⁹, a group of young Greek officers continued to operate on the basis that

they were "defending Hellenism in Macedonia". The group was composed of the following officers: George Tsontos-Vardas, Konstantinos Mazarakis Alexandros Kondoulis, Georgios Katehakis-Rouvas and others. According to the Greek historian, Georgios Modis, Pavlos Melas was especially committed to the "cause" and was its "greatest pillar".¹⁰ At the same time, individuals from this group of officers were also part of the "Committee for Assistance to the Macedonians", which was based in Athens, and whose most prominent members were Ioannis Valaoritis Marko Dragoumis (brother of Stefanos Dragoumis)¹¹ Konstantinos Raktivan and others. Pavlos Melas's marriage to Natalia Mela, the daughter of Stephanos Dragoumis and sister of Ion Dragoumis, was of great significance for his later activities.

According to the memoirs of Natalia Mela, the only conversations held in her father's (Stefanos Dragoumis's) house were about the situation of "Hellenism in Macedonia" and that from morning to night their house was filled with masses of people.¹² In addition, Melas, in his youth, actively participated in the work of the "Etniki Eterija". He attained the rank of sublieutenant and performed his military service in the cryptographic services in the northern border regions of the Kingdom of Greece. In the initial period of this group's activities, the main goal was obtaining funds for the purposes of disseminating Greek propaganda in Ottoman Macedonia. Melas at this time, but also later on, took advantage of the authority and acquaintances of his wife's father-Stefanos Dragoumis.

The next activist in the Greek propaganda triangle was the Kostur

Metropolitan Germanos Karavangelis. He, according to Greek historiography, "was pivotal to the organization of the armed rebel (chetnik) movement", while Ion Dragoumis and Pavlos Melas were "the first to give life [in Greece] to the decision ... to help tormented Hellenism in Macedonia".¹³ Dragoumis, after arriving in Bitola, represented the link which connected up with the idea of organizing of a Greek armed struggle against the Macedonian revolutionary movement. He carried out the correspondence with and coordination between nationalist groups in Ottoman Macedonia and the Kingdom of Greece. Dragoumis and Melas, in the person of the Kostur Metropolitan, found someone through whom they hoped they would more easily implement their plans for the creation of local mercenary armed bands and for the sending of such groups from Greece into Macedonia.

In addition, Karavangelis, after having failed to attract the attention of Athens, finally discovered "national activists", with whose support he considered it would be easier to implement his plans and at the same time obtained financial, moral and technical support for the activities he had already embarked upon. In this manner, the activists forming the Greek propaganda triangle began to function and realize their intentions.

After examining the factual situation in Ottoman Macedonia, Ion Dragoumis noted that the larger part of the population was "Slavic", but that, according to him, it did not possess "any national feelings".¹⁴ He also concluded that conditions on the ground were favourable for Greek propaganda activity as the Macedonian-speaking population had "rather than a religious and

national consciousness or solidarity, an attachment to the cult of their ancestors, which through their language influences their identity."¹⁵ He considered that it was necessary to act immediately, however not in order to "retain loyalties"¹⁶, but rather that it was necessary to for us [i.e. the Greek state] to conquer Macedonia.¹⁷ In order to realize this idea action was required in two directions. Firstly, it was deemed necessary to keep land in Greek hands by which he meant the buying of Ottoman or Jewish estates by Greeks and prohibiting the sale of estates to foreigners (especially to Bulgarians). Secondly, there would have to be a ban on farmers of non-Greek ethnic background working on the estates and if such persons were already working on the estates, they were to be Hellenized or removed.¹⁸

In a letter to Melas of January 23, 1903 (old calendar) Dragoumis stressed that if they wanted their struggle to succeed, it was necessary that "work" be done in Macedonia, and that he and Karavangelis had done "what they could", but what was also needed was "that actions be taken in Greece".¹⁹ He also observed that "money was required for both matters". Further on in the letter Dragoumis expressed his interest about the situation in Athens regarding the "Macedonian Question", but did not omit to also advise Melas about the course that their activities should take.

