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ELECTIONS IN MACEDONIA: A CHANCE FOR MEANINGFUL REFORM OR MORE OF THE SAME?

By Dr. Chris Popov

The current Macedonian political crisis, which began in February 2015, with the release by SDSM Opposition leader Zoran Zaev of wiretaps (“bombs”) of alleged conversations involving the Prime Minister Gruevski, senior government ministers and officials in corrupt business dealings, electoral fraud, human rights violations and political interference in the justice and judicial system appears to be moving towards some sort of denouement. Early parliamentary elections will be held on 11 December 2016 in the hope that they will result in the formation of a government which will commit to serious eco-

nomic reform, fighting corruption, respect for human rights and improved living standards for the population. The early elections have come about as a result of the open interference in Macedonia’s internal affairs by the EU, the threat of prosecution by the newly established Special Prosecutor’s Office (SPO), which was set up at the urging of the EU in order to bring to justice those implicated in criminal activities allegedly revealed by the wiretaps, and the need to pacify the population which has become increasingly disillusioned by corruption, nepotism, clientelism and economic and social disadvantage.

The protests which emerged in the middle of last year in response to the corruption and criminal activities revealed by the wiretaps contained at the outset the seeds of positive social change, having been in the main initiated by NGOs and civil and citizens’ organisations. However, the increasing involvement in these protests of groups and individuals linked to and financed by the controversial billionaire George Soros, certain “impartial” EU functionaries and negotiators and the opposition SDSM political party robbed them of much of their momentum and legitimacy and converted them into a political



tool of the SDSM's campaign to unseat the incumbent VMRO-DPMNE government. The later involvement of Serbian activist group "Otpor" (Resistance), which some have linked to the CIA, and the transformation of the protests into a "Sharena Revolucija" (Color Revolution) which employed the infantile tactic of defacing public monuments and buildings associated with the regime by coloring them with paint balls further tarnished the protest movement and its ostensible goals of achieving social and political justice.

While the establishment of the Special Prosecutor's office, led by Katica Janeva (despite its seemingly unconstitutional nature) seemed to herald the beginning of a process of bringing to account *all* those political actors and officials involved in corruption and criminal activities. The fact that in the past 12 months it has only launched investigations into alleged wrong-doing by politicians and ministers linked to VMRO-DPMNE and its political allies led to accusations- not entirely unjustified- that it has become a political tool of the SDSM and the EU designed to discredit the current government and bring the SDSM to power.

In the lead-up to setting a date for the election, there was much discussion and vehement disagreement among the four major political parties which signed the EU- brokered June 2015 Przino Agreement - VMRO-DPMNE, SDSM, DUI and DPA- in relation to meeting the goals established by that same agreement for the holding of free, fair and credi-

ble elections; namely, cleaning up and updating the voter roll to remove ineligible voters, the establishment of an impartial State Electoral Commission, media reforms designed to provide fair coverage of the campaigns of all political parties, changes to voting arrangements for Macedonians in the Diaspora and the establishment of a transitional government which included ministers and deputy ministers of the opposition SDSM. In October 2016 these parties agreed that these pre-conditions had been met, despite the fact that in the previous months both VMRO-DPMNE and SDSM had threatened to abandon further talks on these matters if their demands were not satisfied.

So what are the chances of the holding of free fair and credible elections on 11 December putting an end to the political crisis in Macedonia and ushering in a period of relative economic and political stability which will allow the country to begin to tackle the myriad problems it faces? If the elections are certified as free and fair by the EU and OSCE, then it is incumbent on the victors and losers to respect the results and work together towards building a better, fairer and more prosperous Macedonia. However given the deep animosity and division between especially the major Macedonian parties and to a lesser extent, the parties of the ethnic Albanian minority, it is not certain that the post-election period will be marked by the cooperation and respect needed for positive social change.

Policies of the Major Parties and Coalitions.

The two major Macedonian political coalitions- "Za Podobra Makedonija" (For a Better Macedonia) led by VMRO-DPMNE and that led by SDSM- will undoubtedly form the next government with their chosen partners from the ethnic Albanian political block. While both VMRO-DPMNE and SDSM like to present themselves as offering radically different visions for Macedonia, their differences on most issues are mainly cosmetic and not as great as the party rhetoric suggests. Both are committed to Macedonia's "Euroatlantic" integration (membership of NATO and the EU), a free market economy, appeasement of the ethnic Albanian minority and sadly, further negotiations on Macedonia's name with Greece. Major points of difference revolve around who is responsible for the endemic corruption in the country, the wiretapping scandal and who can best safeguard national sovereignty and independence.

Nevertheless, the political rhetoric employed by VMRO-DPMNE during the election campaign stresses that it has brought about significant economic progress in Macedonia since it came to power in 2006 and is committed to projects and policies which will improve living standards, while at the same time warning the SDSM is about making deals detrimental to Macedonia with the international community in order to come to power and destroy Macedonian unity and identity by granting more rights to the ethnic Albanian minority and making Macedonia an official bi-lingual state. To that extent it is playing the nationalist card. SDSM, on the

other hand, indicates that VMRO-DPMNE, which is still led by Gruevski and what it says are a cabal of deeply corrupt politicians, has destroyed the country and the livelihood of hundreds of thousands of Macedonian citizens who are forced to emigrate in order to improve their lives. It has employed a deliberate strategy of trying to attract ethnic Albanian votes (much to the chagrin of the major ethnic Albanian parties DUI, and DPA- see <http://vecer.mk/makedonija/ahmeti-zaev-nema-pravo-na-albanski-glasovi>) by promising greater language rights for that minority (which however fall short of official bi-lingualism) and making the teaching of Albanian compulsory in all primary and secondary schools, even in Macedonian majority areas of the country. It is more willing to do the bidding of the EU and the international community and more “flexible” on reaching a solution to the “name dispute”, leading to accusations, some of which have some basis, that it is selling out Macedonia’s vital interests. It has pledged to cooperate fully with the SPO, which is not surprising given the abovementioned activities of the SPO, and would most certainly be the party favored by the EU and the West in general.

To a certain extent a cloud hangs over those who will figure as major candidates for VMRO-DPMNE, due to the possibility that they may be indicted after the elections by the SPO, an action which would certainly destabilise any future VMRO-led government and possibly the country. The SDSM has tried to broaden its appeal by including as candidates major protagonists in the

“Sharena Revolucija” and certain prominent civil society activists, including ethnic Albanians. VMRO-DPMNE has been further weakened by a split in the party which has seen certain leading figures, angered by the alleged corruption uncovered in its ranks by Zaev’s bombs, forming a break away centrist party FRODEM (Front for a Democratic Macedonia), led by former party stalwarts Jove Kekenovski and Trifun Kostovski. There are also challenges to VMRO on the Right; namely from the coalition VMRO za Makedonija (VMRO for Macedonia) which comprises VMRO-Narodna Partija (VMRO-People’s Party), led by Ljupco Georgievski, Obединeti za Makedonija (United for Macedonia) led by Ljube Boskovski and Dostoinstvo (Dignity), led by General Stojance Angelov and the coalition “Za Promeni i Pravda (Coalition for Change and Justice) which groups together the Democratic Union, FRODEM, DEMOS and MORO-RP Parties. (see <http://pozitiv.mk/desniot-blok-se-podeli-na-dva-dela-vmro-np-om-i-dostoinstvo-vo-nova-druga-koalicia/>) However, neither of these groupings is expected to mount a serious challenge to VMRO-DPMNE’s dominance of the centre-right vote, given its control of the state administrative apparatus and well-organised party network through out the country

The largest ethnic Albanian political parties DUI and DPA, which a not inconsiderable section of the ethnic Albanian electorate and intellectual class considers to have become ossified and corrupted by the spoils of political power, are

being challenged by the newly-formed Uniteti (Unity) and Besa (Honour) movements, however it does not appear likely that they will make any inroads into the support enjoyed by DUI and DPA, which like their Macedonian counterparts have widely used the spoils of office and patronage to create a sizeable base of support.

