

MHR *REVIEW*



MACEDONIAN HUMAN RIGHTS

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A close-up portrait of Yiannis Boutaris, the Mayor of Salonika, wearing glasses and a suit. The image is the background for the entire page.

AMHRC CONDEMNS RACIST REMARKS BY SALONIKA MAYOR YIANNIS BOUTARIS IN MELBOURNE

Melbourne 26/11/2014

The **AMHRC** condemns the racist remarks made by the Mayor of Salonika (Thessaloniki in Greek and Solun in Macedonian), Yiannis Boutaris. In an interview with the Greek newspaper Neos Kosmos which appeared in the Greek on-line version of the newspaper (25/11/2014), he stated: "My family hails from Kruševo [a town located in the Republic of Macedonia] but I find it very hard to say this is Macedonia...we should not forget that these people are Bulgarians. There is no Macedonian language. All this was created by Tito...."

While we are not surprised at the racist negation of the Macedonian nation and language

(Continued on page 4)

Yiannis Boutaris

photo: DRASI Wikimedia

(Continued from page 3)

by yet another Greek official, it is nonetheless astonishing that Boutaris chose to make such an offensive statement while supposedly on an official visit to Melbourne to celebrate the sister city relationship between Melbourne and Salonika.

Mr Boutaris's assertions that the Macedonians "are Bulgarians", that there is no Macedonian language and that both are a "creation of Tito" are supported only by Greece and Bulgaria where the Macedonian minorities are denied the most basic human, cultural and political rights. The Macedonian language is internationally recognised by all reputable linguists as a separate language and Macedonian ethnicity is a reality not only in the Republic of Macedonia, but also in Greece, Bulgaria and many other parts of the world - especially Australia, where the Macedonian language is taught at primary, secondary and tertiary level.

Mr Boutaris should immediately apologise for his ignorant racist comments which not only offend and humiliate Macedonians in the Republic of Macedonia, but also Melbourne's sizeable Macedonian population. His offensive views do not only undermine the sister city relationship, but also represent a repudiation of the values of tolerance, diversity and mutual respect on which it is ostensibly based.

#####

Established in 1984, the Australian Macedonian Human Rights Committee (AMHRC) is a non-governmental organisation that informs and advocates before international institutions, governments and broader communities about combating racism and promoting human rights. Our aspiration is to ensure that Macedonian communities and other excluded groups throughout the world, are recognised, respected and afforded equitable treatment. For more information please visit www.macedonianhr.org.au, email info@macedonianhr.org.au or via +61 3 9329 8960.

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To the Mayor of Melbourne

**The Right Honourable Lord Mayor Robert Doyle
of Melbourne
GPO Box 1603
Melbourne VIC 3001**

28 November 2014 City

Dear Lord Mayor

I write to you in relation to culturally racist remarks made by the Mayor of Thessaloniki, Yiannis Boutaris, on his recent visit to Melbourne. In an interview with the Greek newspaper Neos Kosmos which appeared in the Greek on-line version of the newspaper (25/11/2014), he stated: "My family hails from Kruševo [a town located in the Republic of Macedonia] but I find it very hard to say this is Macedonia...we should not forget that these people are Bulgarians. There is no Macedonian language. All this was created by Tito...."

While we are not surprised at the racist negation of the Macedonian nation and language by yet another Greek official, it is nonetheless astonishing that Boutaris chose to make such an offensive statement while supposedly on an official visit to Melbourne to celebrate the sister city relationship between Melbourne and Salonika.

Mr Boutaris's assertions that the Macedonians "are Bulgarians", that there is "no Macedonian language" and that both are a "creation of Tito" are supported only by Greece and Bulgaria where the Macedonian minorities are denied the most basic human rights. The Macedonian language is internationally recognised by all reputable linguists as a language and Macedonian ethnicity is a reality not only in the Republic of Macedonia, but also in Greece, Bulgaria and many other parts of the world - especially Australia, where the Macedonian language is taught at primary, secondary and tertiary level.

Our organisation has already called on Mr Boutaris to apologise for his extremely abusive comments which not only offend Macedonians in the Republic of Macedonia, but also Melbourne's sizeable Macedonian population. His offensive views do not only undermine the sister city relationship, but also represent a repudiation of the values of tolerance, diversity and mutual respect on which it is ostensibly based. We therefore call on you to respond to this letter by unequivocally distancing yourself from his views.

**Yours sincerely,
Dr Chris Popov
Executive Member, AMHRC**



A Reaffirmation of the Role of EFA-Rainbow in Brussels



Yorgos Papadakis

1/12/2014 - EFA-Rainbow (Vinozhito) is delighted to announce that a member of the Presidency and a long time servant of Vinozhito's press office, Yorgos Papadakis, has been appointed Communications Officer at the central office of the European Free Alliance in Brussels. He begins work at his new post in January 2015.

The appointment of a member of our team to such an important position, which was only recently created on account of the dynamic growth of the EFA, is especially pleasing for Vinozhito and the Macedonian human rights movement in Greece;

though we believe it will be of benefit for all the democratically minded citizens of our country. We are certain that Yorgos Papadakis will continue directing his efforts in the service of the struggle for recognition of the Macedonian ethnic minority in Greece and all the other minorities in Greece. We are also hopeful that this latest development will enable more serious dialogue with Greece's Euro-Parliamentarians in relation to the problems faced by the Macedonian minority in Greece.

Press Office EFA - Rainbow (Vinozhito)



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Book Launch: *Taboo*



Dr. Stojko Stojkov

On the 12th of December 2014 at the Faculty of Education in the University Gotse Delchev, Shtip a new book was launched: *Taboo: The Persecution of Macedonians in Bulgaria, During the Communist Era (1944-1989)*, authored by Dr. Stojko Stojkov of OMO "Ilinden" PIRIN. The keynote speakers were the academics Ivan Katardzhiev and George Pop Atanasov.

The event was well attended and apart from academics and students

a delegation from Pirin Macedonia (in Bulgaria) was also present. Notably, some of those who were present, were individuals who been put into Bulgarian jails because of their stance on the Macedonian question.

In his speech, Ivan Katardzhiev recalled that in the period following Tito's death, in Yugoslavia, the predominant policy became to 'forget' that Macedonians live in Bulgaria. This was part of a desire to foster "good neighbourly rela-

tions". Moreover, Macedonian refugees who had escaped from Bulgaria were treated with distrust by the Yugoslav authorities and were often deported to the West. On the other hand, George Pop-Atanasov recounted his experiences as a Macedonian in Bulgaria who had been incarcerated and persecuted. His speech made a powerful impression.

The third and final speaker was the author himself, Dr. Stojkov. After thanking the various people



and institutions which had supported the publication of the book, he concluded by aptly reminding us: "That the negation of Macedonians in Bulgaria, is but one as-

pect of the negation of the Macedonian nation in general and that affects all Macedonians, independently of whether or not they are concerned about such matters.

... We are talking about a topic that is a taboo in Bulgaria"



THE VOICE OF THE STUDENTS MUST BE HEARD IN THE FUTURE

Interview with
Kostantin Bitrakov,
member of the
Student Plenum of Macedonia

by Maja B. Talevska



Konstantin Bitrakov

They are the new, creative, rebellious, progressive, educated, self-conscious and hopeful face of Macedonia. They appeared overnight, calling themselves the “Student Plenum” and defiantly said ‘NO’ to the state examination which the Government of the Republic of Macedonia wants to introduce to Macedonian universities. They said ‘NO’ to interference in the autonomy of universities, ‘NO’ to what they allege to be breeches of the Constitution and laws of the country. They said ‘NO’ to what they claim is jeopardising democracy and violations of their internationally guaranteed human rights of free, accessible and autonomous education.

Konstantin Bitrakov, a post-graduate student of international relations at the University of Kiril and Methodius in Skopje, is part of a young and impressive group of people which organised a protest of some 10,000 citizens who lined the streets of Skopje to defend their rights, without compromise. And they do not plan on stopping here...

Why do you oppose the state examination in the form as proposed by the current government?

The state examination, as the executive branch of government of the Republic of Macedonia proposes, is not in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia established in 1991. The introduction (and implementation) of such an examination, in the manner in which it is proposed would lead to a gross violation of the autonomy of the universities that is guaranteed by Article 46 of the Constitution and also by international conventions. Autonomy, as a concept, is foreseen in our legal system as well as in an international framework. This concept is comprised of several aspects including financial, academic, human resources [power to appoint personnel] and organisational autonomy of the university. Here I would like to emphasise academic freedom, as an essential part of the concept of autonomy. Academic freedom means that a university professor has the right to decide: what curriculum will be taught to the students; how students will be examined; which mechanisms are most appropriate for maintaining the quality of the studies; which students deserve to continue with their higher education studies. The proposed state examination leads to a violation of the

established academic freedom for a range of reasons.

Firstly, the proposed state examination would reduce the importance of the examination set by the subject professor as the academic destiny of the student would be determined by the state examination. In connection to this, regardless of the opinion of the professor about what should be taught, a student will undoubtedly pay more attention to the material related to the state examination. Additionally, in the draft law which the government proposed to the Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia, it is not specified from which academic materials the questions for such an examination will be drawn. This essential issue has been left to be regulated by delegated legislation to be determined by the Minister for Education and Science. That leaves a large amount of room for direct interference in the educational system by the executive branch of government, which according to the constitution is not permitted.

That which should always be taken into consideration when introducing significant changes to a law is how it will directly affect the subjects of that law. In this case, the students will be put into an undoubtedly unfavourable position.

In the second and the last year of their studies, they will have to sit a broad ranging examination in many of their subjects in only 180 minutes. The question is, is this the appropriate method to evaluate one's knowledge. Additionally, there is a lack of arguments to justify this state examination, especially in those scientific fields where the creativity of the student is particularly important. It is absurd that the academic career of the student at the faculties of dramatic arts, fine arts and sport, will depend on the state examinations comprised of five multiple choice questions per subject.

Finally, the state dictating to the university, directly or indirectly, affects the intellectual development of students, reduces the space for the development of progressive thoughts and the self-expression of the students. This affects the political pluralism that assumes different perspectives. All this leads us to suspect that these changes to the higher education system, might become an attempt by the executive branch of government to interfere in the educational system.

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Are students afraid of an examination of their knowledge?