It was in that context that the following questions and suggestions from him to Melas were posed: "What is happening with the association, will it be formed? Is it being formed? Is there money available? If there is, keep a certain amount for buying weapons, there may be a need later on if an association exists, you can talk

about the idea regarding the need for weapons, as if it was yours. For now, first of all, attend to the need to organize a journalistic campaign for the promotion of Greek interests in Europe, which means that you must have enough money to buy foreign papers and people. ... And I am prepared [to write] and Nata [Natalia Mela] can write something as well, I will also send information ... Secondly, you need to have enough money so that it can be at our disposal any time it is needed".²⁰ In this manner Ion Dragoumis laid out the basic contours of the tasks to be carried out by Greek propaganda against the Macedonian Revolutionary Organization within the Ottoman Empire, as well as in the Kingdom of Greece. At the same time he advocated that a journalistic campaign be launched through which Greek interests and goals in Ottoman Macedonia would be presented to the European public.

The campaign for the collection of funds in support of Greek propaganda efforts in Ottoman Macedonia was gradually begun. Initially, it encountered certain difficulties due to the lack of preparedness on the part of Greek financial supporters, but also due to the suspicion with which national elements viewed the earlier activities of the "Etniki Eterija". The rich French princess, Luisa de Rainkur, who lived in Athens, was the largest financier of the Greek propaganda effort in Macedonia. She was recruited to help finance the Greek cause by Maria, the aunt of Ion Dragoumis.²¹ In Greece, the financial assistance needed for propaganda activities was obtained from relatives, friends and rich donors, while Stefanos Dragoumis, on the other hand, sought funds from his rich friends living in Egypt.²²



Ion Dragoumis



Pavlos Melas Portrait

Ion Dragoumis, in his subsequent letters to Melas, drew his attention to the organization of the armed struggle against the MRO, the activities of Karavangelis in the Kostur Diocese and the preparation of analyses of the goals and activities of the Macedonian revolutionary movement. He considered that it was necessary to take action against the internal organization by the use of armed bands made up of corrupted sectors of the local population in Ottoman Macedonia. In the letter to Melas of 6 February 1903 (old calendar), he wrote as follows: "We should not send armed bands from Greece, but rather we should create them here [meaning Macedonia]. Fortunately we started several months ago (with almost no money) ... the money you sent to me is needed to continue the temporary defence of the villages in the Kostur district. The Kostur Metropolitan is the only patriot out of all the remaining metropolitans and carries out his work enthusiastically".²³

In contrast to the efforts made by Karavangelis for the sending of armed bands from Greece into Macedonia, Ion Dragoumis had a different view. He considered that local bands were sufficient²⁴, such as those that had already been formed by the Kostur Metropolitan. From the letter it can be clearly seen that his goal was the creation of new or the maintenance of the existing local armed bands with funds from Greece. However, it was unclear from whom those bands would be "defending" the "Macedonian population" in the Kostur region?! Namely, Karavangelis's goal and that of his collaborators was not "the struggle against the Ottoman authorities", as had been also indicated in the Constitution of "Amina", but "the national defence"²⁵ of the "Patriarchist communities" in Ottoman Macedonia which they considered to be their own Greek communities. Therefore, the main task of Karavangelis and his associates was to prevent the Patriarchist Macedonian population's participation in the Macedonian revolutionary struggle and to retain its loyalty to Greek/Patriarchist propaganda.

From here on it was clear what the intentions of Ion Dragoumis were as presented in the report cited above. His idea was that the main struggle would be waged against the operations of the MRO which was the main rival to the "Greek struggle" in Ottoman Macedonia. He, according to the information he was receiving from the Kostur Metropolitan on the activities of the renegade Kote Hristov from the village of Rula, was convinced that only with the support of the armed bands formed by the local corrupted Macedonian population, would Greek propaganda be able to successfully oppose the Macedonian revolutionary movement. According to

him, these bands would be very familiar with the terrain on which they would operate, would be able to easily find shelter and supply themselves with food, while at the same time being able to form or disband according to need. Precisely in the period when the Macedonian ethnic group was united around the program of the MRO which propagated the autonomy of Macedonia, Dragoumis wanted to create discord and disunity among the population. He tried to show that ethnic differentiation existed among the Macedonian-speaking population on the basis of church affiliation. Therefore, he declared that Macedonian Patriarchists were "Greeks", while Macedonian-Exarchists were "Bulgarians", including in this regard the MRO which he regarded as agents of the Bulgarian government. On the other hand, he also underestimated the strength of the Macedonian revolutionary movement in the pre-Ilinden period. In particular, the well organised armed bands of the MRO in the Kostur district. Namely, because these MRO armed bands mercilessly pursued and destroyed those armed groups which did not accept the Constitution and Program of the MRO, especially those paramilitary formations which had been formed by the propaganda structures of the neighbouring states. Greek propaganda structures could only rely on those bandit elements among the local Macedonian population or on former members of armed bands-cum-renegades from the ranks of the Internal Organization. The latter were often isolated in a few villages, as was the case with the renegade Kote, cowing the population into obedience through terror and violence.