The genuinely left-wing Macedonian party Levica is standing candidates for the first time, however due to its lack of resources and small membership, which mainly consists of progressive Macedonian intellectuals, it will in all likelihood be unable to mount any more than a symbolic challenge to the dominance of VMRO-DPMNE and SDSM. Its offer of a progressive, anti-regime coalition with the opposition was ignored by all such parties. (<http://meta.mk/saveski-levitsa-ke-odi-na-izbori-sama-oti-site-od-opozitsijata-ne-ignoriraa/>)

According to the most recent opinion polls (if opinion polls can be trusted after the Brexit and US Presidential Election results), it appears that VMRO-DPMNE will once again garner the largest number of seats in the new parliament, although whether it wins the 62 seats required to form government in its own right-which it claims it must in order to prevent Zaev and SDSM turning Macedonia into a bi-lingual federal Macedonian/Albanian state- is problematic, given the widespread corruption and wrong-doing by VMRO-leaders revealed by the wire-taps. (see: <http://faktor.mk/anketi-koj-ke-pobedi-na-slednite-izbori/> and <http://www.mia.mk/mk/Inside/RenderSingle->

Ironically, Macedonia has effectively been federalised since the redrawing of municipal boundaries took effect several years ago. In any case, despite VMRO-DPMNE's rhetoric about preventing the formation of a federal state, an unwritten rule since independence- at the urging primarily of the EU and the USA- has been to include an Albanian party in government to promote "stability and inclusiveness". This means that even if it gains an absolute majority of seats, VMRO-DPMNE will most probably enter into an agreement with the DUI on forming a stable government, as will the SDSM with its preferred Albanian partner if it is given a mandate. If the SDSM gains say 40-45 seats, there is a possibility that it could form government with the assistance of both DUI and DPA and/or the right wing Macedonian coalitions mentioned above. There has also been speculation around Nikola Gruevski not taking up the post of Prime Minister in any future VMRO-DPMNE-led government in return for an indemnity from prosecution by the SPO in order to appease the EU. In this scenario he would govern in the background as an eminence grise.

The holding of free and fair elections, and certified as such by international observers, will count for nought if the new incoming government, irrespective of its composition and political make-up, continues to pay lip service to the far-reaching reforms needed to institute positive change in Macedonia and engages merely in cosmetic measures designed to

relieve the pressure being applied by Europe. "Business as usual" is no longer an option. In short, the new government must give a strong lead in promoting a radical change in the political and moral culture of the country. This can only occur if the new government is led by honest, progressive political actors untainted by their association with dubious practices of the past; an unlikely occurrence given that many of those implicated in such practices by the wiretaps have been nominated as candidates. Candidates with a less than reputable background also figure in the candidate lists submitted by SDSM, DUI and other smaller parties. In addition, for this to happen the SPO will have to show through its actions, and not just declaratively, that it is truly committed to tackling corruption and wrongdoing by officials and politicians of all political stripes and not only pursuing those persons associated with VMRO-DPMNE, thus converting itself into a genuine anti-corruption investigative body.

It is only through internal, far-reaching party political reform and cultural change that any solution to the current crisis reached will contribute to the creation of a society where the interests of the people are safeguarded and promoted. While such change will take at least a generation to occur, a credible start to bringing it about must begin as soon as possible after the elections if Macedonians are to be given hope that a better and more just society is possible.

Finally, if Macedonia is to continue to exist as a viable Macedonian homeland all

Macedonian political parties must recommit to a policy of defence of Macedonia's name as part of any agreement on the country's future and resist calls to change the official name of the country, Republic of Macedonia, as part of any deal to advance Macedonia's accession to NATO and the EU. Surprisingly, given the centrality of this issue to Macedonia's and Macedonians' continued existence as a state and distinct people, it has not figured prominently to date in the campaigns of either of the major Macedonian parties. The shock victory of Donald Trump in the USA may give Macedonia more room to manoeuvre in regard to the name issue if America embarks on a more isolationist, unilateralist foreign policy and accommodation with Russia. Ultimately though, progressive internal political, social and economic reforms will lose their transformative power if a name change which erodes Macedonian identity, culture and sovereignty is allowed to occur.

Dr. Chris Popov



THE NEED FOR SOME MACEDONIAN PARTY BI-PARTISANSHIP

By George Vlahov

The national elections held in Macedonia last December resulted in the conversion of a two year political crisis relating to an erosion of democratic standards and public concern about corruption, into an even more problematic ethnic crisis. Upon the completion of the elections, the leaders of the minority ethnic-Albanian parties presented the major Macedonian parties, VMRO-DPMNE & SDSM, with a "platform" of demands, as the price for joining a coalition government, with either of the major parties.

On face value, those demands amount to an attempt to impose ethno-specific aspects of the culture, including the language, of around 20% of Macedonia's population, on the remaining 80%. From that perspective alone, the major parties should have immediately ruled out the "platform". Perhaps an even more important reason for rejecting the ethnic Albanian "platform", from a

democratic perspective, is that it was not even presented prior to the elections. It appears to have been devised during post election consultations in a foreign country, with the leadership of that country, i.e. Albania.

Therefore the approach of the Macedonian parties should have been to immediately dismiss the "platform" as undemocratic. Instead, the major parties treated the "platform" as a legitimate bargaining 'chip' and both, first VMRO-DPMNE and then SDSM, entered into negotiations for the formation of a coalition government with the ethnic Albanian parties. Furthermore, those negotiations were totally lacking in transparency, a thoroughly irresponsible means of proceeding, which was tantamount to 'pouring petrol on a fire'.

It is exceedingly ironic that early elections were held in order to satisfy a large scale protest movement which was

not about further ethnicising Macedonia, but rather about democracy, the rule of law, negating corruption and responsible citizenship. We are thoroughly dismayed by the unprincipled approach of the major political parties and we unreservedly reject the undemocratic ethno-political bartering which has taken place in the aftermath of the elections.

As a matter of urgency, we call on the members of both major parties and the wider citizenry, to demand that the leadership teams of VMRO-DPMNE & SDSM establish an official forum for inter-party dialogue, designed to negotiate a bipartisan rejection of the "platform". We will add that the development of such a forum could evolve into a permanent 'lever' which might alleviate and even prevent the occurrence of similar crises in the future. It is time for the major parties to implement practices that possess a tendency to place Macedonian society ahead of the

lust for power.

In conclusion, the need for Macedonia to avoid further ethnicisation in forms that reinforce segregation and separatist tendencies, is obvious. The general cultural, including linguistic rights of ethnic Albanians in Macedonia, are and have long been, second to none in Europe. Thus the "platform" is irrelevant to the pursuit of responsible governance. Macedonian governments need to focus on improving the lot of all citizens and not on satisfying the irrational nationalist desires of extremists from the ethnic Albanian minority.

Some Points for the Macedonian Cosmopolitan to Consider

The expression and practice of cosmopolitanism, can obviously be both admirable and necessary. But it is not the practice of a cosmopolitan to remain silent about or pretend there is nothing wrong with, the Albanian "platform". No, that is equivalent to supporting a destructive form of Albanian nationalism; Albanian nationalism that was virtually exported to Macedonia by another country.

Remarkably, over the last two weeks, on social media, I have seen certain party affiliated Macedonians contend that ethnic Macedonians who no longer reside in Macedonia, should not "interfere" in Macedonia's internal affairs; and then proceed to defend as "reasonable", ethnic Albanian party leaders from Macedonia, taking themselves off to Tirana for policy discussions with the premier of Albania.

The double standard staggers

the mind and only makes sense when one realises that the lust for governmental power in Macedonia, often outweighs both simple logic and democratic principles. Indeed, the hatred between the members of the major Macedonian parties, seems to have reached a point, where one can legitimately pose as a serious question: are the members of the different parties, also members of different nations!? One could certainly present a viable argument in favour of an affirmative response and then continue by posing the question: why do they not at least treat each other with some cosmopolitan tolerance and respect!? Undoubtedly the corruption issues associated with VMRO-DPMNE's decade long hold on power, makes the feasibility of such interactions, difficult, but I had hoped that a serious existential crisis would override such obstacles.