Students are not afraid at all of an examination of their knowledge. On the contrary, we are permanently subjected to tests and examinations in the course of our studies which we do not oppose at all. We are also not opposed to additional examinations should they come from within the university. However what is not acceptable to us, having in mind autonomy as a constitutional category, is being checked by an external subject (i.e. the state). The state, that is to say the executive branch of government, has no right to interfere in evaluating knowledge; a right which is exclusively enjoyed by the university. Additionally, a whole range of factors leads us to a conclusion that an examination comprised of five questions cannot be a reliable evaluation of one's knowledge.

What are the long-term consequences for a university and for a society in general of the violation of a university's autonomy?

The long-term consequences of such an invasion are vast. Above all, they lead to a reduction in the capacity to develop science and authentic, progressive thought. Eventually that will lead to a full cessation of the process of democratisation of the Republic of Macedonia.

In your opinion, why is the government insisting on such a proposal despite your objections?

The failure to explain why they are insisting on such a proposal is exactly one of the reasons why the students are opposing it. Other than generalisations and rhetorical statements that these changes will improve the quality of the educational system, the executive branch of government has not offered any arguments to justify these changes.





In your opinion, what are the most appropriate ways to improve the Macedonian education system?

I believe that in order to improve the educational system, we need to conduct a proper analysis which will show if there has been a reduction in quality and why. Until this moment, no relevant analysis in relation to this issue has been conducted. On the contrary, there have been a lot of arbitrary estimations and opinions, without a solid basis. Even if that kind of reduction in the quality of the education system would be found, there are existing mechanisms in the law to deal with them. Here, above all, these include the Board of Accreditation and Evaluation, internal self-evaluation conducted by the Faculties, external evaluations by European experts, etc. What remains the main demand of the student is for our voice to be heard in the cases where proposed changes affect us indirectly or directly.

A free, accessible and autonomous education system which represents a human right, however today is in danger in several post-communist countries. How far are you prepared to go to defend it?

Students have demonstrated their readiness to be in it for the long haul. The voice of the students must be heard because the Student Plenum, as a movement is gaining wider support. Of course, there is hope that our demands will be met, bearing in mind that we are talking about our constitutionally guaranteed rights, which are also outlined in various international conventions.

The media advocates of the government have attacked you on the basis that these legislative changes do not affect current students, but rather

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future students. They have used this as an argument that you are conducting an orchestrated action for the opposition. How do you respond to such assertions?

Regardless of how this issue affects current students, that which keeps the student movement active is the battle to protect the constitutional and legal system. It is about a movement comprised of individuals who stand for wider interests than just themselves.

We are individuals who seek justice, people who strive for what is 'right', taking into consideration the essential values of our society. Our future in this country largely depends on these issues, as well as basics of the democratic process. This is the power that drives our movement.



Konstantin Bitrakov

Maja B. Talevska is a journalist who carried out this interview, exclusively for the MHR Review. Interview translated from Macedonian by David Vitkov of the AMHRC.



GREEK STARS, THE 12 APOSTLES and BULGARIAN DIALECTOLOGY

By Dr. Chris Popov



The 12 Apostles Victorian coastline photo: 2010 Wikimedia Richard Mikalsen

“Gods, Myths, Heroes”

In November the Australian public was treated to a truly bizarre spectacle. The Greek national tourism agency was caught out using one of Australia’s most famous landmarks, the Twelve Apostles in Victoria, to depict the

Greek coastline in an international tourism campaign. The controversy erupted after Australian photographer Alex Cherney discovered that 15 seconds of footage from his award-winning time-lapse film *Ocean Sky* had been used without his authorisation in the Greek national tourism agency’s official *Visit Greece*

tourism campaign video. The “Gods, Myths, Heroes” video used footage of the night sky moving over the Twelve Apostles to depict the birthplace of Aphrodite, the ancient Greek goddess of love and beauty. However, when Mr Cherney contacted the director of “Gods, Myths, Heroes”, in-

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stead of receiving, at a minimum, an apology, he was told that the Greek tourism agency had acquired a licence for the footage and planned to keep using it in its promotional campaign. Moreover, instead of attempting to defuse the controversy by acknowledging the error that had been made and erasing the footage from the promotional video, the Greek tourism ministry, in a display of unparalleled arrogance and insolence, mounted a vigorous defence of its use of the footage. It argued that:

That almost all the world, wherever you turn around your eyes, you will meet an idea, a name, that originated from Greece. Even the skies of Australia in the southern hemisphere, explains the artistic creator, when lift your eyes open, you will see stars and constellations that carry Greek names. The mythology of the sky at all latitudes and longitudes of the Earth is Greek.¹

So there we have it; behaviour that is laughable in the extreme and rightly treated as such by the Australian media. In fact the whole incident was treated in an overwhelmingly jocular fashion by the Australian media which did not have any fear that the 12 Apostles or indeed the whole of Australia would be annexed by the bankrupt Greek state as it lay beneath a "sky filled by stars and constellations with Greek names." Thankfully, Mr Cherney was eventually paid by Greek authorities for use of his footage.

What is of added interest in this whole sorry episode of "cultural

and topographical theft"- and not at all surprising to Macedonians- is the breathtaking double standard applied by the Greek state. As we all know only too well, Greece has for the past 23 years waged an international campaign against the Republic of Macedonia and its inalienable right to use the name Macedonia and all derivatives thereof to describe the Macedonian language, identity and culture and blocked its entry into NATO and the EU on the specious grounds that in so doing the Republic of Macedonia is misappropriating Greece's perceived Macedonian heritage. Moreover, it claims that in "stealing Greece's Macedonian heritage", the Republic of Macedonia is laying the groundwork for making a territorial claim on that part of Macedonia which Greece annexed in 1913 by virtue of the Treaty of Bucharest. Greece has consistently played that "cultural theft" card where that serves its interests, such as in the case of the Republic of Macedonia or in its attempts to secure the return from Britain of "Elgin's Marbles", however, it had no compunction in impudently making infantile justifications when caught out fraudulently portraying the 12 Apostles as part of Greece's coastline.

Greece's accusation that the Republic of Macedonia is engaging in cultural misappropriation has had dire consequences for the Republic of Macedonia. As indicated above, it has blocked Macedonia's entry into NATO and the EU (although membership of those two organisations at present does not seem as attractive as has been touted), it has prevented Macedonia's full recognition internationally as the Republic of Macedonia, thereby undermining Macedonian statehood, identity, culture and language, it has stifled Macedonia's economic progress

and development (through two economic embargoes in the 1990s) and endangered the country's security and has emboldened Macedonia's Albanian minority to make ever more aggressive demands aimed at forcing a Macedonian capitulation on the name.

It is also pertinent to point out that in contrast to the jocular way in which the 12 Apostles episode was treated in Australia, the Kingdom of Greece's cultural misappropriation and propaganda campaigns in the latter quarter of the nineteenth century which was designed to show that Macedonia was a "quintessential Greek land" and should thus be incorporated into Greece, had very serious and tragic consequences for Macedonia and the Macedonian people.

In their attempts to strengthen their claims to Macedonia and its majority Macedonian population, Greece and the competing neighbouring states, Serbia and Bulgaria, utilised various deceitful arguments and implemented a series of abusive measures against Macedonia's population.

The result of these campaigns was the massacre, expulsion and mistreatment of those Macedonians who refused to support the Greek cause and the tripartite partition of Macedonia in 1913. Clearly, Greek efforts to present everything Macedonian as part of Greek culture and heritage in the late nineteenth century had very destructive consequences for the Macedonian people, in contrast to the farcical attempt to portray Victoria's 12 Apostles as part of the Greek coastline by the reference to the "stars and constellations with Greek names" in the southern Australian skies", an undertaking which was rightly ridiculed by the Australian media.

Bulgarian Dialect Study

Not long after the 12 Apostles farce, Macedonians witnessed another shameless exercise in cultural misappropriation, this time emanating from Bulgaria, which has long rivalled and on occasion surpassed Greece, in its futile endeavours to "prove" that the Macedonians are Bulgarians. On 8 December 2014 the Institute for the Bulgarian Language in Sofia published an interactive map of Bulgarian dialects which according to it are spoken throughout the Balkans. This map which was published with funds obtained from the European Social Fund, did not limit itself to a description of the Bulgarian dialects spoken within Bulgaria itself, but moreover claimed that Bulgarian dialects are spoken in all of the Republic of Macedonia, Aegean Macedonia, in the Mala Prespa, Gora and Golo Brdo regions of Albania, in Gora in Kosovo and in the western parts of Serbia as far as Nis, roughly half the territory of the Balkans.² While the creators of this map claim that they have used "objective linguistic criteria" to chart the spread of the Bulgarian language in the Balkans, it is obvious that in the case of the Macedonian language (covering the Republic of Macedonia, Aegean Macedonia, Pirin Macedonia, the Mala Prespa, Gora and Golo Brdo regions of Albania, and Gora in Kosovo) the main criterion that has been used is an overtly political one; namely, that is, the claim that "as the Macedonians speak Bulgarian, they must be ethnic Bulgarians", thus indirectly justifying the annexation of Pirin Macedonia by Bulgaria in 1913 on the basis of the principle "one people in one nation". However, while the ultimately futile attempt of Bulgarian linguists to portray the Macedonian language and all

its dialects as part of the Bulgarian dialectal continuum could be easily dismissed by pointing to the accepted and well-established principle that the speakers of a language are the ultimate arbiters of how they describe their language and the linguistic characteristics around which it has developed, let us look briefly at the main differences between the Bulgarian and Macedonian languages in order to expose the ulterior political motives of those who have created this map.

Several objective differences exist between the Macedonian literary language and the Bulgarian literary language. Even though these differences may not always be observed in all dialects, that does not change the essence of the matter. Such is also the case with the Serbian dialects and their relation to the Bulgarian and Macedonian dialects.

Even at the time of their national renaissance, Bulgarian nationalists and the adherents of the Bulgarian Idea in Macedonia spoke of two dialects or groups of dialects which according to them made up the Bulgarian language—namely, a Bulgarian (or Eastern) and Macedonian dialect. There were many who strove to create a common literary language, similar to Serbo-Croatian, out of these two supposedly Bulgarian mega dialects. However, the Bulgarian literary language came to be dominated by the eastern dialects (that is, the Bulgarian dialects).

Nevertheless, due to the insistence of a series of intellectuals, the deliberate aspiration of the state to conquer Macedonia and the growing number of Macedonians in Bulgaria, numerous Macedonian elements and words entered the Bulgarian literary language, such as the verbal noun form *-jki*

(*odejki, zboruvajki*) which is expressed in the Bulgarian dialects using the form "*kato*" (*kato hotel, kato govorel*). This led to the appearance of a dual system of accenting of the same words such that both variants were accepted as literary forms (for example *vino* (wine) with the accent on the first syllable—Macedonian form—and the same word with the accent on the last syllable—Bulgarian form).