Ion Dragoumis, in his letter of 27 February 1903, (old calendar) informed Melas of the MRO's goals. He, being consciously aware of the situation, observed as follows: "The armed bands of the Committee [MRO] are present everywhere and have no intention of obeying the Russians and the Great Powers that advise them to seek peace. They are working even harder than ever they do not seek to make Macedonia Bulgarian, but want an autonomous state (Macedonia for the Macedonians)." ²⁶ Dragoumis, further on in the letter concluded "that it is necessary to defend the Orthodox villages²⁷ and to work on their education, as many of them are being attracted"²⁸ to the revolutionary movement. While in his previous letter of 6 February, he had not clarified from whom the villages in the Kostur region should be defended, in this letter he very clearly pointed to the "villain". In addition, his frank statements allude to his concern at the loss of Patriarchist adherents. That is the reason why he once again stressed that one of the ways to defend the self-proclaimed Greek elements was through the formation of armed bands from the local

population. In relation to that he informed Melas that "around Kostur there is an armed band [referring to Kote's group] which defends our people".²⁹ He finally emphasized that insofar as they failed to form such armed bands, they would not succeed in realizing their intentions, nor would Kote's existing armed group be able to survive as it was surrounded on all sides by MRO bands.

One of the activities of the propaganda triangle was the procuring of weapons for the needs of the Greek propaganda effort in Ottoman Macedonia.³⁰ In the initial period (1900-1903), with funds from Greece, the weapons were most often bought in Macedonia, specifically from the Muslim population and through certain smuggling channels. The sending of weapons from Greece, according to Melas, was "impossible ... as momentarily the government has strictly forbidden it".³¹ Melas proposed to Dragoumis that he also inform Karavangelis about the situation in Greece. However, a month later, Dragoumis expressed "surprise" at the decision of the government in Athens to "send 200 rifles to Kostur [Metropolitan Karavangelis]".³² In contrast to the data contained in Dragoumis's report, the Metropolitan in his memoirs pointed out that 100 rifles had been sent, with sufficient ammunition, as well as an equal number of fur coats (cloaks). In Greece, the whole operation regarding the supply of weapons for the needs of the Greek armed propaganda effort was coordinated by Melas. He informed Karavangelis by letter that the weapons had been sent to Kalambaka and that the consignment would be received by the Metropolitan through his trusted people.³³ Such a course of events

and the partial change in the policy of the government in Athens were expected. It was decided that more radical measures needed to be taken, on the one hand because of the pressure exerted by nationalist circles in the Kingdom of Greece and Ottoman Macedonia, and on the other hand, due to the way events were developing and the continuing pronounced decline of the strategic position suffered by the Greek propaganda effort in Ottoman Macedonia.

Dragoumis, in one of his subsequent letters sent to Melas, informed him that "our work so far mainly consists of creating bands in the Kostur region, maintaining Kote and winning over the Greeks [he means the Patriarchist population] who are here [referring to Bitola] and in the villages".³⁴ He also looked after the allocation of funds that came from Greece and were intended for the needs of the Greek propaganda effort in south-western Macedonia. At the beginning funds were sent to Bitola through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Greece, but due to frequent delays, Dragoumis suggested to Melas that he send them himself via recommended mail. The funds were provided monthly and the amounts sent depended on the needs of the Greek propaganda effort in Ottoman Macedonia, but also on the capacity of Greek nationalist circles in the Greek state to collect money from rich "donors".³⁵ Once the money arrived in Bitola, Dragoumis would retain a certain amount for his own needs, while he sent the larger part on to the Kostur Metropolitan. The Metropolitan used these funds for purchasing arms, for monthly payments to Kote's band, for the bribing of various bandits and other activities which were directed against the Macedonian-speaking population and Macedonian

revolutionary movement. Funds were also set aside for the murder of senior leaders of the MRO in the Kostur region.³⁶