It is also nauseating to watch otherwise intelligent people from Macedonia concentrating their energies on arguing that ethnic Albanians should be permitted to participate on the Macedonian side of the official negotiations, with Greece, about the name of the Republic of Macedonia. Such attitudes, take as their starting position an acceptance of the existence of those negotiations as a normal, legitimate part of life. Propagating thus, is not cosmopolitanism, it is direct support for a form of Greek nationalism, that is racist. Of course, the principled action, is to simply declare the talks as completely out of order and discard as irrelevant, the concern about the ethnic composition of the negotiation team.

The same applies to the official discussions with Bulgaria. The idea of accepting as serious scholars, a group of Bulgarian academics, whose *raison d'être* is to propound the assertion that Macedonians have no history and are really confused Bulgarians, should be abominable to a cosmopolitan. Finally, to remain amenable to the desire of ethnic Albanian politicians to write into history a "genocide" of Albanians, that never happened, is quite sinister. Incidentally, in all the public discussions relating to the imaginary genocide, which the Albanians have dated as running from 1912 - 1956, not once, have I seen a Macedonian politician pose the question about what happened prior to 1912, during Ottoman Muslim rule. Nor for that matter did I even see the word 'genocide' defined, which obviously assists in making palatable, a scandalous attempt to distort history.

We could go on, but we shall bring our discussion to a close by underlining that it is the very existence of different groups, nations or other types of groups, which creates and maintains the possibility of cosmopolitanism; or to put it bluntly: cosmopolitanism and nationalism, actually create each other. Moreover, nationalism comes in more than one form and some forms are compatible with cosmopolitanism.

George Vlahov



AMHRC REITERATES CALL FOR RESPONSIBLE CITIZENSHIP IN MACEDONIA

Melbourne 27/2/2017 The national elections held in the Republic of Macedonia last December, have so far failed to solve the political crisis which has gripped the country for the last 18 months. The major parties, VMRO-DPMNE & SDSM have failed to establish a governing coalition. Moreover, that failure is directly connected to an intensification and virtual conversion of what was a crisis centred around corruption to one about ethnic issues.

Minor political parties representing Macedonia's Albanian minority, especially DUI, have presented the major parties with a set of jaundiced and eth-

nically skewed demands, as the price for entering a coalition government. Among other things, ethnic Albanian demands involve a desire to officially impose usage of the Albanian language, throughout the entire territory of Macedonia. Attempts by ethnic Albanian leaders to couch such a demand in terms of human rights are beneath contempt.

The desire to impose the language of around 20% of the population on the remaining 80%, has nothing to do with human rights and responsible citizenship; rather, it reeks of nationalism bent on destruction. If implemented, it would

undoubtedly create unnecessary and onerous difficulties for both state and society alike. The probable result would be a dangerous level of internal discord.

From a human rights perspective, it is undoubtedly proper that ethnic Albanians have always possessed the right to use their mother tongue and to maintain it via state funded educational institutions, in the Republic of Macedonia. Indeed, the linguistic and other rights granted to the ethnic Albanian minority by the 2001 Ohrid Framework Agreement exceed standard international conventions and accords de-

signed to protect minority groups. Put another way: ethnic Albanians in Macedonia enjoy legal protections for their linguistic and other rights, which surpass those possessed by almost any other minority group in Europe.

Remarkably, it appears that none of the figures involved in the public debates have deemed it relevant to mention that the Macedonian minority in Albania, enjoys only a fraction of the rights possessed by Macedonia's Albanian minority. Suspicions about the malicious intent of the Albanian demands have been heightened by the fact that ethnic Albanian leaders presented their demands, not during the recent

election campaign, but rather upon the completion of post election consultations with the leadership of a foreign country, i.e. neighbouring Albania. Contextually, it is imperative to note that ethnic Albanians predominate in two states which neighbour Macedonia, Albania and Kosovo.

The AMHRC calls on the members of all political parties in Macedonia to reject the corrupt ethno-political bartering of their leadership groups which treat the populous as ethnic pawns in the service of maintaining their power. Like all countries, Macedonia needs a government which begins from the premise that its *raison d'être* is to serve citizens.

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 or email info@macedonianhr.org.au.

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THINKING ABOUT OUR FREEDOM OF SPEECH

By Stefani Taskova

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948, is designed to provide all human beings with basic rights and fundamental freedoms. One of which is the right to freedom of opinion and expression, as listed under Article 19. This includes the ‘freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media regardless of frontiers.’ The freedom of speech is an important right that should be upheld, as it is a key and necessary right for democracy. Any restrictions on the freedom of speech would mean altering the democratic system.

It is therefore important as it allows exchanging and evaluating our ideas, and permits us to speak out against governments, further assisting in providing a check and balance amongst politicians themselves as they scrutinize each other. However, the notion of free speech should be used responsibly and therefore it should not encompass hate speech. Debate, disagreement and scrutiny, yes, but not abuse.

There is a general belief that governments should not limit freedom of speech at all, as it is integral to the maintenance of a democratic society. This is based on the assumption that rational minds will predominate in any given society and

will reject any unsound arguments. However, there are sections of all societies which are prone to persuasion and manipulation by arguments that are not sound. This was recently evident at times throughout Trump’s presidential campaign, where spiteful language conveying degrading, racial and ethnic prejudices, certainly contributed to reinforcing negative stereotypes.

Hate speech can and often does contribute to the maintenance racism and other forms of discrimination that undermine the human rights and freedoms of others, often powerless members of various minority groups. Moreover, hate speech, when voiced by well

established public figures, can often convey the wrong message to impressionable members of the younger generation of a society.

On the other hand, in the Republic of Macedonia, it is a cause for concern that there is evidence of attempts by the government to place unjust limits on the freedom of speech. The constitution safeguards the freedom of expression under Article 16, which states that 'the freedom of speech, public address, public information and the establishment of institutions for public information is guaranteed.' Furthermore, the constitution explicitly states that 'censorship is prohibited.' Nonetheless, there has been a decrease in the freedom of speech in recent years in Macedonia. Growing trends of government control and pressure have resulted in media censorship and bias, which has become a major issue in the corruption scandal which has plagued the country for the last two years. A lack of access to accurate information that is not being made public and available to mainstream media ultimately violates Macedonian citizens constitutional rights. Moreover, the ethnic and political division within Macedonia also contributes to rising ethnic tensions and hate speech.

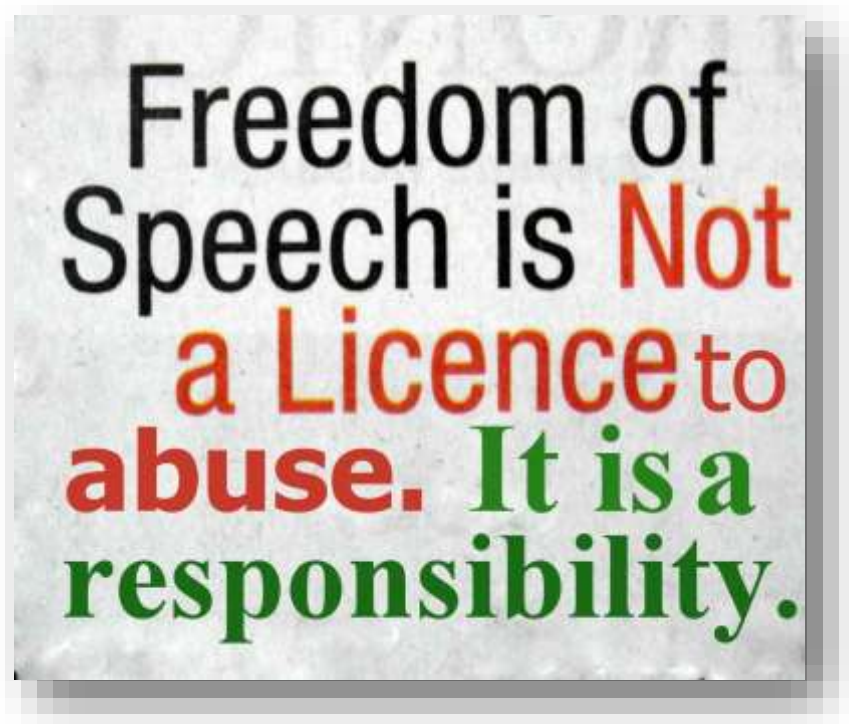
The wiretap recordings released by the opposition leader Zaev, revealed conversations between high-level government officials and staff of several major television stations. This includes Sitel, a private, pro-government television station with national reach.