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

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

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

-The Definite Article. In the Macedonian literary language there are three types of definite article which expresses the relationship of the subject to the object in accordance with the level of knowledge and presence (for example, *mazot* (the man), *mazov* (this man), *mazon* (that man), while in the Bulgarian literary language there is only one type of definite article with two forms- complete and incomplete definite article- which differ in accordance with whether one is executing an action or not (for example, *mazhut govori* (the man is speaking), *toj govori sas mazha* (he is speaking with the man).

-In the Macedonian language the double object is widely used, whereas it is very rare in

Bulgarian. For example: I saw him: *Jas go vidov nego* (Mk) vs *Az go vidyah* (Bg).

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

Eg: *vera/ vyara* (faith), *begam/ byagam* (to escape), *leto/lyato* (summer)

-The demonstrative pronouns **this** and **that** are very different in Macedonian and Bulgarian

(this in Macedonian is *ova* (neuter), *ovoj* (masculine), *ovaa* (feminine), *ovie* (these), whereas

in Bulgarian this is represented by *tozi* (masculine), *tazi* (feminine), *tezi* (these), *tova*

(neutral). That (far away) in Macedonian is *ona* (neuter), *onoj* (masculine), *onaa* (feminine), *onie* (those -plural), whereas in Bulgarian it is *onova* (neuter), *onzi* (masculine), *onazi* (feminine) and *onezi* (those-plural)

-Verb conjugation differs considerably in Macedonian and Bulgarian, especially when one

uses the future in the past tense (eg: I would have gone: *Jas kje odev* (Mk) vs *Az shtyah da*

otida (Bg), the past perfect tense (eg: I had eaten: *Jas imav jaden, jas bev jaden* or rarely

jas bev jal (Mk) vs *Az byah yal* (Bg) and the conditional tenses. (eg: I would talk: *Jas bi*

zboral (Mk) vs *az bih govoril* (Bg), they would work: *Tie bi rabotile* (Mk) vs *Te biha rabotili* Bg)

-The transition of the proto-Slavic forms *tj, dj* into *kj* and *gj* in Macedonian, whereas in

Bulgarian they manifest as *sht* and *zhd* (and as *ch* and *dz* in Serbian). For example *svekja*

(Macedonian) *svesht* (Bulgarian), *svecha* (Serbian).

-Apart from that and despite the fact that there is a large fund of common or very similar

words in the south Slavic languages, they do not always have the same meaning or sense.

Many such examples exist in the Macedonian and Bulgarian languages. For example, the

word *vreden* means useful in Macedonian, whereas in Bulgarian it means destructive and

mrsno which in Macedonian means oily or fleshy, whereas in Bulgarian it means dirty.

Bulgarian claims that a Bulgarian can understand a Macedonian

speaking Macedonian

are not valid objective criteria for stating that Macedonian is merely a dialect of

Bulgarian There is also a large degree of mutual intelligibility between Bulgarian and Serbian,

as well as between Spanish and Portuguese, however no reputable linguists, either

Bulgarian or Spanish, would claim that Serbian is a dialect of Bulgarian or Portuguese a dialect of Spanish.

-Despite the objective closeness of Bulgarian to Macedonian (and the other Slavonic

languages) there is also a large objective difference. Macedonian and Bulgarian are more

different languages than are Serbian, Croatian and Montenegrin or Russian and Belo

Russian and at least as different as Russian and Ukrainian, and the Czech and Slovak

languages.

Perhaps the last word on this matter should go to eminent linguist Professor Victor Friedman who in an article discussing the view posited by some authors (such as non-linguists Hugh Poulton and Misha Glenny) that Macedonian is a Bulgarian dialect due to the fact that Bulgarian, like Macedonian has a definite article and no case declension, states the following:

Aside from the fact that the sharing of two grammatical features is hardly justification for classifying one language as a dialect of another, in addition to which we should note that that these two particular features are shared with some south-

ern Serbian dialects, the fact remains that Macedonian was already treated as a separate language by Slavic linguists prior to World War Two. Describing Macedonian as a Bulgarian dialect is like describing Norwegian as a Danish dialect (see Haugen 1968).³

Dr. Chris Popov

¹ Cameron Houston, Chris Vedelago, "Greece claims ownership of Twelve Apostles in tourism promotion", Sydney Morning Herald, November 16, 2014 at <http://www.smh.com.au/national/greece-claims-ownership-of-twelve-apostles-in-tourism-promotion-20141115-11na9g.html>, accessed on 9 January 2015.

² Бугарите истражиле-половина Балкан зборувал на бугарски дијалект, Vecer, 12 December 2014 at <http://vecer.mk/makedonija/bugarite-istrazhile-polovina-balkan-zboruval-na-bugariski-dijalekt>, accessed on 10 January 2015.

³ Victor A. Friedman, The So-Called Macedonian Name Issue in the Context of Modern Macedonian Historiography, Language and Identity in Mircela Dzuvalakovska Casule (editor in Chief), *The Name Issue Revisited: An Anthology of Academic Articles* (Macedonian Information Centre, Skopje, 2012), p. 241

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REDEFINING THE CAFE EXPERIENCE



NEWS IN BRIEF

Compiled & Summarised by Mitch Belichovski



On September 25 Independent MK reported that Macedonian President Gjorge Ivanov held a speech at the United Nations Security Council. Ivanov stressed that “The illegal blockade of the rightfully deserved membership of the Republic of Macedonia in NATO is a serious blockade of peace, security and stability in the Balkans.” The UN Council Session was summoned and chaired by US President Barak Obama over the rising threat of terrorism.

On October 2 Independent MK reported that infrastructure investments in the Macedonian capital have risen to a record level of EUR 340 million, twice the levels they were in 2005. The planned funding for 2015 includes work on three major capital investments including the Demir Kapija – Smokivca (north – south) highway, the Miladinovci – Stip (east – west) highway and the Kicevo – Ohrid (south – west) highway.

On October 6 it was reported by Independent MK that Macedonia will receive its sixth successive recommendation to start the membership negotiations with the European Union. While the previous five recommendations have not been accepted by the Council due to Greece’s veto, the EU’s informal government wants to protect the enlargement credibility and is pressuring the chiefs of states and governments of the member countries to put the entire blame for Macedonia’s recommendation to the Council.



Vlado Kambovski photo: Republika

On October 8 Independent MK reported that the right to a fair trial and protection of human rights among others were some of the issues discussed at a debate on the legal protection of human rights in Macedonia, organised by the Macedonian Academy of Sciences and Arts. Academic Vlado Kambovski stressed that the progress in the promotion and the protection of human rights is the real measure of social progress, i.e. whether a certain society is stagnating or moving forward.

On October 13 Independent MK reported that Macedonian citizens who want to work in some of the Schengen zone countries or stay there longer than 90 days, have to apply for a visa and applicants will also have to provide bio-metric fingerprints from both hands. These are some of the changes introduced by the Visa Information System (VIS), which has been fully operational since September 25. The system is designed to lower the number of abuses of the visa-free regime by the Western Balkan countries, but also for those countries who still need a visa to enter the Schengen zone, such as Kosovo and Turkey.

On October 14 it was reported by Independent MK that Macedonia will begin to export lamb meat to China. The Food and Veterinary Agency (FVA) announced that Macedonia has signed the agreement to export lamb meat and to expand its marketing of dairy products. The agreement follows a visit to the country by a senior Chinese delegation. "High standards have been achieved in terms of food safety that provides adequate assurance for safe and quality products" informed the FVA.

On October 15 Independent MK reported that the DUI party insists an inquiry committee to investigate the fight with DPA in Parliament. The brawl between DUI and DPA happened during the parliamentary hearing on the revised budget. The Deputy Parliament speaker, Rafiz Aliti, confirmed that DUI has not renounced intention to clarify the incident through the Inquiry Commission established by the assembly.

On October 23 Independent MK reported that another Macedonian of Albanian ethnicity has died fighting in Syria. According to the Albanian language portals the killed citizen of Skopje participated in the Kosovo War and in the conflict in Macedonia. According to official data, eleven Macedonian Albanians are confirmed dead in the battles in Syria and Iraq.



On October 27 it was reported by Independent MK that the Greek Ambassador to Switzerland, Karalambos Mensis sent a letter to the organisers of the film festival in Lugano and requested the Greek film to be withdrawn as a sign of protest because our country was recorded in the program as Macedonia. The Greeks have been "revolted" because the Macedonian Films have been presented under the constitutional name at the film festival in Lugano, Switzerland.

(Continued on page 22)

On November 4 Independent MK reported that village residents live at least one year longer than town residents, the actuarial time table data of the State Statistical Office show. According to the data, last year, the life expectancy of people in Macedonian towns was 71.6, while the life expectancy of people in villages was 72.6. Demographer Donco Gerasimovski says that several factors have made an impact on the situation: demographically, because of the fact that the negative population growth contributes to having older people living in villages, fuelled by the clean air and the healthy food.

On November 5 Independent MK reported that Macedonians in Kosovo make ends meet with assistance from Serbia. “The new Government in Kosovo is not going to bring positive changes for Macedonians who live in Kosovo. Nobody cares for us” says 63 year old Asan Kaskani, who lives in the village of Brod in Gora, Kosovo. He also states that many of the Macedonians in particular in Gora survive with the monthly child allowance of about 42-43 Euros as social assistance they take from Serbia because they have Serbian ID cards.



On November 10 Independent MK reported that Macedonia's 2014 growth was above average in the region. Macedonia will end this year with a growth of about 3.5 percent, outpacing the average rate in the region. The country's 2014 growth reflects the increased export rate and private consumption. With regards to public debt management the International Monetary Fund (IMF) recommends regular cooperation between the Ministry of Finance and the Central Bank.

On November 11 Independent MK reported that a Macedonian from Greece is seeking asylum in Macedonia following pressure that he was no longer possible to endure. The Macedonian man from Drama, who was born in Kostur, worked as a technology professor and taught at several high schools. The man, whose identity is not allowed to be revealed, noted that he received threats even from the high school students, among whom there have been many members and supporters of the Golden Dawn. Even one headmistress of a school where he taught told him that “he better go to Macedonia or in one of the European countries.”

On November 17 Independent MK reported that most Macedonian citizens prefer NATO to the EU. There is a clear consensus with around 81 percent of respondents supporting Macedonia's bid to join NATO, while only 68 percent would like Macedonia to join the EU. The poll was conducted before the NATO summit on a sample of 1,167 respondents from across the state. According to the majority of respondents, the benefit of Macedonia's membership in NATO would be greater security, modernisation of the army, less danger from external attacks and greater inflow of foreign investments.