In any case, Karavangelis, Dragoumis and Melas in the months leading up to the Ilinden Uprising (1903) were busy with the initial organized arrival of armed individuals and groups from Greece whose aim was to fight against the MRO.³⁷ The different views and approaches of this "troika" regarding the way in which to organize the struggle against the Macedonian revolutionary movement was not a great obstacle to the realization of their nationalist plans.³⁸ The actions taken by the "troika" had a significant impact on the future organized intervention of the Greek state in Ottoman Macedonia. Therefore, Ion Dragoumis, Germanos Karavangelis and Pavlos Melas can be said to be the forerunners of the [Greek] "Macedonian Struggle".³⁹

Dr Dimitar Ljorovski Vamvakovski. Translated from Macedonian by Dr Chris Popov of the AMHRC.

ENDNOTES

¹ Germanos Karavangelis, *Macedonian Struggle (memoirs)*, (Skopje, 2000), p.25.

² These included the families Dragoumis, Melas, Politou, Raktivan, Lambros, Lammbris, Delios, Mavros, Varatasis and others.

³ Ιωαννης Δραγουμης, Τα Τετραδια του Ιλιντεν, (Αθηνα: Γιωργος Πετσιβας 2000), p. 44.

⁴ On March 18, 1903 (old calendar) Kjuze Pezas left for medical treatment because of bad health and left Ion Dragoumis in charge of the consulate in Bitola. Δραγουμης, Τα Τετραδια, p.44.

⁵ Ι. Δραγουμης, Τα Τετραδια, p.44.

⁶ Idem, p.17

⁷ Юра Константинова, *Балканската политика на Гърция в края на XIX и началото на XX век*, (София: 2008), 295.

⁸ Весела Трайкова, „Наченки на андарското дело в Македония – Каравангелис, Йон Драгумис и десетината Критяни“, *Македонски научен институт; Преглед*, г. XXIV, бр.1, (София: 2001), p.50.

⁹ "Etniki Eterija" (National Society) was created in the spring of 1894 by a group of Greek officers. In two years the organisation developed into a serious political and military force in Greece. Under the pretext of the unrest in Crete, "Etniki Eterija" decided in the spring of 1896 to send armed bands to Ottoman Macedonia. The armed action ended ingloriously for the aspirations of Greek propaganda in Macedonia. The capabilities and objectives of the armed groups sent from the Kingdom of Greece were in no way and could not be aimed at destabilizing Ottoman rule in Macedonia. On the contrary, their goal was to indicate their territorial aspirations to Europe and oppose Bulgarian propaganda in Ottoman Macedonia. "Etniki Eterija" also sent armed bands to Macedonia in 1897. These Greek paramilitary detachments experienced the same fate as the previous ones; i.e they were quickly liquidated or driven out.

¹⁰ Γ. Χ. Μοδι, *Μακεδονικός αγών και μακεδονικές αρχήγους*, (Θεσσαλονίκη: 1950), p.223.

¹¹ Stefanos Dragoumis (1842-1923) was a Greek social activist, politician and national ideologue of the Greek armed propaganda effort in Ottoman Macedonia. He was also a member of the Greek Parliament, and alternatively was Minister for Justice, and for Interior and Foreign Affairs during the period 1886-1893 year. He was Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Greece for a short period. (18 January - 6 October 1910)

¹² Νατάλια Μελα, Παύλος Μελας, (Αθήνα: 1926), p.166.

¹³ Κωνσταντίνος Σβολοπούλος, „Η απόφαση για την οργάνωση του ενοπλού αγώνα“, *Ο Μακεδονικός αγώνας; Συμπόσιο*, Θεσσαλονίκη-Φλώρινα-Καστοριά-Εδεσσα, (Θεσσαλονίκη: 1987), p.59.

¹⁴ Драγουμис, *Та Тетрадиа*, p.48.

¹⁵ Драγουμис, *Та Тетрадиа*, p.49.

¹⁶ He refers here to keeping Macedonian Patriarchists under their influence and above all keeping them within the confines of the Constantinople Patriarchate.

¹⁷ Драγουμис, *Та Тетрадиа*, p.52.