It is true that internet access remains unrestricted and vari-

ous web portals exist without being subject to government coercion. Moreover, Macedonians can still freely speak out and express their political views. However that does not change the fact that there is evidence to suggest that the government conducts unlawful surveillance and unjust censorship, practices which can obviously flow into other types of human rights violations.

Ultimately, freedom of speech is an essential element in the maintenance of fundamental rights and freedoms. It is imperative for preserving the inviolability of human autonomy, as the ethicist and political philosopher, Thomas Nagel, has argued.

Stefani Taskova





MACEDONIA— DECADE WAIT FOR EU ENTRY

TEAM UZUNOV EXCLUSIVE - EU's Dr Nathalie Tocci on Macedonia by Sasha Uzunov - dateline: Melbourne, Australia, 26 September 2016.

The European Union's top security advisor has blamed the EU's membership process over Macedonia and Turkey's inability to join the EU, is disappointed that both countries have not headed in the direction she would have liked and Macedonia may have to wait another dec-

ade, regardless of EU member state Greece's opposition, before the EU begins accepting new members but she has affirmed her support for Macedonia's right to its national identity, independence and territorial integrity.

Dr Nathalie Tocci, who was a guest speaker at

the Australian Institute of International Affairs in Melbourne tonight, is the Special Adviser to the European Union's High Representative, Federica Mogherini. Dr Tocci was discussing the EU's new blueprint on security, which she drafted.

The document is titled "Shared Vision, Common Action: a stronger Europe - Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy," and was released in June 2016.

After her talk, she took questions from the floor.

Dr Tocci was responding to a TEAM UZ-UNOV question:

"The Republic of Macedonia is in a deep and prolonged political crisis due to claims over a government corruption and wire-tapping scandal.

"To add to this dangerous situation, there is Greece's deliberate blocking of Macedonia's name, increasing Bulgarian meddling; rising Albanian separatist sentiment and a leading Macedonian journalist who claims EU support, Mr Borjan Jovanovski, has gone to the extreme of wanting to return Macedonia to de-facto Serbian-Yugoslavist rule - such a crazy move would lead to certain civil war in Macedonia and spread across the Balkans.

"Dr Tocci, do you support Macedonia's right to its national identity, independence and territorial integrity?"

DR TOCCI: "the short answer is obviously yes...the slightly longer answer is what can we do about it?"

"Obviously Macedonia is not heading in a great direction. I relate this back to the answer on Turkey. The only way in which you can have influence in these countries if it has a credible process.

"In the case of these countries we are talking about an accession process. If for years the accession process with a country like Macedonia is blocked because of a name issue what does that do to our credibility?"

"Now of course it's easier and you know I speak half with my hat as a scholar and half with hat as an advisor, so I realise all the complexities behind that name blocking there is a

long history between Greece and Macedonia.

"But still there is, and I think this is a point... we have a responsibility in our internal debates to member states - is it in our interest or not to see Macedonia moving in a particular direction - what instruments or leverage do we have - if the answer to that question is - 'it's the accession process, stupid' - we got to make it credible.

"So it's a long and painful process. The other side to this is also broader... enlargement was a huge success for central and eastern Europe but people are now beginning to have doubts after the migration crisis- but that's a different story.

"...It's quite clear we are not heading to new enlargements anytime soon. So there is a real challenge how do you maintain the flame alive in what will probably be the best part of a decade in which we have to reorganise ourselves internally and then weather the storm and then look out again and eventually take in new members."

PETRE NAKOVSKI FURTHER ILLUMINATES THE DARK DAYS OF THE GREEK CIVIL WAR FOR MACEDONIANS

By Dr. Michael Seraphinoff

I am a firm believer in the long-term value of making knowledge of the past available to present and future people. Whether they will take the time to read it, show interest in what went on before their time, we can't know. Our only job is to make it possible for them to have access to knowledge of the past in order to possibly learn from the past, if and when they realize the value of that and choose to do it. "What you don't know can't hurt you," is one of the most outrageous statements ever made.

An author who has devoted much of his literary career to trying to illuminate the dark days of the Greek Civil War for us is Petre Nakovski. His biography includes the following: Petre Nakovski, a novelist and translator, was born on July 17, 1937 in the village Krchishta, Kostur Region, Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia. He completed his pedagogical education in Poland and his Philosophical education at the Faculty of Philology in Skopje. He received his PhD from the Institute of Political Sciences at the University of Wrocław in Poland, with the thesis entitled "Macedonian children in Poland 1948-1968", published in Skopje in 1987.

Petre was a journalist for "Večer" and "Nova Makedonija". He worked at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Petre was the first Ambassador from the Republic of Macedonia to serve in the Republic of Poland (1995-1999). He was a member of the Macedonian Writers' Association since 1989.

He is the author of several short stories published in Macedonian periodicals as well as the books: "Postela na chemernite" (a novel 1985), "Makedonski Detsa vo Polska 1948-1968" (doctoral thesis 1987), "I kamenot e zemja" (a novel 1988), "Golemata udolnitsa" (a novel 2003), "Golemata izmama" (a novel 2007), "Makedonskite begalci vo Polska 1948-1975" (a selection of documents 2008), and "Na

pat so vremeto" (a novel 2010). (All of the novels mentioned above have been translated from Macedonian to English by Risto Stefov for free. The printing of 100 copies of the novel "On the road of time" was paid for by Dr. Lefter Manche.)

Petre has translated and published 46 literary works and numerous other papers from Polish to Macedonian. He has also translated numerous poems and stories by Macedonian authors into Polish, including the drama "Tsrnila" by Kole Chasule (performed on stage in the Polish city Katowice (1971)), an anthology of contemporary Macedonian poetry entitled "Pesni od Ohrid", published in Krakow in 1974, a selection of poetry by Rade Siljan "Tragi na vremeto" (2010), and "Pragot na minatoto" by Traian Petrovski (2014) published in Torun by the publisher "Adam Marshalek".

Petre has won the "Golden pen" and the "Kiril Peichinovich" awards for his translation opus. In Poland he was awarded the "Gold Medal of Merit for Polish culture" (1976, with the ZAiKS (Association of all Polish authors (1982) award), the "Golden Marshal Award" (1999, the President of Poland distinguishes successful ambassadors with this award) and the medal "BENE MERITO" awarded to Petre by the Republic of Poland Ministry of Foreign Affairs to strengthen cooperation between the two countries (2010).

Petre was married to Ditta (Aphrodite) and father to two daughters, Milenka and Tatiana. Petre Nakovski's novels were the subject of Tatiana Pelivanova's master's thesis entitled "Literature of fact in Peter Nakovski's novels", defended on February 14, 2014 before a committee consisting of Professors Dr. Venko Andonovski, Dr. Christina Nikolovska, and Dr. Vesna Mojsovska-Chepishevska at the University of "Sv. Kiril i Metodi" under the mentor-