On November 19 Independent MK reported that liturgy in Albanian language will soon be held in one of the Orthodox churches in the country. The decision is an expression of willingness of the Macedonian Orthodox Church to meet the demands of citizens who are Orthodox Albanians. This will be the first time in one of the temples in the country the services will be performed in Albanian in the community.



On November 20 Independent MK reported recent comments made by German Chancellor Angela Merkel. The Chancellor said “that it would be unacceptable for the European Union to have to ask Russia for permission whether to allow membership access is proof of the EU's incapacity to address crisis situations.” Montenegrin analyst Drasko Djuranovic noted “Russia is not the one that blocks the country's accession to the union, but it is the Greek interest and the inability of the EU to protect the legitimate rights of Macedonia. It is a terrible and unacceptable situation for a country to suffer like Macedonia, as it tries to protect its own name.”

On November 23 Independent MK reported that the Macedonian Prime Minister, in an interview with Sitel TV, said that “the state exam aims to enhance the quality of the higher education and put an end to the phenomenon of purchased diplomas.” Prime Minister Gruevski further added that “it is not good for society to produce generations with zero knowledge and the Government must not look away.”

On December 11 it was reported by Independent MK that it is almost certain that the election ink for marking the right thumb of the voter will no longer be used. Constitutional judges have accepted the initiative for this provision of the Electoral Code and first estimates show that it violates several articles of the Constitution. The ink was used for the first time in the presidential and parliamentary elections in April this year.

On December 17 Independent MK reported that Macedonia and Serbia are to make efforts to finish construction of “corridor 10” by 2016. Minister of Transport and Communications Mile Janakieski held talks with Serbia's Deputy PM and Minister of Construction, Transport and Infrastructure, Zorana Mihajlovic. The interlocutors discussed major infrastructural projects in the sphere of railways, first and foremost to improve conditions in passenger and cargo transport, as well as other issues of mutual interest.



On December 18 Independent MK reported President Ivanov's statement that “Athens can slow down but cannot hinder Macedonia's connection to Europe.” In his annual address at the Parliament Ivanov said “We are aware of the scale of damages and the consequences of Macedonia's blockade on the road to EU and NATO. The blockades are causing frustrations in Macedonian society, instability in political life and tensions in the inter-ethnic relations.” The Macedonian President stressed that “the double standards we are faced with, cannot triumph over the truth, and reminded that throughout history; Macedonia has been through many difficult times.”

Gjorge Ivanov photo: Republika



On December 24 US diplomat and Balkans expert, Janusz Bugajski, believes that the United States and the European Union must pressure Greece to solve the name dispute with Macedonia and have the country accepted to NATO in a matter of months, while at the same time open the EU accession process. Bugajski, who currently works at the Centre for European Policy Analysis in Washington DC, argues that if Greece refuses to abide to international law, it should be cast out from organizations like NATO ad EU.

On December 29 Independent MK reported that a Registry of Property Prices is to be introduced. From April next year, the Agency for Real Estate Cadastre plans to put into operation the distribution system, which will allow citizens and businesses to obtain property proof documents, copies of maps, certificates of movement of the property, and other documents electronically.

On January 4 Independent MK reported that a big fuss is expected over State Exam in upcoming Parliament sessions. "The constitutional amendments have almost been reconciled, SDSM's mandates will not be a subject of discussion, whereas amendments to the changes to the Law on Higher Education can be submitted if we receive arguments", says Member of Parliament Pavle Trajanov.



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Krale Marko

in Macedonian Folklore



Prince Marko and Musa Kesedžija,
1900 painting by Vladislav Titelbah

I would like to begin my discussion of the significance of Krale Marko in Macedonian folklore with what might sound like an unrelated aside. I am sure that most of you, like myself, have had to endure the flood of public and both local and outsider's mockery and complaints about the recent monumental statuary and structures of downtown Skopje, and most particu-

larly the giant bronze statue in the main square, the "warrior on a horse."

The politically and culturally sophisticated foreigner and native alike tend to mock and ridicule these public works of the project "Skopje 2014." I confess that I am among those who think that most of these works are out of proportion to the scale of the surrounding

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city, and that public funds could have been better used elsewhere. This disproportion can seem unattractive, and be subject to ridicule just as human individuals who are exceptionally tall or short or thin or stout are sometimes mocked with terms such as "beanpole," "fatty," "shrimp," and the like.

In some similar manner, the works of "Skopje 2014", are mocked using terms like "kitsch," and "reminiscent of fascist art," and the like. If it is a non-Macedonian doing the mocking I like to, at least, mount the minor defense that a professor friend used before me, that unlike truly fascist monuments, none of the statues are of living persons. And I bring up the fact that the Greeks are unwilling to grant Macedonians the least connection to the ancient Macedonians who once lived here, and they use this as part of the pretext for denying the Republic of Macedonia entry into the modern political and economic union of Europe or the NATO defense organization until we give up the constitutional name. This is one reason why so many Macedonians chose to support the placement of a giant statue of an ancient warrior (Alexander the Great? everyone asks), like a giant middle finger aimed at Greece.

Some of us do cringe a bit at the ridicule of others for what appears to be somewhat childish Macedonian behavior. So, collectively, Macedonians are not an entirely mature people. (I would argue that other peoples, such as the American people of the land of my birth, are often less than mature in their own collective behavior, given their unwillingness to be subject to the World Court or sign on to treaties designed to reduce global carbon emissions, and the like.) All the same, Macedoni-

ans may very well take a comfort in their "warrior on a horse" for reasons that others have no understanding of.

What if the Macedonian people of today feel genuinely insecure in their lives, in terms of their economic and political circumstances, and, perhaps, their physical safety? It seems that, no matter who is running the show, capitalists, communists, socialists, nationalists, the majority of the population remains among the poorest in Europe. The country has established all of the institutions of a modern state, but nearly everyone feels that bribery, corruption, nepotism and the like, are far too common and entrenched. And the relations with all of the neighboring Balkan states leave the nation feeling besieged, surrounded by hungry wolves who would gobble up their state and nation, if they could.

So tell me, is it so unreasonable for your average Macedonian to seek comfort in a cultural artifact that represents protection from harm, even if a bit overblown in its proportions? It was not so long ago in Macedonian history, during the dark, insecure days of the Turkish Empire that the down-trodden Macedonian peasant drew comfort in the recitation and singing of hundreds of tales of the exploits of a semi-mythical, out of all proportion, mighty defender of the people, Krale Marko. He also rode to the rescue of the beleaguered Macedonian people on a mighty steed and brandished a mighty sword. According to some accounts there are as many as seventeen hundred epic tales from the Ottoman era Balkans of the exploits of Krale Marko.

Was this merely childish escape into fantasy, or was there some genuine comfort to be had in their hard lives through the telling and the hearing of Marko's exploits?

Scholars are quick to remind us that the Marko of legend bore little resemblance to the historic Krale Marko, who was the original inspiration for the legendary Marko. Yet, so many tales of his implausible exploits were told and retold endlessly. Yes, they were utterly fanciful, often ridiculous and sometimes funny, and even deserving of the term kitsch, no doubt, much as the sophisticated speak of today's "warrior on a horse" statue.

And yet, they must have served the people somehow, served some inner need for a super hero who could right the wrongs that no one seemed capable of righting in real life. And so, I, at least, wish to draw our attention to the fact that a symbolic, out of all proportion protector of a people who feel too little protection in real life, is not an absurd notion.

I have frequently drawn the reader's attention to the remarkable resources available to us today in the on-line world. Once again, in an exploration of some of the significance of Krale Marko for yesterday's Macedonians, the Wikipedia on-line entry concerning Krale Marko has the following to say about the various story lines in tales of Marko:

"Marko grew up into a large, strong man, with a terrifying appearance, which was also somewhat comical. He wore a wolf-skin cap pulled low over his dark eyes, his black moustache was the size of a six-month-old lamb and his cloak was a shaggy wolf-pelt. A Damascus sabre swung at his waist, and a spear was slung across his back. Marko's pernach weighed 66 okas (85 kilograms (187 lb)) and hung on the left side of his saddle, balanced by a well-filled wineskin on the saddle's right side. His grip was strong enough to squeeze drops of water

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from a piece of dry cornel wood. Marko defeated a succession of champions against overwhelming odds." (Deretic, Jovan, *Kratke istorija srpske knizevnost*, "Epska povesnica srpskog naroda," Project Rastko, 2000")

"The hero's inseparable companion was his powerful, talking piebald horse Šarac; Marko always

Krale Marko is characteristically, as the Wikipedia authors write, "portrayed as a protector of the weak and helpless, a fighter against Turkish bullies and injustice in general." And he represented many of the norms of the medieval Balkans, the patriarchal system in family life which included a "reverence and love for his mother, from whom he often sought advice, following it even when it contradicted his own de-

spirit that lived on in spite of disaster and defeat," according to translator of Serbian epic poems David Halyburton Low in "The Marko of Ballads," (1922).

Scholars have noted that the Marko of legend "used not only his strength and prowess but cunning and trickery. Despite his extraordinary qualities he was not depicted as a superhero or a god, but as a mortal man. There were

Warrior on a Horse, Skopje Macedonia



gave him an equal share of his wine. The horse could leap three spear-lengths high and four spear-lengths forward, enabling Marko to capture the dangerous, elusive vila Ravijojla." (Low, David Halyburton, *The Ballads of Marko Kraljevic*, Internet Archives, "Marko Kraljevic and the Vila, and Marko Kraljevic and Musa Kesedzija," 1922.)

sires." She is often portrayed as "guiding him away from evil and toward good."

The Marko of legend is also represented at times as a loyal vassal of the Ottoman sultan, fighting on behalf of the emperor. Like the historic Prince Marko, he participated in Turkish military campaigns. (Deretic, 2000). Yet, for the Serbs he was "the proud symbol expressive of the unbroken

opponents who surpassed him in courage and strength. He was occasionally capricious, short-tempered or cruel, but his predominant traits were honesty, loyalty and fundamental goodness." (Low, 1922).

His mother in one tale advised him "to cease his bloody adventures and plough the fields instead. He obeyed in a grimly humorous way, ploughing the sul-

(Continued from page 28)

tan's highway instead of the fields.
A group of Turkish Janissaries
with three packs of gold shouted
at him to stop ploughing the high-
way. He warned them to keep off
the furrows, but quickly wearied
of arguing:

He swung plough and oxen on high,
And slew therewith the Turkish
Janissaries.
Then he took the three charges of gold,
And brought them to his mother,
"Behold," quoth he, "what I have
ploughed for thee this day."
(Low, 1922).