¹⁸ Драγουμис, *Та Тетрадиа*, p. 49.

¹⁹ Драγουμис, *Та Тетрадиа*, p.11.

²⁰ Драγουμис, *Та Тетрадиа*, 11-13.

²¹ Драγουμис, *Та Тетрадиа*, 44.

²² Трайкова, *Наченки на андарското дело в Македония*, p.51. In a letter of May 24, 1903 (old calendar), Pavlos Melas informed Ion Dragoumis that his father Stefanos "has the intention of asking for a report from you about everything that is happening in Macedonia and then asking his friends in Egypt to give money for you. Драγουμис, *Та Тетрадиа*, p. 119.

²³ Драγουμис, *Та Тетрадиа*, 17.

²⁴ The Greek Consul in Thessaloniki, N. Evgeniadis had the same view "Therefore, merely by forming armed bands from the population from the Orthodox Macedonian villages [Macedonian Patriarchist villages, our note], we will succeed in opposing the Bulgarian armed bands [referring to the armed bands of the MRO, our note]. Report of the Royal Greek Consulate in Salonika No.3, 4 January 1904 (old calendar). Copy of the document in the possession of the author.

²⁵ Юра Константинова, *Българи и Гърци в борба за османското наследство*, (София: 2014), p.108.

²⁶ Драγουμис, *Та Тетрадиа*, p.27

²⁷ Villages inhabited by Macedonians-Patriarchists which I. Dragoumis and the Greek propaganda machinery presented as Greek.

²⁸ Драγουμис, *Та Тетрадиа*, p. 27.

²⁹ Referring to Macedonians-Patriarchists.

³⁰ Ion Dragoumis informed Pavlos Melas on April 30, 1903 (old calendar) that he was buying guns in Macedonia. Драγουμис, *Та Тетрадиа*, p.91

³¹ Letter from Pavlos Melas to Ion Dragoumis, March 29, 1903 (old calendar). Драγουμис, *Та Тетрадиа*, p.67

³² Letter from Ion Dragoumis to Pavlos Melas, April 30, 1903 (old calendar). Драγουμис, *Та Тетрадиа*, p.91

³³ Каравангелис, *Македонската борба*, p. 25.

³⁴ The letter is dated May 12, 1903 (old calendar). Драγουμис, *Та Тетрадиа*, p.27.

³⁵ From the letter of Pavlos Melas sent to Ion Dragoumis of April 26, 1903 (old calendar) one learns that in the month of April, the monthly amount came to 60 pounds. There was a possibility for that amount to increase in the coming months. Драγουμис, *Та Тетрадиа*, p.87

³⁶ In a letter to Germanos Karavangelis of May 8, 1903 (old calendar), Ion Dragoumis asked the Kostur Metropolitan, to give 50 pounds to certain people in Bilishta who were supposed to assassinate Vasil Chakalarov. In the event that the assassination of Chakalarov did not succeed, the money was to be returned to Karavangelis. Драγουμис, *Та Тетрадиа*, p.103.

³⁷ This refers to the arrival of the first organized paramilitary formation from the Kingdom of Greece in Ottoman Macedonia, immediately before the Ilinden Uprising (June -July 1903) which operated in parts of Lerin and Kostur county.

³⁸ In his diary on 12 August 1903 (old calendar) Ion Dragoumis noted: "The Bishop wants an operation which will bring about a result straight away in relation to the Macedonian question. I am in favour of something which will prepare the people and make them better and an undertaking which will have some type of influence on the Macedonian Question. Драγουμис, *Та Тетрадиа*, p.53

³⁹ Αποστολου Ε. Βακαλοπουλου, *Ο μακεδονικός αγώνας (1904-1908) ως κορυφαία φάση των αγώνων των Ελλήνων για τη Μακεδονία*, (Θεσσαλονίκη: 1985), p.29.



MACEDONIAN GATHERINGS IN MELNIK AND MUSOMISHTA

On April 27 2014, the traditional all Macedonian gathering in memory of Jane Sandanski was held in the town of Melnik. The main organiser of the event was OMO "Ilinden" PIRIN. Around 1,000 people attended, they came from various parts of Pirin Macedonia and Bulgaria in general. Some special guests from the towns of Bitola and Novo Selo in the Republic of Macedonia, also attended. Proceedings began with a speech given by OMO co-President, Dr. Stojko Stojkov. That was followed by performances from an array of singers and musicians hailing from various parts of Pirin Macedonia and the event went on for more than five hours.