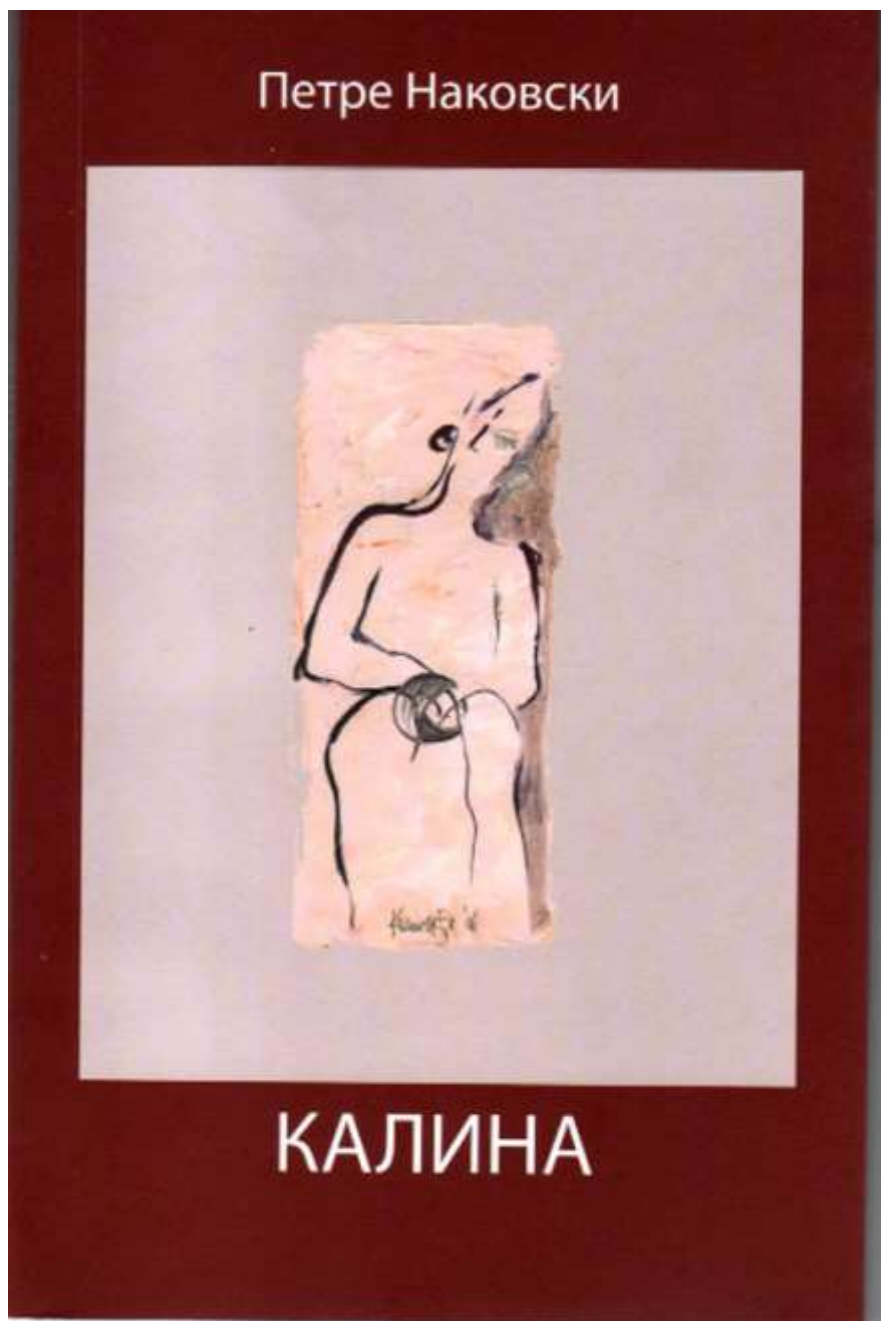
ship of Professor Dr. Kristina Nikolovska.”

The Pollitecon Press website is presently offering the most recent of Petre Nakovski's historical novels as a free eBook download. Here is what they say about the novel *Kalina*:

Women Prisoners in the Greek Concentration Camps

Petre Nakovski's novel *Kalina* explores the experiences of a 17 year old village girl who, along with hundreds of other Macedonian and Greek young women, was forcibly mobilized into the Democratic Army of Greece (DAG), fought in the Greek Civil War and eventually faced a long prison sentence. *Kalina* tells her story as she sees it - the bunkers and trenches, battle charges in the night, long and exhausting marches, the Greek island prison camps in the Aegean Sea, the 70 days and nights she spent in the battlefields of Gramos, suicide missions in Voden, Lerin and Negush, the struggles at Vicho, and the final disastrous military defeat. *Kalina* was translated by Risto Stefov.

Risto Stefov offers the following comments on the book *Kalina*: “It was a well-anticipated story and delivered as promised. The last two times I was in Macedonia we talked about it; Petre and I. Then he got sick. But after he was better he took a trip to Greece and did his research. This book, you can say was his final frontier in research. He wanted to write it because not much is known about the women's prison camps on the Greek islands. My father had told me that there were such camps on Macronisos but the men were not allowed to go there. It took



Petre 2 years to write the book. He wanted it to be perfect. He sent me a draft and told me to read it but not to start translating because he was still "perfecting it" as he put it. Then, some time later he said "here it is it is yours I am getting tired, so do what you can". I told him I will capture its essence the best I can...

From what Petre wrote, the Greeks used the same play-book on the women as they did on the men. *Kalina* is unique because it is a story about all the women and what they had gone through. She was a Macedonian, a partisan fighter and a prisoner in the Greek prison camps; all in one story. Petre, as usual, has also captured the human side of *Kalina* showing that Macedonian women are just as resilient as the men and can survive anything... and still be human. Perhaps *Kalina* was special in that respect...?

The first time Petre told me about wanting to write about the women, without being asked, I said I would be interested in that and I will translate the book for him. I do the work for free. So far I have translated 22 books and am now working on 23. It has become an obsession with me... That's what my sons tell me.

I was hoping to find something more, something different, about how the women were treated in Greece but from what Petre has found, there was not much different or special in the way women were treated."

An excerpt from the novel:

***Kalina*, Chapter 25**

...The thread of exit from evil...

My torn thread behind me and my mother's torn black thread from her malina, on my feet... Our black... our black torn thread...

Our cursed time in which no one gave me the thread of exit from evil...

That day I did not return to the city. I remained in the village.

I spent the night in the church, in our church, in Sveta Nedela (Holy Sunday). A beam of moonlight entering through the little window faintly illuminated the faces and eyes of the images of saints and angels. They were watching me and following my every move, seeming like they were silently asking what I was doing there. I kept quiet, being drowned in countless questions about the many things that were and that are.

I lit candles for the living and for the dead, for those who were gone and for those who remained. In my thoughts I kept returning to the mountains, hills, trenches, bunkers, ditches, long nights of marches, and there I found the fighters... I sat with them and caressed the soil that lay over them and again returned to my place of birth, a place that once was a house, a home, a garden, a chimney from which a pillar of smoke rose straight up letting the world know that there was life there.

Now I am the sole person alive to walk on this desolate piece of land, on which only thorns and weeds grow... I now have a desire to contact Madame Olga, down there in

Athens, and tell her that the good people and the house of goodness are gone...

They are gone...

Why...?

* * *

Dedo Giorgi, a man with long roots and with a very large family, was left all alone waiting to die... He died in the nursing home...

They told me that they buried him at the end of the cemetery, where the rich from Kostur bury their pet cats and dogs.

Dedo Giorgi wanted to be buried in the village cemetery where his ancestors were buried. He wanted to be buried among the century-old oaks that weathered great storms... and flourished...

It was his final wish... an unfulfilled last wish.

I visited him... his grave in Kostur, on a weekly basis...

I always left a piece of bread and a small bottle of wine near the headstone with no name...

X

At that time I remained true to myself, to my own thoughts, in body and soul. Not in some strange place but in my grandfather's yard, firmly sitting exactly where the foundation stones were set...

I grew up here on this scorched piece of land, which now is my home... even though there was nothing left of the house, not even a foundation... I am at home; I am in my home...

Above me is the blue sky and below me are the ashes of my house covered with weeds and thorns...

And from here, from my home, I stare at the mountains, hills, rocks, stones, forests, meadows... all covered with pain, bitterness, deceit, disappointment, sadness and the blood spilled during bad times... where, after many years, nature covered them with colours and restored their beauty.

There is nothing there to remind us of those burning days. Everything is covered with greenery, grass and trees, the colors of flowers... The history of the living and the stories about Orle, Gorisha, Krusha, Kotelkata, Kula, Kopanche, Odreto, Sveti Ilija, Aliavitsa, Krastavets, Charno, Goliot, Kamenik, Gramos and all the other dozens and dozens of hills and peaks that have disappeared in the deep blue sky...

The mountain landscape with its open space is an illusion making everything seem possible, even to reach the farthest light on the horizon...

When I go there, it is my time, a time for thought about the spiritual dimension of humankind, about dignity and understanding, about human value and the fate of all those who took the road to war, to defeat, to the exodus and to the salty waters that led them to the camps...

That's where we were, that's where they remained, they who I constantly think about and want to be in our thoughts and to shine in our memory with honour...