While "Krali Marko" has been a major character in Serbian and Bulgarian folklore for centuries, epic tales about Marko often originated in Macedonia, the land of origin of the historic Marko. Among the important folklorists who collected stories about Marko were the teacher Trajko Kitanchev in the Resen region of western Macedonia and Marko Cepenkov of the Prilep region.

These include colorful, fantastic tales such as one about how "at Marko's birth three narecnitsi (fairy sorceresses) appeared, predicting that he would be a hero and replace his father (King Vukašin). When the king heard this, he threw his son into the river in a basket to get rid of him. A samodiva named Vila found Marko and brought him up, becoming his foster mother. Because Marko drank the samodiva's milk, he acquired supernatural powers and became a ...freedom fighter against the Turks. He has a winged horse named Sharkolia ("dappled") and a stepsister, the samodiva Gyura." (A History of Macedonian Literature, 865-1944, Vol. 112, C.A. Moser, Mouton, 1972).

In some South Slavic legends "he was imagined as a giant who walked stepping on hilltops, his head touching the clouds. He was said to have helped God shape the earth, and created the river gorge in Demir Kapija ("Iron Gate") with a stroke of his sabre. This drained the sea covering the regions of Bitola, Mariovo and Tikveš in Macedonia, making them habitable. After the earth was shaped, Marko arrogantly showed off his strength. God took it away by leaving a bag as heavy as the earth on a road; when Marko tried to lift it, he lost his strength and became an ordinary man." (Radenkovic, Ljubinko, Slovenska mitologija, "Kraljevic Marko," Zepter Book World, Belgrade, 2001, pp. 293-297).

"...Marko was associated with large, solitary boulders and indentations in rocks; the boulders were said to be thrown by him from a hill, and the indentations were his footprints (or the hoofprints of his horse). (Radenkovic, 2001, pp. 293-297).

He was also connected with geographic features such as hills, glens, cliffs, caves, rivers, brooks and groves, which he created or at which he did something memorable. They were often named after him, and there are many toponyms—from Istria in the west to Bulgaria in the east—derived from his name. (Popovic, Tatyana, Prince Marko, Syracuse University Press, NY, 1988, pp. 41-42). In Bulgarian and Macedonian stories, Marko had an equally strong sister who competed with him in throwing boulders."

Marko was the subject of a number of dramas beginning in the early 19th century to the present day throughout Southeastern Europe. He was also the subject of numerous works by visual artists, including frescoes dating as far back as the 14th century and

many works by modern South Slav illustrators and artists. And there are the popular, commercial uses such as that of the Prilep brewery that, since 1924, has had a light beer, Krali Marko.

Given the depth and richness of the Krale Marko tradition among Macedonians, no doubt, some of the Marko tales have origins in earlier stories that had Tsar Aleksandar, Alexander the Great, as the mythical hero and protector of the people. And so there is some plausible link between the modern Macedonian "warrior on a horse" and Krale Marko.

A number of Macedonian authors have employed the Marko myth in modern works. The series of poems by Blazhe Koneski immediately come to mind in this regard: "Odzemanje na silata," "Sterna," "Kale," "Markoviot Manastir," and "Pesjo Brdce." (Koneski, Blaze, Pesni, Kultura, Skopje, 1981). These poems are a sophisticated, modern poetic response to the simpler folklore of old.

"Odzemanje na silata" "Taking of the Strength," deals with the theme of one legend in which Marko is tested for his strength by God. When God discovers that Marko can lift the very Earth on his shoulders, he becomes frightened by the power he has bestowed on this man of his creation and reduces that power to a third of the original strength. Koneski's poem focuses on Marko's demand to God to know why he has been so diminished in his power.

...мој Боже,
зошто се уплаши од мене,
зошто во непромислен страв ја измени својата првобитна намера,
зошто ми ја одзеде силата?

...my God,
why are you afraid of me,

(Continued from page 29)

why in thoughtless fear did you revoke your original intent,
why did you take away my strength? (transl. M.S.)

In "Sterna" Koneski describes how Marko created a beast that dug underground channels for water to flow beneath the Prilep plain, and then considers his work:

Сите спијат а јас го загубив сонот.
Ми бучи Стерната во уши како никогаш
како да претекла сета во мене,
овде, в гради,
и по дамарите
ми приидуваат темните подземни водје
без починка, ...

They are all sleeping while I lost the dream.
The Sterna roars in my ears as if never,
as if it overran my senses
here in my breast,
and through the veins
pass the dark underground waters
without pause, ...

In "Kale," "Fortress," Marko laments the terrible suffering he caused so many in the building of the fortress. He did this, in his mind, for the good of the people, yet he is haunted by the voice of those who suffered:

"Ти не си гледал како гинеме, Марко Крале, -
Ние гинеме.
Ти не си слушал како пискаат нашите дечиња,
Нашите пилци,
Коса да ти се крене, -
Ние слушавме.
Проклета да е твојата вистина, Марко Крале, ..."

"You did not watch as we slowly died, Krale Marko,
We were dying.
You did not listen to how our little children wailed.
Our little chicks.
Your hair would have stood on end,
We heard.
Damn your truth, Krale Marko, ..."

And in the poem "Markoviot Manastir," Koneski repeats a legend of Marko building seventy churches to atone for the seventy children he sacrificed to the construction of the fortress. Here Koneski focuses on Marko Monastery:

Направив манастир на скришно место,

Да стои долго самотен,
Да кажува некогаш за мене.
Рушители, нема да најдете во него злато и сребро,
А само студена полутемнина
Како во таговна душа.

I built a monastery in a hidden place.
To stand long in its isolation,
To say something about me.
You vandals, you won't find gold and silver in it,
But only a chill, half darkness
Like that of a sad soul.

And lastly Koneski focuses on the site of Marko's last battle in "Pesjo Brdce." This is his great final battle, but one which ends in his death. Here he emphasizes the hero's desire that no one see his last moments on this earth. His desire to be alone at the end:

Само никој да не ја види мојата смрт,
Да бидам сам со неа
Како со невеста
Во ноќ на затруднување!

Only let no one see my death,
Let me be alone in it
Like the conception night
with a bride.

Perhaps I haven't provided much comfort to those who have been made so uncomfortable by the disproportionate grandeur and the squandering of public funds on public statuary such as Skopje's "warrior on a horse." But just as Blazhe Koneski attempted in his poems to interpret the old Marko tales in a more sophisticated manner, perhaps we too can develop a more nuanced appreciation of some of the works of "Skopje 2014." The choices of others may also have their merit.

Dr. Michael Seraphinoff



Macedonian Child Refugees

The **Macedonian** Question as Perceived by the Greek Print Media - Post the Civil War in Greece

Dr. Dimitar Ljorovski Vamvakovski

We shall begin by presenting some extracts from Greek newspapers, via which, the official national doctrine of Athens in relation to the Macedonian question, in the years following the civil war, will be illuminated.

The raising of the question of a Slavomacedonian Macedonia and concretely the protection of a supposedly slavic population in "Aegean Macedonia" creates an unsuitable situation in the Yugoslav federation. The American position is still reserved in relation to the Yugoslav federation. The USA wants to make use of Tito against Moscow and that is why it still has not taken a clear and concrete position. Churchill has stated that Tito is "a poisonous snake hiding in the grass". (Newspaper "Nea Alitya", 24/6/1950)

It will be a sacred mission when our heroes and apostles go to the villages around western (Aegean) Macedonia. There need to be found 200 teachers and 200 priests for the distant border villages in western Macedonia. Those 400 people should be full of enthusiasm, militant and tireless, so that they will be able to commence a major action. Those people should not be appointed in an ordinary fashion, they need to be volunteers, tireless revolutionaries, morally prepared, spiritual educators and builders of a new Greece. They should be the advanced guard of a new struggle which sooner or later will envelop the whole nation and state. History will speak of them, as they will be the first one to raise the cross on Golgotha. (Newspaper "Nea Alitya",

(Continued on page 32)

15/11/1950)

The government reckons that the question of the reconstruction of the border villages is vital for national defence and for the development of the economy. At the meeting, the following decisions were made:

- 1. This summer the government will begin repatriating all the villagers who fled ...*
- 2. The implementation of the plan requires major expenditure and for three to four years.*
- 3. Firstly, it should begin in the villages where the national cause is more important, to secure the borders and for the pastures.*

The question of security is a top priority and should be analysed in detail by all responsible. At the beginning, in the new villages, all those villagers who possess a strong (Greek) national consciousness will be taken back. If, from some regions the inhabitants have fled behind the Iron Curtain, or if they are carriers of an anti-national consciousness, them by their villages will be constructed new ones with patriots chosen by the reservists according to law 751 (all those who participated in the fight against the Democratic Army).

For all of the above, the voluntary contribution of the Queen will result in 20 million Drachmas of support. The military, police and political authorities in the provinces were sent a directive to give their thoughts about this very important work by the 30th. of March 1953. (Newspaper "Acropolis", 24/3/1953)

Declaration of Loyalty

The person, Avram I. Anastasios from the village Skopya (Gorno Nevolljani) - Lerin (Florina) region, declares that at the time of the occupation he was member of EAM, after that, during the time of the bandit war (the Civil War), he aided the Partisans, for which, he had been sentenced to 20 years jail, from where, thanks to the amnesty, he was released on the 13th. of March 1952. After that, he declares that while working for the communist organisations, he realised that the KKE is not a Greek party and that its aim is to make Greece a colony of the Slavs. He also, in his declaration, condemns the KKE and EDA, regrading the latter as a branch of the KKE and he also asserts that in future, he will fight against the men-

tioned organisations for the good of the fatherland. (Newspaper "Eliniki Foni" 18/10/1960)

Athens - The fact that the government has not made any response in relation to the report in "Mond" from Belgrade, according to which Belgrade fully approves of the raising of the Macedonian question by Kolishevski, has caused surprise in political circles.

From the cited report it becomes apparent that the Belgrade newspaper, "Politika", commenting on the declarations made by Kolishevski, and at the same time pointing at the Greeks, characterised as laughable the fact that they are denying matters which are a reality.