The traditional gathering in memory of the Ilinden Uprising (1903) against Ottoman was held in the village of Musomishte in the region of Goce Delchev in Pirin Macedonia on July 27. Again the main organiser was OMO "Ilinden" PIRIN. Attendees came from all over Pirin Macedonia and also from the cities of Sofia and Shumen. Also in attendance was a delegation from the Association of Macedonians from Aegean Macedonia in Bitola. Macedonian singers from various parts of Pirin Macedonia provided entertainment until late in the afternoon.









“NON-EXISTENT” MACEDONIANS CELEBRATE

By Dimitri Ioannou (Jovanov)

Citizens of a country which does not recognise their existence, the Macedonians in Greece, demonstrated that they are an embodied reality and flaunted their difference via a variety of cultural festivals held in a myriad of villages across the part of Macedonia which falls within the boundaries of Greece. Many of the Macedonians who attend these festivals travel long distances to meet their fellows at these annual events and to partake of songs and speeches in the Macedonian language. Though it needs to be remembered that some of the groups performing at these festivals, are still governed by fears of the past and play Macedonian melodies, without a singer....

This year, during the month of July, some of the most notable festivals were staged in Krushare (near the town of Enidzhe), Tudortsi (Voden), Patele (Sorovich), Embore (Kajlar), Setoma (Kostur), Gornichevo (Lerin), Mokreni (Kajlar) and Blatsa (Kostur). In August other notable manifestations took place in the villages of Teovo (Voden), Krontselovo (Voden), Krushoradi (Lerin), Banitsa (Lerin), Pozhar (Meglen), Zabrdeni (Lerin), Neret (Lerin), Krpeshina (Lerin), Peshoshnitsa (Lerin), Kladorabi (Lerin), Ekshi Su (Sorovich), Rakita (Kajlar), Ajtos (Sorovich), Ljubetino (Sorovich), Kopanovo (Negush), Armenoro (Lerin), Lichishte (Kostur)

and Tiolishta (Kostur).

However, the largest gatherings took place in the villages of Tsrmorinovo (Negush) and Ovchareni (Lerin). Thousands of Macedonians attended the festivals held in those two villages for two days of singing and dancing. It was particularly heartening to view the youngest of children sing in Macedonian and the dancing of the "Tanets" ensemble from the Republic of Macedonia, was amazing. It is difficult to find the words to explain the enchanting nature of the atmosphere....



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

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

- Change it now, even bilaterally, and it will be changed everywhere
- Do you want to be called 'Northern Macedonian', 'Vardarian', 'Skopjar' 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 'Disputed' 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
- Score-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 FOR INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION

AMHRC
AMERICAN MACEDONIAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE INC.
www.amhrc.org.mk

and other Macedonian organizations - www.mkim.org.mk, www.mkim.org.mk, www.mkim.org.mk

OUR NAME IS MACEDONIA

ABOUT MHRMI & AMHRC

Macedonian Human Rights Movement International (MHRMI) has been active since 1986. The Australian Macedonian Human Rights Committee (AMHRC) has been active since 1984.

Both MHRMI and AMHRC are non-governmental organisations that inform and advocate about combating racism and promoting human rights. Our joint aspiration is to ensure that Macedonian communities and other excluded groups throughout the world, are recognised, respected and afforded equitable treatment.

RELATED ORGANIZATIONS

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



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MACEDONIAN ALLIANCE FOR EUROPEAN INTEGRATION

The political party of the Macedonians in Albania

Website www.macedoniansinalbania.org



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MACEDONIAN SOCIETY "ILINDEN" TIRANA

A Macedonian cultural association in Tirana, Albania

Website www.ilindentirana.com



NOVAZORA

A pro-Macedonian newspaper based in Aegean Macedonia, Greece, edited by Dimitri Jovanov and with a printed circulation of 20,000 copies per month

Website novazora.gr



NARODNA VOLJA

A Pro-Macedonian newspaper based in Pirin Macedonia, Bulgaria, edited by Jan Pirinski and Stojko Stojkov. The first edition was published in 1980

Website www.narodnavolja.com

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