My pain of the memories of those lying here in the Macedonian mountains is great. Every step I take takes me back, to the past, and every hill, every stone, every broken tree, uncovers history and opens festering wounds...

Who, today, speaks for those who died and for those who wasted in the island prison camps?

Very few of us from my partisan generation have remained...

Our partisan generation is slowly going...

... it is leaving betrayed and disappointed...

I keep all of them in my memory and pray to a merciful God to receive them in his bosom...

Skopje-Prespa

April 2014- September 2015

КАЛИНА –Дел 25

Конецот за излезот од злото...

Зад мене мојот скинат конец и на моите колена црниот скинат конец од малината на мајка...

Нашиот црн - нашиот црн скинат конец...

И нашето колнато време во кое никој не ми подаде конец за да излезам од злото...

Тој ден не се вратив во градот.

Нокта ја преседов во црквата, во нашата црква, Света Недела. Низ

прозорецот течеше сноп месечева светлина. Бледо ги осветлуваше лицата и вчудовидените очи и натажените лица на светците и ангелите вковани во мене чиниш ме прашуваа што барам меѓу нив, а јас молчев и ме давеа безброј прашања за многу нешта што беа и што се.

Палев свеќи за живите и мртвите, за тие кои ги нема и кои се. Со мислите се враќав во планињето, ридовите, земјанките, рововите, бункерите, траповите, долгите нокни маршеви и таму ги наоѓав соборците, седнував крај нив и ја галев земјата над нив и одново се враќав на пепелиштето, кое беше кука, двор, дома, оцак од кој право угоре, како столб, се издигнуваше чадот, бележејќи дека тука имаше живот.

Сега на тоа запустено парче земја, на кое бујно расте бурјанот и шипот, само јас чекорам жива... и желба ми е да и`се јавам на мадам Олга, таму во Атина, за да и`кажам дека веќе ги нема добрите луѓе и куката на добрината...

Ги нема...

Зошто?...

* * *

Дедо Ѓорѓи кој беше корен од старо и бројно големо семејство и на стари години самуваше, умре во старскиот дом.

Ми рекоа дека го погребав на крајот од гробиштата, таму каде богатите Костурчани ги закопуваа

своите миленици - мачките и кучињата.

А дедо Ѓорѓи сакаше да биде погребан на селските гробишта, таму каде почиваат неговите предци, таму каде над нив со векови растат и во најлошото време истрајаа и траат старите и дебели дабје на кои не им се знаат годините.

Не му беше исполнета последната желба.

Неделините го посетувам.

На безимениот камен секогаш оставам парче леб и бокалче со вино...

Х

Во тоа време со тело, мисла и душа си останав своја. Не на туѓо, туку во дедовиот двор, цврсто седната токму таму каде беше каменот темелник...

Врастена сум во пепеланото парче земја, кое сега е мојата дома... иако од куќата ниту темели ниту камен не ми оставија...Дома сум, во мојата дома...

Над мене лазурот на небото, а под мене пепелта на мојата дома покриена со трескот, бурјан и шип...

И од тука, од мојата дома гледам таму, во планините, ридовите, карпите, камењата, шумите, ливадите, кои се покриени со болката, огорченоста, измамата, разочараноста, тагата и крвта истурена во тие лоши времиња, каде по многу години и сега природата ги покри со бои и им ја врати убавината.

Таму веќе ништо не потсетува на тие гламносани денови. Се` е послано со зеленилото на тревата и дрвјата, со боите на цвеќињата и на синото небо и стана историја за живите и приказна за Орле, Горуша и Круша, Котелската Кула, Копанче и Одрето, Свети Илија и Алјавица, Краставец и Чарно, Голиот Каменик и Грамос и сите други десетици и десетици ридови и чуки...

Планинскиот пејзаж мами со отворената просторност и се чини дека се` може да се дофати, па дури и најоддалечената светлина на хоризонтот...

Таму кога одам, тогаш времето ми е време на замисленост за духовната величина на човекот, за неговото достоинство и за поимањето на сопствената вредност и за судбината на сите кои ги поминаа патиштата на војната, на поразот, егзодусот и солените води до логорите...

Таму бевме ние, таму останаа тие, тие, кои постојано сакам да се во нашите мисли и огреани со нашето паметење и почит...

Големи се болките на спомените легнати тука во македонските планини, каде секој чекор враќа во минатото и секој рид, секој камен, секоја карпа, секое скршено стебло открива историја и отвора неисцелени рани...

Кој денес зборува за тие, кои изгинаа и за тие кои гниеја во островските логори?

Од нашето партизанско поколение малкумина останавме.

Нашето партизанско поколение полека си оди...

...си оди измамено и разочарано...

Сите ги чувам во споменот и се молам, милосрдниот Бог да ги прими во своите пазуви...

Скопје-Преспа

Април 2014- септември 2015

Review by Dr. Michael Seraphinoff

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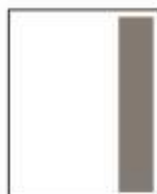
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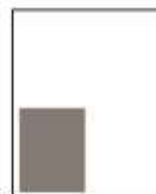
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A DELIMITATION OF THE ZONE INHABITED BY THE MACEDONIAN AND GREEK ETHNIC GROUPS IN OTTOMAN MACEDONIA

By Dr. Dimitar Vamvakovski-Ljorovski Translated from Macedonian by George Vlahov



The title of this text refers to a border area inhabited by a mixed population, i.e. a region in which two or more ethnic groups, overlap. Our concern here is with the southernmost region of Macedonia, which, during Ottoman rule, consti-

tuted the border zone between the Macedonian and Greek ethnicities. We shall attempt to delineate the 'borders' between the two groups; however, prior that, we shall present a wider purview of late Ottoman society, in the context of

the so-called Macedonian Question.

Firstly we shall discuss population numbers and the structural division of the population which inhabited Ottoman Macedonia during the second half of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries. It is difficult to give a precise figure on the number of inhabitants as Ottoman censuses are not accurate in relation to a total number or ethnic breakdown. Above all else, Ottoman censuses were dictated by the needs of the military and the taxation authorities. The categories for identifying the population were religion and gender. Muslims were the ruling or governing class and Christians (or "raya") were subject to their rule. All other classifications were of secondary importance.

We need here to explain the Millet system. It was an institution created by the Sultan for the purpose of maintaining control over the various religious groups by the central government. At the head of any particular Millet, stood a religious leader who, via his subordinates maintained a certain level of autonomous control over his Millet. Some Millets were established immediately after the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople (today Istanbul). Originally, all Christians in Ottoman Macedonia were part of the Orthodox Millet, the head of which was the Orthodox Patriarch. Later, a substantial number of Christians joined newly formed Bulgar and Vlach Millets.

During the late Ottoman period, the recently established Balkan states began to use the Millets as a means for pursuing nationalistic ambitions. In other words they began presenting the Millets as members of their own nations, in spite of the fact that the Ottoman Millets were an a-national social institution. Thus it is that the Macedonian-speaking population came to be labelled as "Bulgarians" and "Greeks" in a national sense by the Greek and Bulgarian states. The demographic picture of Macedonia during the 19th and early 20th centuries was further complicated by the accounts of various Western travel writers, ethnographers and propagandists representing the Balkan states. The information given by all of them, was more or less different in relation to the total number of inhabitants and their religious and ethnic affiliations. It seems to have been mostly dependent on the centre of power they represented.

On the basis of all of the available information,

it can be concluded that at the beginning of the 20th century, Ottoman Macedonia was inhabited by somewhat more than two million people. And if we took the mother tongue as our main determinant of the ethnic composition of Macedonia at that time, we would conclude that slightly more than 50% of the population was Macedonian, i.e. around 1.1 to 1.2 million of the inhabitants. After that we have the Turks with around 500,000, Greeks around 250,000, Albanians 120,000, Vlachs 80,000 and Jews, somewhat more than 50,000. It needs to be underlined here that the ethnic and religious mix in Macedonia, during Ottoman rule, was also characteristic of all the other territories ruled by the Ottomans, which eventually became modern nation-states.