In political circles it has been noted that while the question is being so openly raised in Belgrade and in such a manner, the Greek government maintains its paradoxical position of silence, and the Greek public finds out from Paris, via various telegrams sent by correspondents. The "Athens Agency" did not publish any information in relation to this question. (Newspaper "Macedonia", 23/10/1960)

The Government's Politicking Created the Non-Existent Macedonian Question

The political and diplomatic circles in Athens, commenting on the raising, by the Yugoslav government, of the question of the Macedonian minority in Greece, which in reality does not exist, underline that the government of Karamanlis is responsible on account of the policies it has been pursuing, which permitted, with harm to Greece, the creation of a question which actually does not exist. The opposition will raise the matter in parliament, as soon as it resumes sitting.

Among other things, the opposition will demand that the contents of the letters exchanged by Venizelos and Karamanlis in 1959, in relation to the above matter, be made public.

Yesterday, the Progressive party released the following media statement: It is strange, in 1961, that there is still talk of the existence of a Macedonian minority in Greece. In relation to the latter, no other conclusion is possible. It is impermissible for the Yugoslavs to raise, sometimes in one form and other times in a different form, such claims. Those sought of tactics should have been brought to an end, long ago. From this the accountability of the government has been put into serious question, for only a few days ago it was asserting that

such a question does not exist. (Newspaper "Vima", 19/12/1961)

Thus the end of the civil war in Greece (1949) did not signal an end to the official politicking of Athens towards a final solution of the Macedonian question in Greece, especially in relation to the so called "non-existent" Macedonian minority. In spite of the fact that a decade of war within the Greek state (1940-49) had resulted in a massive reduction in the number of Macedonians, Greek state institutions continued the politics of assimilation from the pre-war period with the aim of creating total homogeneity in the Greek nation-state.

It is noteworthy that there was a systematic repetition of measures employed during the inter-war period, though some of the latter were 'improved' and some new methods were introduced. Of service to the Greek state, in the implementation of a politics of assimilation in relation to Macedonians, was the international power constellation after WWII - i.e. the so called Cold War. Presenting the Macedonian question as a Communist and Slavic threat to its national and territorial integrity, usually gave the government in Athens a free hand to implement its policies.

Dr. Dimitar Ljorovski Vamvakovski - translated from Macedonian by George Vlahov.

THE FENCE

Australian Macedonian Theatre of Sydney

Written by *Dushan Ristevski*

Directed by *Stefo Nantsou*

The Fence is the latest production from the Macedonian Theatre of Sydney and continues the tradition long established by this group, and embraced by the local community, for tackling tough social issues of taboo and tolerance both within and between different cultural communities in the Australian suburban landscape.

The MTS has plenty of runs on the board with this gritty style through previous seasons of plays like *Fear and Shame* and *Wrestling the Bear* each of which sets out to tackle difficult and unpopular subjects such as the stigma around mental health and cancer diagnosis. Thanks to a unique capacity for writer Dushan Ristevski to saturate his writing with well-

crafted humour audiences know that a night out with the MTS will not be awkward or morbid. In fact quite the opposite is true with a quality of audience participation unlike any I have seen.

I'm not sure if it is a particularly Macedonian trait or if it is unique to Ristevski's writing style but the audience at each of his shows (and I have seen a few) are not passive receivers of a performance (as this writer is more accustomed to in other Australian theatres) but are constantly engaged vocally in the drama often shouting out 'helpful' suggestions to the characters - indicating their approval or otherwise at a particular course of action that one of the cast is engaged in. At first to the

uninitiated this is disconcerting and one is tempted to 'shhhh' the audience as often happens in conventional theatre. But quickly one sees that this is actually a demonstration of the deep emotional engagement that Ristevski, Nantsou and their fellow cast members are able to generate in their audiences. In fact a recent performance of *Wrestling the Bear* was one of the most extraordinary examples of audience engagement I think I have ever experienced, certainly in community theatre. I saw that play delivered in the Macedonian language, and despite not understanding more than a handful of words in the entire 90 minute performance, was swept along with an audience who seemed to be actually living the

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Australian Macedonian Theatre of Sydney

Written by
Dushan Ristevski

Directed by
Stefo Nantsou

AUSTRALIAN MACEDONIAN
THEATRE OF SYDNEY

THE FENCE

English language production



Hurstville
City Council



Hurstville City Council 2014
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(Continued from page 33)

experiences depicted by the cast members. At times the performance resembled more of a forum than a piece of theatre and communication was equally profound in both directions between audience and cast. This, in my view, is a particularly rare experience in modern theatre and one that could not be manifest without the humour and ingenuity provided by the team of Ristevski and Nantsou.

And so to **The Fence** which grapples with a host of difficult subjects with great courage. Fundamentally the play is set at the corner of three adjoining fences somewhere in Australian suburbia. Over the back fence lives Kevin (played by Nantsou himself) – in some ways the stereotypical lovable larrikin of Australian folklore but with a dark streak of racism fuelled by a world that is very different from the one his family knew when he was growing up. Deprecating humour is Kevin's *modus operandi* – he vents his frustration with a clever thrust and parry of jokes and abuse. His humour hides a deep fear of the unknown and is fuelled by the social isolation that often surrounds the intolerant. It is the 'Fence' behind which he can express this fear through racial taunts. If things get nasty he is quick to defend his position with disingenuous phrases like 'just having a lend of ya...haven't you got a sense of humour?'

On the other side of his fence are two adjoining properties. One occupied by a family of Lebanese background (father – Saleh Saqqaf, mother – Joumana Tanana, daughter – Essraa Tanana and son – Mohamad Tanana) and the other by a family of Macedonian background (father – Vasko

Srbinovski, daughter – Valerie Peovska and son – Petar Pavlovski). These families live within the pressure cooker of daily racial stereotyping and the stress on their lives not only leads to ruptures within their families but also across their fence as they struggle to live a life of mutual respect for their neighbours.

These families are very familiar with the ugly nature of discrimination and it is this common experience that creates the bridge between their families and allows them to rise above their resentment for Kevin enabling them to come to his assistance when a crisis arises in his life.

There are many threads to this work cleverly woven through the play that add dimension to the above-mentioned themes. The way that the children in each family are able to bond with relative ease suggests that racial stereotyping has to be taught by example. The young are able to begin their lives without this blight on their character and the play suggests hopefully that discrimination might at least in part be unwound by fresh comparisons made by the young between stereotype and reality.

It turns out that Kevin isn't so utterly isolated as we first think – with distant relative Bill (Ian Shearer) showing up revealing that Kevin has a shade of indigenous heritage. Here then we see the first nation appearing in the picture reminding us that relative to the truly indigenous we are all recent arrivals – including the original European boat people.

The only missing element in the play I felt was unfortunately lost in a last-minute rewriting and recasting of the play due to an unan-

ticipated illness of one of the cast members. In the original version both families had a mother and it was the connection between the women that first began to unwind the tension between the Lebanese and Macedonians. Ristevski is well aware of this weakening of the original narrative and I understand that future versions of the play are likely to reintroduce these extra segments, if a new casting is possible, and this feels like it will add the only missing piece in the play's message. Frequently it is the women in communities who have less enthusiasm for acting out the masquerade of discrimination; many historical factors inherent in racial intolerance arise from wars perpetuated by the menfolk of those participating societies.

If you have not experienced the work of the MTS before can I suggest that you keep an eye out for their work (usually performed at their home base in Rockdale and frequently travelling around the state, sometimes interstate and overseas). If my experience is anything to go by this is one of those rare groups that most effectively reads the pulse of its community and provides a service that binds, entertains and educates well beyond expectation and certainly beyond the small budgets that they by necessity work with. Thanks go to the many local businesses and organisations who support them who see the tremendous value in keeping this tradition of truly great theatre alive. In particular the 'Living in Harmony Project', initiated by the Australian Macedonian Centre for Welfare Services and supported by the St George Lebanese Joint Committee, deserves special mention for its broad vision and support of local communities and artists.

Don Francis

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WOLLONGONG - Saturday 28th February 2015

Time: 7:00pm start | Venue: Sun Lounge & Function Centre, Wollongong

Tickets: Ljupco Stefanovski 0448 963 805, Boris Vrtkovski 0403 493 505.

NEWCASTLE - Sunday 1st March 2015

Time: 4:00pm start | Venue: Macedonian Orthodox Community of Newcastle and District's Macedonian Cultural Centre

Tickets: Pece Vrtkovski 0411 673 073, Krste Topevski 0406 959 823, Zlate Necovski 0409 456 160



Interview with *Chris Terpos* for *PLFC*

This time Johnny Tsiglev secures an exclusive interview with the one and only, the famous actor.....wait for it..... ‘Ralf Fiennes’!

Well, not quite, but I think he’s Ralph’s damn well Doppelganger!

Boy, what a handsome lot of actors we are here at the AMHRC. What with George ‘Depp’ Vlahov, Jason ‘Rutger Hauer’ Kambovski, Johnny (place generic rocker’s name here) Tsiglev, and good ol’ Chris ‘Fiennes’ Terpos, we should be in a band or making movies. But no, sadly (for me anyway) we’re not here to talk movies or music, it’s....“Here we go”, “Here we go”, “Here we go”..... Sports, sports, sports... The Artist covering ‘sports’....again!

It’s an aberration. A sway from my creative, comfort zone of the Arts and into the Lion’s Den (metaphorically and almost literally being about the Preston Lions) of sport. But as you will soon find out, the Preston Lions Football Club is not just about Football. No, I’m not talking about the usurped named game, aka; ‘Eggball’, or ‘Footegg’, or ‘Bodyball’ that you handle with your whole body, or ‘Bodyeggballbagsball’ J That was the topic in my previous interview with Alex Marcou. No, we’re talking the original ‘Football’. The game about the ‘ball’ that you kick with your foot, hence the name. Or ‘Wogball’ as it used to be so affectionately called by so many ‘non-wogs’ before it became popular in this country.

Preston Lions FC (known traditionally to many of us as Preston Makedonija) is not just about the ‘ball’, it’s an institution.

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My interview with Chris was supposed to be conducted months ago. I met up with Chris a number of times at B.T. Connor Reserve during the Preston Lions' undefeated run last season under the stellar leadership of the recently acquired coach 'Andy O'Dell', who played a crucial role in Preston's amazing on-field turnaround. We were on a bit of a high back then, with only 2-3 games remaining and Preston standing a good chance of topping the leader board come season's end and earning the right to apply for promotion into the National Premier League Victoria (NPLV). Well, it didn't quite turn out that way, and Chris has recently scaled back his committee involvement at the club. Still, a post-Preston Chris interview is a very relevant way of getting an insight into the oldest Macedonian football club outside of Macedonia. My only wish is for the club to continue on full steam ahead with all of the great work and milestones achieved over the past few years.