One final matter which needs to be discussed prior to our delineation of the border zone between the Macedonian and Greek ethnic groups, is the territory which constituted Ottoman Macedonia and its status within the Ottoman state. During Ottoman rule Macedonia was not a state political or administrative unit, rather, it was a region that fell within three administrative Vilayets: Bitola, Salonika and Kosovo. In other words it was a geographical area which the Macedonian revolutionary movement was hoping to convert into a political subject. Originally, upon the Ottoman conquest of the Balkans, European states did not appear to have attached any importance to Macedonia and the notion of a Macedonia all but disappeared. That perception changed with the gradual weakening of Ottoman rule; the latter encouraged European states to turn their attention towards the Balkans and also Macedonia. The renewal of interest in Macedonia by the West, was strongly influenced by a large number travel writers: geographers, ethnographers, merchants and others; who, for one reason or another, visited the Balkans and began to write about the history and culture of the people inhabiting the region.

The borders of Macedonia, above all else, appear to have been delineated by geographic factors. On three sides Macedonia was bounded by mountains (Olympus, Pindus, Shar, Black and Rila), while a section of the south, including Salonika, was bordered by the Aegean Sea. This late Ottoman definition coincides with definitions from Antiquity, i.e. from the time of the rule of Philip II. All the same, as the cartographer H. R. Wilkinson indicated, numerous vari-

ations on the definition of Macedonia existed during Ottoman rule. Bases for these definitions included: physical geography; historical political boundaries; the perception of the population as a melting pot of various cultures and peoples, with a view of the region as the border between Orient and Occident and in connection with that, Macedonia as a region perceived as suitable for the pursuit of geo-strategic goals, (i.e. against the backdrop of the crumbling Ottoman Empire) by the Great Powers and also by the newly established neighbouring nation-states. Be that as it may, we can conclude by citing the scholar Manol Pandevski, who after analysing the issue, asserted that the reality of the situation was that Macedonia had become a "definitely bordered unit on the geographical map of European Turkey."

Of course the border we intend to delineate, is presently located within the territory of Greece and is largely, apart from some minority enclaves that Athens refuses to recognise, a homogenous national and religious territory. None-the-less, towards the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries, the situation in the southern and central parts of Ottoman Macedonia, was, ethnically, much more complicated and it is worth examining the Greek position in relation to Macedonia, at that time.

Greek national ideologues and historians, from the end of the Eastern Crisis (1875-1881) until early in the 20th century, revealed their nationalist pretensions by dividing Macedonia into three zones - northern, central and southern. Prior to that, the territorial pretensions of the Greek state were based on dubious arguments about the Greek character of the population inhabiting Macedonia as a whole. Around 1880 those arguments began to lose traction, firstly as a result of the development of the Pan-Slavic movement and secondly, the rise of rival Bulgarian pretensions accompanied by the installation of Bulgarian nationalist social institutions in Ottoman Macedonia. According to the Greek historian Konstantinos Vakalopoulos, the northern zone, which spanned from north of the Shar to the Rila Mountains in the east, and south, in line with the towns of Ohrid, Krushevo, Veles, Melnik, Nevrokop, ending at the Rhodope Mountains, was inhabited by "a Slavic population, which from the middle of the 19th century, fell within [the pretensions of] the Bulgarian national movement and from 1870, formally

came under the jurisdiction of the Exarchate. That population spoke a language similar to the Bulgarian language." Thus it was that the Greeks altered their program and renounced claims on the northern zone, leaving it to the Bulgarians - in other words, the northern zone was 'rubbed out' of the "Grand Idea" (Megali Ideya). The Greek historian, Evangelos Kofos, underlined that some in the northern zone "still remained loyal to the Eucumenical Patriarchate", but concluded that they were insufficient to "affect the general picture."

The southern zone was considered unquestionably Greek, while in the central zone, it was considered essential to make a maximum effort to remove oppositional propagandas so that Hellenism would reign supreme. The southern portion of the southern zone began from the Ottoman-Greek border and ran east to the shores of the Aegean, while the northern border, an imaginary line between the southern and central zones, ran from the Pindus Ranges to Kostur and then the line took in the towns of Ber, Salonika, Seres and Drama. The Greek speaking population inhabiting this zone, which was affiliated with the Patriarchate, was considered "unquestionably" Greek. Thus the Greek Consul in Bitola, Logotetis, in a memorandum dated July 2 1880, underlined that this part of Macedonia is "purely Greek-speaking and has a stable and total [Greek] national consciousness; while the Greek historian, Sophia Vouri, contends that "only in the southern zone does the population 'sincerely' regard itself as Greek." Though even here, there were enclaves of Orthodox Vlachs and Albanians, which Greek propaganda unhesitatingly included in its ethnic corpus.

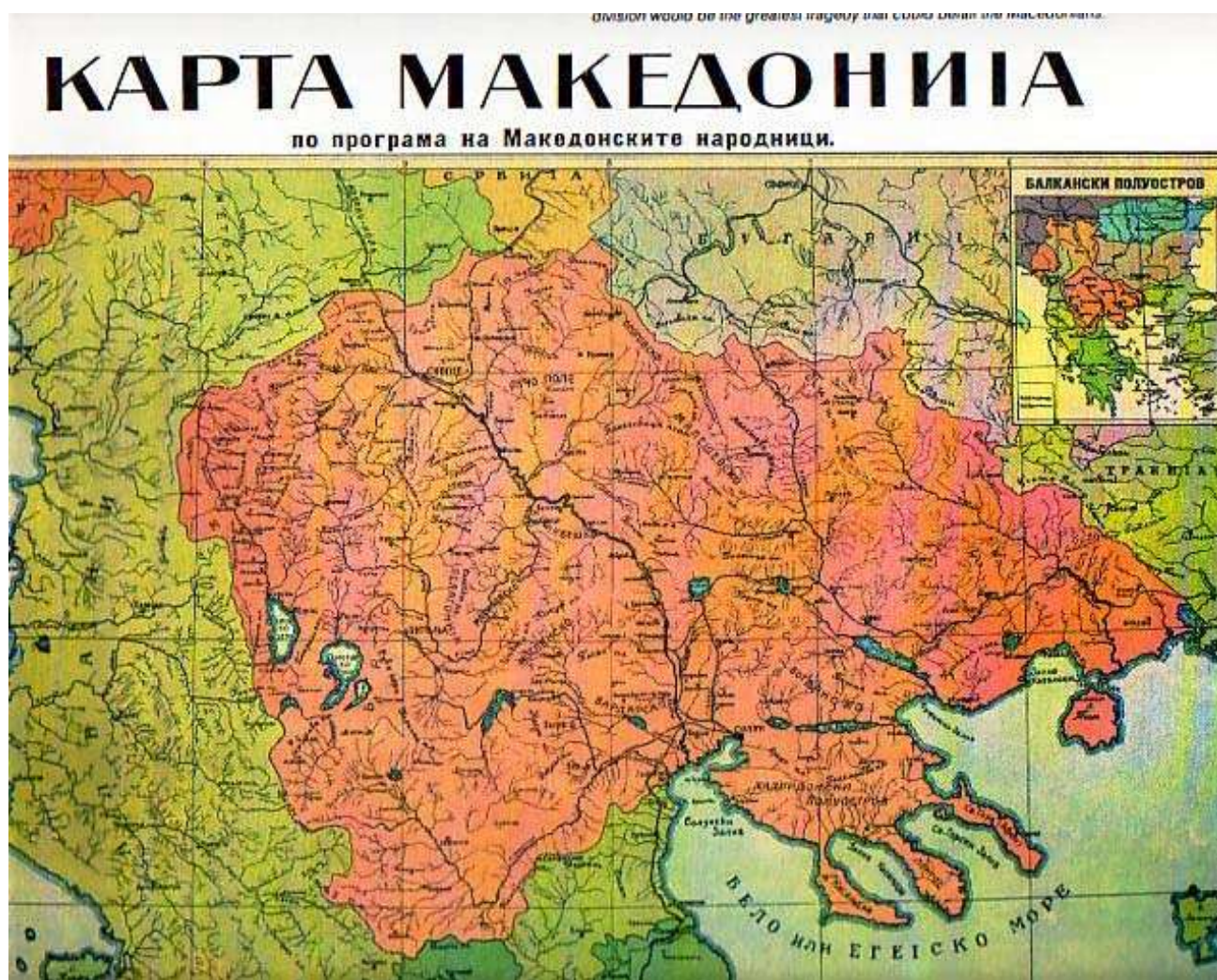
Overall, the Greek perspective was that the central zone is the most contested or debatable. In a report, no. 275 July 1 1880, sent to the Greek Foreign Ministry by the Greek Consul Logotetis, defined the borders of the central zone: north, from east to west, Lake Ohrid - Krushevo and then south from Prilep (or just north of Bitola) all the way to the Mesta, a definition which contains the towns of Strumitsa, Petrich, Melnik and Nevrokop. The southern line begins from Mount Gramos and takes in half the villages in the jurisdiction of Kostur, while keeping south of Lerin and Voden; and north of Kozhani, Solun and Chalcidice, all the way to Seres and Drama. The struggle with the other

propagandistic educational and religious institutions, and later, the rise of the Macedonian revolutionary movement, were the main reasons in explaining why the Greeks did not, at that time, declare that central zone, "Greek".