JT> Sir Ralf Fiennes? I'm honored to be interviewing you. How's the acting going?

CT> Ha ha, well acting is not my strong suit mate. Although I am chuffed that you think I share a likeness with the man who played Lord Voldemort. And yes, I do see an uncanny resemblance between your flowing locks and those Aussie big hair bands of the 1980s like Pseudo Echo or perhaps Brian Mannix from the Uncanny X-Men.

JT> Ha ha ha, 'Funky Town', yeah baby! That song still resonates in my head from the 80's! We probably would never have heard of

Pseudo Echo if they didn't cover that song! The original being by the American band 'Lipps Inc'. I've never been compared to those guys, it's usually American rockers, but hey, why the hell not! Aussie 80's rock/pop. Good times! J

Lord Voldemort! Maikata! What an ugly thing!.... I was thinking more along the lines of the character you played in Schindler's List!

Ok ok, we'll get (a little) serious Chichko Risto. How are ya son? How's your post-Preston life going? This is actually a post mortem for you!

CT> Yeah, 2014 was a huge year for the club both on and off the field. So it's been great to finally relax these past few months since the end of last season. Just enjoying the summer, spending time with the family and some swimming. It's actually a nice change not having to be in pre-season mode, knowing all the preparation and ground work off the field that goes into getting ready for a long football season ahead.

JT> Man, I'm thinking of all those dad's that volunteer at their kid's soccer clubs. Bloody hell, I couldn't do that!

But as I mentioned above, you stepped down from your position at the club. I hope it wasn't because of Preston not winning the league?

CT> No, not at all mate. Unfortunately I was never able to don the coveted Preston jersey given my limited soccer skills, so being able to represent the club off the field as a volunteer and administrator these past several years has been a privilege and an honour. I've worked with and met some fantastic people who I will consider to be lifelong

friends, and hopefully I've been able to contribute some real value to the club and its pleasing to now see it in a much more healthy and positive position than when I started. Being committed to such a role year after year does take its toll though, having to constantly juggle your own professional work commitments, family life with young children, and then your volunteer commitments on top of that which often feels like it's your second job but without the financial reward. But it has been rewarding on so many other levels, and now I'll just be taking some time to focus on a few other things. But rest assured I won't be too far away from B.T. Connor Reserve as I will continue to remain involved behind the scenes assisting the club in a few different areas of expertise.

JT> Ahhh, it's good to hear you'll still be involved with the club in some capacity. I think you'll definitely be missed mate.

Like the mafia or the Eagles song 'Hotel California'; "You can check-out any time you like, but you can never leave!" Did you see how I did that? I still managed to talk about music in an interview about a football club! J

Chris, you were a key player in the club's Debt Demolition fundraising campaign. I regularly received emails relating to fundraisers and also read all the articles you posted in the local paper. Who proposed some of these fantastic fundraisers, and also, what was the most successful fundraising initiative during your time at the club?

CT> There was a group of about 12 club members and supporters that came together at the start of 2012 to form a fundraising sub-committee, and over the past three years we helped to raise over \$70,000 for our Debt Demolition campaign. There



Chris Terpos drawing the PLFC Annual Raffle



Chris with Raffle winner and No 1 fan, Jim Kirko

were so many different fundraising activities, but some of the more successful would be our Major Season Raffles which generate between \$6,000-\$7,000 each year. We organised a very successful Preston Makedonia Legends Match a few years ago which saw over 30 past players from the NSL and VPL eras return to the club for a friendly match in front of 2,000 spectators, and we also have our annual Golf Day Fundraiser which is now into its third year. And of course we can't forget the many individuals from the community (members, sponsors and supporters) who have donated a significant amount from their own pockets.

JT> Yeah, I guess these clubs wouldn't exist without the community chipping in. As I mentioned in a previous interview, and I'd like to acknowledge again, good ol George Damevski did so much to help build the club, and AMHRC's very own Tase Filipov did a lot of work also. I'm sure there were and are many more key helpers, I just don't know them. My only gripe here is that it's a pity so many people don't give their time to help non-sporting organisations, such as a certain human rights group !

Is the PLFC Growling Frog Golf day a suc-

cessful fundraising outing? I'm asking, I guess also on behalf of the AMHRC as we need all the help we can get when it comes to fundraising. As I mentioned, our community (apart from a few generous souls) refuses to donate money (and time for that matter) back into our community unless there is some sort of obvious benefit for themselves.

CT> Yes, the golf day certainly has been a well run and supported fundraising event. Each year we get between 40-50 golfers participating, and the event is growing in popularity each year. The key has been to market the day as an annual club event which is held at the same time every year, so people always know to put it in their diaries. Originally, we targeted the event towards those with close ties to the club, then every subsequent year through word of mouth and people's own networks we've had a gradual increase in player numbers. We also offer great value by providing each player with 18 holes on a championship golf course, various competitions and prizes on the day, lunch and drinks in the clubhouse following the game, an exclusive club-branded souvenir item and a complimentary season pass membership for the following year. That way we also encourage participants to come along to watch our games as well. So apart from enjoying a game of golf, if you can also provide everyone with some other tangible benefits as well, then it's usually easier to get people to support your fundraising initiative.

JT> Yep, rarely do you find people (such as your good self) who put so much time into helping others without any reciprocal expectations.

Why did you get involved for what obviously seemed like a death sen-

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tence to others? What was your primary motivation for putting your hand up and joining the club?

CT> I can remember attending my very first games at B.T. Connor Reserve in the mid 1980s with my dad, and all those trips to Olympic Park for the double headers. It was those experiences that really planted the seed and helped cement my passion for the club. It wasn't until the mid 2000s after completing my degree in Sports Management and working in the Marketing and Communications field for several years with a national sporting organisation that I decided to "jump into the deep end" if you like and volunteer my services to the club. That was about 10 years ago now. And the rest as they say is history!

JT> You guys have done a great job in helping to stabilise the club both on and off the field, with the promise of a bigger and better future. Was the feeling of being a part of a great renaissance of the world's oldest Macedonian football club outside of Macedonia, or as Andy O'Dell was quoted saying; "Awakening the sleeping giant", part of the reason for your continued commitment in your role on the committee? You know what I mean? Seeing it through to the end.

CT> Having experienced some of the more darker times at the club, it certainly makes it all worthwhile to now see it emerge as a club with a very bright future ahead. At one point the club really was struggling to keep its head above water and could easily have become just another in the long line of clubs to fold. And for a club with such a long and distinguished history and revered supporter base to get into that position, it would have been an absolute tragedy to lose it. So it was

incredibly important that all of us as a community stuck to our guns and helped to steer the club away from an uncertain future to one with great hope and promise.

JT> Tell your readers out there a little more about the club. I only know that it's one of, or the oldest Macedonian football club outside of Macedonia? Tell us some more interesting tidbits about the Lions.

CT> One of the more interesting things I learnt when I was researching the history of the club during its 50th anniversary celebrations back in 2009, was that even though the club only began playing in sanctioned competition and became a registered member of the Victorian Soccer Federation in 1959, the club was originally established as far back as 1946 when members from the local Macedonian community began kicking a soccer ball around near the site of the current day Melbourne Zoo at Royal Park. Who would've thought back then that these tentative steps by this small group of pioneers would lead to the development of a sporting icon in the Australian-Macedonian community that would go on to achieve such success at the highest level of football competition in this country in the 1980s and 90s during the club's term in the National Soccer League.

JT> Yeah man. What a super club we were in the 80's and 90's. Also, our collective dedo's (grandfather's) generation must have had great drive and spirit in the 40's and 50's to (quoting another 80's-90's rock band) "Keep the Faith" and maintain the traditions of their homeland.

As I mentioned in my little preamble/blurb, I've been going to a few Preston home games lately. I'm not a sporting guy, but I love the

seltsko (village) atmosphere at the home games. One of the last bastions of old school goodness, good times. So much so that it feels exactly like a game I went to between Zaberdeni and Ovchareni in Lerin to watch my cousin play. A fellow (albeit loyal) Preston Lions supporter cheekily joked to me at a game recently; "Once you step through the gates, it's like that Mel Gibson film, Lethal Weapon, in here we have 'diplomatic immunity', the rules don't apply". Thank God for that I said back and we had a great laugh about the fact that some things don't change. My son Liam loves going just for the awesome kebapchina rolls and freely walking around the ground with his friends. Me personally, I like to grab a beer, watch a bit of soccer, have a laugh with some of the old school fans and not be judged or overly policed such is commonplace at large sporting arenas today.

Sorry about ranting on, but I had to let the readers know how I felt about it all. How do you see Preston evolving over the next few years?

Do you think it will be status quo for a while, or do you believe they will win their division this year and the club will get an even bigger, renewed lease of life?

CT> Without a doubt, the club is now in the best position to move forward than at any stage it has been over the past decade. The landscape of the local game has also changed significantly during that time, particularly with the recent introduction of the National Premier Leagues in each state. What this means for Preston is that it will have to wait patiently until the application process opens up again for entry into the National Premier League Victoria. But until that time, the club will continue to grow in all key areas by investing in junior development, expanding

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1992 Dockerty Cup photo: John Punshon

its women's football program, working with local and state government on infrastructure improvements, and I firmly believe that in another 2-3 years we will see Preston competing again at the top level of competition in this state.

JT> Chris, I heard that the uptake of juniors is one the highest in the league, not only consisting of young Macedonian kids, but of all sorts of nationalities. Is this true? And also, do you think this will strengthen Preston's future as a relevant club with a positive future??

CT> Yep, that's spot on mate. Back in 2012 we only had about three or four junior teams and things were not looking so good. But through careful planning and some strategic recruiting activities, we managed to increase that number to 13 junior teams and almost 200 junior players last year. We even started our very first junior girls team and have also formed a working relationship with Blind Sports Victoria to run a football program for young vision impaired children. And with interest levels already exceeding expectations this year, we think that number will grow to well over 250 junior players in 2015. The backbone of

any good club is its junior program as they are the future of the club, and it's vitally important to set up a structured pathway for their ongoing development to progress into the senior teams later down the track. And whilst Macedonian kids will always be drawn to the club, they would probably only make up about 30-40% of our junior numbers at the moment. Preston prides itself on being an inclusive club regardless of gender, ability, cultural background, colour or religion. At Preston you will find kids with varying backgrounds such as Italian, British, Afghan, Iraqi, Lebanese, African, Chinese and many more. We are first and foremost a football club, and whilst we will always respect and honour the club's Macedonian heritage, we also have a responsibility to keep the club relevant in these modern times and engage with a much broader audience to ensure our long term survival and prosperity.

JT> Bravo Chichko Risto. Well said and it's great to hear about all the little ones jumping on the mighty Lion's shoulder's.

Ok Mr Fiennes, we're going to step back in time now and talk about some of the nostalgic good ol' days of Preston Makedonija Soccer Club.

At this point in the interview, Chris and I discussed all sorts of compelling and controversial anecdotes, stories, events etc of Preston's eventful past involving certain chants, 'certain' priests, 'certain' turncoats, 'certain' incidents, however, we decided to leave out some of these gritty stories so that we don't offend 'certain' readers and to also reinforce the more positive attitude of the current club/committee, and not dwell on some of the negative (to 'certain' people)

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events of the past. If you want an uncensored version of the interview, you'll have to find one of us at a future game at B.T. Connor Reserve and ask us personally! J

The Super club of the 80's. When our community was united and we were a force to be reckoned with. We (as a Macedonian Community) were proud and had some of the biggest attendances in the then National Soccer League. I was just an impressionable young fella then, but it was awesome seeing so many Macedonians in the one place. I used to go to B.T Connor Reserve with my late Tato and the rest of the Zabertsi. It left an indelible imprint in my childhood experiences, especially after hearing that great man with the great voice chanting "MAAAAAAAAAA" "KE" "DONNNNN" "IIIIJAAA" which echoed around the capacity B.T Connor Reserve like he was connected to a surround sound P.A system! Also all the billowing smoke (from the cigarettes) and the Gjuptin making a killing selling Semki. It was almost intimidating for a little fella, but bloody exciting. It was a different world from the multi-culture of 80's suburbia.

CT> Yep, I remember those days vividly as well. Some of my fondest early childhood memories are those summer Sunday's waking up in the morning and watching "On The Ball" on SBS, then heading to Baba and Dedo's place for lunch, followed by the pilgrimage to B.T Connor Reserve to watch our Preston heroes in action. And walking through those gates you felt a sense of pride and belonging, we were part of a club that represented all Australian-Macedonians on the national stage. A few years ago I actually put together a Preston greatest goals DVD and literally spent weeks going through boxes of

video tapes from old Preston games during the National Soccer League. And it was great to relive some of those magical moments and memories. You know what...when people ask if you could go back in time where and when would you go...I tell them back to the late 80s and early 90s to watch a Preston game with over 5,000 mad Preston supporters chanting "MAKEDONIA"! That really gave you goose bumps and got the hairs standing on the back of your neck!

JT> Yeah, it was crazy. Did you attend Preston's finals win in Albert Park about 10 or so years ago? I can't even remember who we were playing? , but the atmosphere was simply electric! So much passion. All those corners at the end of the game coming sooooo close, and then finally, bamm....'GOALLLLLLLLLLL'. My God, the crowd erupted!

CT> Sure was mate. That amazing match against Fawkner is still regarded as the greatest Victorian Premier League Grand Final ever, and really was the catalyst for re-sparking my interest in the club back then. Ever since Preston was relegated from the NSL at the end of 1993, like many people my interest in the club waned. I attended a few games here and there against the bigger teams like Heidelberg, Green Gully and Altona Magic, but it wasn't the same as before. Then in 2002 when the club looked headed for relegation half way through the season, they went on an amazing run to fall into the finals by the barest of margins on goal difference. Every game during that finals series was an elimination final, and as the weeks went on we just kept winning in the most amazing fashion with last minute goals and extra time winners. Then on Grand Final day the fairytale came true. A golden goal in extra time and the crowd went nuts! I still re-



2002 VPL Grand Final

member jumping over the fence a split second after the ball hit the underside of the cross bar and crossed the goal line...I reckon I was one of the first people in the crowd to jump onto the ground and celebrate with the players, and then it was stacks on the mill...people coming from everywhere. A crowd of 6,500 people (90% of them Preston supporters) and we were crowned the champions of Victoria. What a day!!! Unforgettable!!!

JT> Mate, you summed up my sentiments of that day exactly! It was a throwback to the 80's. I loved it, best sporting event I've been to in



crowd Erupting! Simply Electric! See if you can spot Chris and I in the crowd!

Photo: Steven Gray

my life!

Soccer is definitely in the blood of many young Macedonian youths. Some talented players went on to play elsewhere, for Victoria and Australia, however, so many promising young players simply failed to make it. I personally know many of these boys, as my brother-in-law was one such player, described by the late George Pulkov (a great AMHRC supporter) as a Franz Beckenbauer type of player. His demise was largely due to injuries, however many of the other former great players simply fell into obscurity, even though they played for

some big international clubs and even Australia.

Why do so many young Macedonians get so close to greatness, yet give up when it's time to go to the next level? I have my reasons, but I'd like to know why you think this might be??

CT> I don't think it's something necessarily restricted to young Macedonians...it happens with young players at all clubs regardless of their background. Sometimes other things take priority in their lives

like school, girlfriends, etc. Sometimes parents push their kids into things they don't necessarily want to do. Or sometimes the hard work, dedication and mental application required to reach that next level is just too much for certain people. Apart from having the necessary physical skills and attributes, you have to be very focused and single minded to achieve success at that elite level - some people have it, others don't. Many great players have come through the club's established junior development pathway over the years and gone on to represent Australia internationally at

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both senior and youth level. The most recent and notable of these being Sasa Ognenovski. Following his junior years and early senior career at Preston, Ognenovski blossomed into one of the nation's best young defenders in the A-League with Adelaide and Brisbane, before moving to the Korean K-League in 2009. He then went on to captain

JT> Yeah, you're right, it happens to kids from all backgrounds. I guess it's just obvious concerning young Maco kids as we're around them more. Though I can clearly see some of the obvious mistakes some Macedonian parents (that I know) make regarding providing their kids with the right mental aptitude to succeed. I just think we (Macedonians) have an overtly

Chris, I don't follow the Soccer (or any sport really) with any sense of enthusiasm, but I want to talk about the 'A League'.

I truly have no interest in supporting a club with no history, no cultural connections, no 'heart' (pun intended) and set up primarily by business people. Enlighten me if you will (or can) but sorry, I personally see it as a sad reflection of modern day society, where the ado-



Sasa Ognenovski captaining his side 'Seongnam FC' to victory in the 2010 Asian Champions League Final

his club side Seongnam FC to victory in the 2010 Asian Champions League Final and in the process became the first Australian to take out the prestigious Asian Football Confederation's (AFC) Player of the Year award. Ultimately he was rewarded with Socceroos selection where he starred during Australia's 2011 Asian Cup campaign.

negative attitude to a whole bunch of stuff. But saying all that, I'm glad you mentioned Sasa. I forgot to ask you about him being a great success story of the club. I guess his parents positively reinforced him to push himself to the next level, without pushing him into doing something he didn't want to do!

ration of money and business prevails over history and culture.

Many ex-players I know tend to share my view and simply refuse to attend a game. How do you feel about all this? Does the A league interest you? Don't be scared to answer honestly. I might be completely wrong about it all?

CT> Look, to an extent I feel the same way. I'll watch a good A-League game on TV, but I really don't have much interest in going to the games or supporting a club and buying a membership. But that's because I didn't grow up supporting any of those teams, I just don't feel that same connection like I do with Preston. Also as you say, these A-League clubs are private entities and not member-based organisations, which means you don't really have any rights or a say in the future of the club. That's what's great about our club, every member is a stakeholder and gets a vote. Don't get me wrong, I think the A-League has done many great things for the game as a whole to give it mainstream attention. So it does have some great things going for it. But I don't necessarily think the quality of football (or the players) is any better now than it was during the National Soccer League era, in fact sometimes I'd argue it's not as good, however that's an argument for another time. But for the kids growing up today, the A-League is what they know, so a Melbourne Victory or Melbourne City to them is the same as what Preston was to us back in the 80s. I just hope their parents remind them about all the good things we have at Preston and keep that flame burning inside of them for future generations.



Only true supporters make up a dismal final game crowd at B.T. Connor Reserve 2014

JT> Ha ha ha, “the quality of football is not as good as the National Soccer League era”, that’s what all the old National Soccer League era players that I know keep reminding me about! Classic!

I think Melbournian Macedonians should be a little less indignant and make a bit more of an effort to show up to a Preston game once in a while (during good and bad times), as it's more than just about the game, it's a cultural institution. The game will last forever, but the club won't survive without the support of its people. So aide Make-dontsi. There's a whole new blood of good, honest young people (Dobe who's on the new committee being one of them) trying to lift the club (and our community) out of a very bleak and divided time. Pull your heads out (to use a sporting phrase) and show some support. Stop wasting all your money on corporate A League games and put

it back into some good ol' grass roots football. It's a lot more satisfying than making some rich fat cats even fatter!

Apart from the loyal fans holding steadfastly (you know who you are, Jim K, Tony S, etc...), several of the games during the season had some dreadful turnouts, even though Preston was having an unbeaten run to the possibility of being promoted. How did the committee feel about this?

CT> Unfortunately the reality is that we are playing in what is effectively the third division of Victorian football. So with that you have to accept that crowd numbers will not be at the same levels we were used to in years gone by. Last year I think home spectator numbers

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remained relatively consistent with the previous year which was a touch surprising given our unbeaten run, but that just goes to show the challenge ahead. I'm confident with all the great things the club has achieved in the past few years and the team of good people involved at the club that we will gradually see those numbers rise again. It's up to all of us to continue supporting the club and the best way of doing that is to purchase a membership and come along to the games. There's no better feeling than to be amongst the Preston faithful when we put the ball in the back of the net! It's contagious...once you experience it, trust me, you'll keep coming back for more!

JT> Ha ha ha, it sure is contagious. I think subconsciously that is one of the main reasons I do go back for more, and those damn good Kebapi! Mmmmmm, I can smell them from here!

Risto, you're an AMHRC committee member who does a great job behind the scenes helping us spread the love, so thank yourself for taking the time out for the AMHRC, and the MHR Review.

See ya at the next game for a Kebapche and a few beers. J

CT> My pleasure J.T., I'll look forward to it...my shout or yours? J :-)

JT> I think Ralph Fiennes has had a more successful career than the combined members of Pseudo Echo and the Uncanny X-Men, so it's definitely your shout!

Ha ha ha.... :)



Chris Terpos (AKA Ralph Fiennes) takes a lovely swing at the PLFC Growling Frog Golf Fundraiser

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

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MACEDONIAN SOCIETY "ILINDEN" TIRANA

A Macedonian cultural association in Tirana, Albania

Website www.ilinden-tirana.com



NOVA ZORA

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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