The Ottoman context, which did not permit the establishment of a codified vernacular, by the largest demographic group in Macedonia, the Mac-

the Macedonian Christians. Kofos, in analysing the situation in the central zone, recognised it as "delicate" and described the tenets of Greek politicking at that time. He begins by asserting that the central zone was inhabited by a "polyglot, mixed Christian population, mainly Slavophone in the villages, Hellenophone and Vlachophone in the cities and small towns, with some pockets of Albanophone in-

into three sub-groups: the members of the first group were considered supporters of Hellenism; those in the second were perceived as supporters of Bulgarian nationalism and the members of the third and largest group, were viewed as fluid, changeable in their allegiances and as individuals "still did not possess a concrete national orientation." It is obvious why the latter group became the main target of Greek



edonian Christians, as well as by the Vlachs and the Albanians, was an added benefit for the Greek factor in its pretensions towards all three of those ethnic groups. This context was also utilised by the Bulgarian and Serbian propagandas, which were also aiming at

habitants." On the basis of confidential consular reports, he contends that the "Greekophones, Albanophones and Vlachophones were viewed as part of the Greek national idea", while "the Slavophones were an open issue". Kofos divides the latter

political propaganda and over which the most bitter struggle was fought by the Balkan nation-states in their endeavours to install their respective national ideologies.

After the Eastern Crisis, Greek territorial ambitions extended

only to the central zone. The historian Konstantinos Paparigopoulos, recognising that the dominant group in that zone was the "Slavic" element, proposed strengthening the propagandistic efforts among that population so that they "feel the Greek consciousness" and that such efforts should extend all the way to the northern borders of the pretensions set out by the Greek state. In the subsequent years, apart from the "peaceful" Greek religious, educational and economic propagandistic efforts, in and up to the boundaries set by the "Great Idea", from the last decade of the 19th century and especially during the so called Greek "Macedonian Struggle" (1904-1908), there was a tendency by Greece to mark out its zone, via armed intervention. For example, during the guerrilla intervention organised by the Greek Etniki Eteria society in 1896, certain Greek guerilla bands, prior to being crushed by the Ottoman military, reached as far north as the towns of Mariovo and Demir Kapiya. Greek guerrilla commander Yanis Karavitis, in his memoirs about the Greek "Macedonian Struggle", on a number of occasions, refers to the limits of Greece's national pretensions. For example, in a discussion with a Greek Metropolitan in the village of Zhelevo in the Lerin region, Karavitis rejected Serbian pretensions towards those parts of Macedonia, which according to Karavitis, had already been flagged as part of an expanded Greek state: "And the Serbians should understand that we are placing our national borders from Ohrid to Krushevo or Babuna, or the bridge at Black River, between Bitola and Prilep and from there, southeast, with a boundary line from the Black River to the east of Mariovo and onwards along a line which takes in Gevgeliya and Strumitsa. They should have this in mind so that we don't have misunderstandings in the future. Just when we clear the area of guerillas, [belonging to the Macedonian Revolutionary Organisation] is not important, of course we will kill them and in any case, we will reach Krushevo by the coming Spring."

The delineation of the borderlines in the zone inhabited by the Macedonian and Greek ethnic groups in the southern part of Ottoman Macedonia could be carried out on two bases. Firstly, by using the very numerous ethnographic studies of both Balkan and European ethnographers, historians, travel writers and diplomats. The second method, which requires much more research, is via observing the location of local and

regional committees established by the Macedonian Revolutionary Organisation (MRO). It is well known that MRO did not form any committees in the southernmost tip of Ottoman Macedonia, where the dominant population was Greek or had been Hellenised. There were some Vlach villages in that area, which were connected to MRO, but then again, a substantial number of Patriarchist ethnic Macedonian villages, which were influenced by Greek propaganda, did not have MRO committees. On account of that, we shall delineate the border zone utilising the first method, via the research of the Bulgarian academic, geographer and politician, Vasil Kanchov.

The work in question was published in Plovdiv 1900 and is entitled "Macedonia. Ethnography and Statistics". Kanchov had been employed as an Exarchate teacher at high schools in Salonika and Seres, while during the years 1894-1897, he was appointed as the General School Inspector of Exarchate education institutions in Macedonia. That position gave him great freedom of movement, which he utilised to visit a large number of places throughout Macedonia and the information he gathered was the basis of his book. However, it needs to be explained that in accordance with the politics of Bulgarian nationalism at that time, Kanchov refers to the Macedonian Christian population as "Bulgarians" and the Muslim Macedonian population as "Muslim Bulgarians" or "Pomaks". All the same, in another of his books, published in 1911 (almost a decade after his passing in 1902), he explains in his introduction that "To determine the borders we will mainly follow the general perception of the population and the determination given by the most skilled recent travellers. The local Bulgarians and Kutsovlachs who live in the area of Macedonia call themselves Macedonians, and the surrounding nations call them Macedonians. Turks and Albanians from Macedonia do not call themselves Macedonians, but when asked where they are from, they respond: from Macedonia" (Orohydrography of Macedonia – Vasil Kanchov, Plovdiv, 1911). Notably, the Macedonian Scholarly Society, based in the Bulgarian capital of Sofia, published a work in 1945, entitled "Macedonia as a Natural and Economic Unit. It was primarily the work of the Bulgarian geographer and ethnographer, Dimitar Yaronov. He utilised Kanchov's statistics, however, he

used the terms "Macedonians" and "Islamicised Macedonians".

In delineating the limits and boundaries of the border zone, we shall begin in the southwest of Ottoman Macedonia and develop a line to its eastern end. The western most point at which this imaginary line limitation begins, is located in the Kostur region. The western end of this line borders a zone inhabited by ethnic Albanians. The bulk of the region was inhabited by Macedonians, i.e. the regions north, west and southeast of Kostur. While the southernmost tip of the Kostur regions was predominantly inhabited by Greeks - the Borbot area. South of that area, the regions of Anselichka and Grevena, were inhabited by Greeks. Heading from west to east, the line passes between the vicinities of Kajlar and Kozhani. The Kajlar region was inhabited by a majority Muslim population, though there was a substantial Macedonian populace. In contrast, the population of Kozhani was predominantly Ottoman Muslim

and Greek (it needs to be underlined that southern borders of the regions of Grevena and Kajlar, were actually also the borders of Ottoman Macedonia). The line continues west between the Negush (predominantly inhabited by Macedonians) and Ber (predominantly inhabited by Greeks) regions. It then continues on to take up a large amount of territory in and around Salonika. The eastern, western, northern surrounds of Salonika were predominantly inhabited by Macedonians, while the southern part, in a line leading to peninsula of Chalcidice was populated mostly by Greeks. Salonika itself was a cosmopolitan city, predominantly inhabited by Jews, but also by Ottoman Muslims, Macedonians, Greeks, Romanys and others from various parts of Europe. West of Salonika and north of Chalcidice, the line runs along the Lagadino region, was predominantly inhabited by Ottomans and the minority Macedonians and Greeks, were about the same in number. To the west, the line runs to the

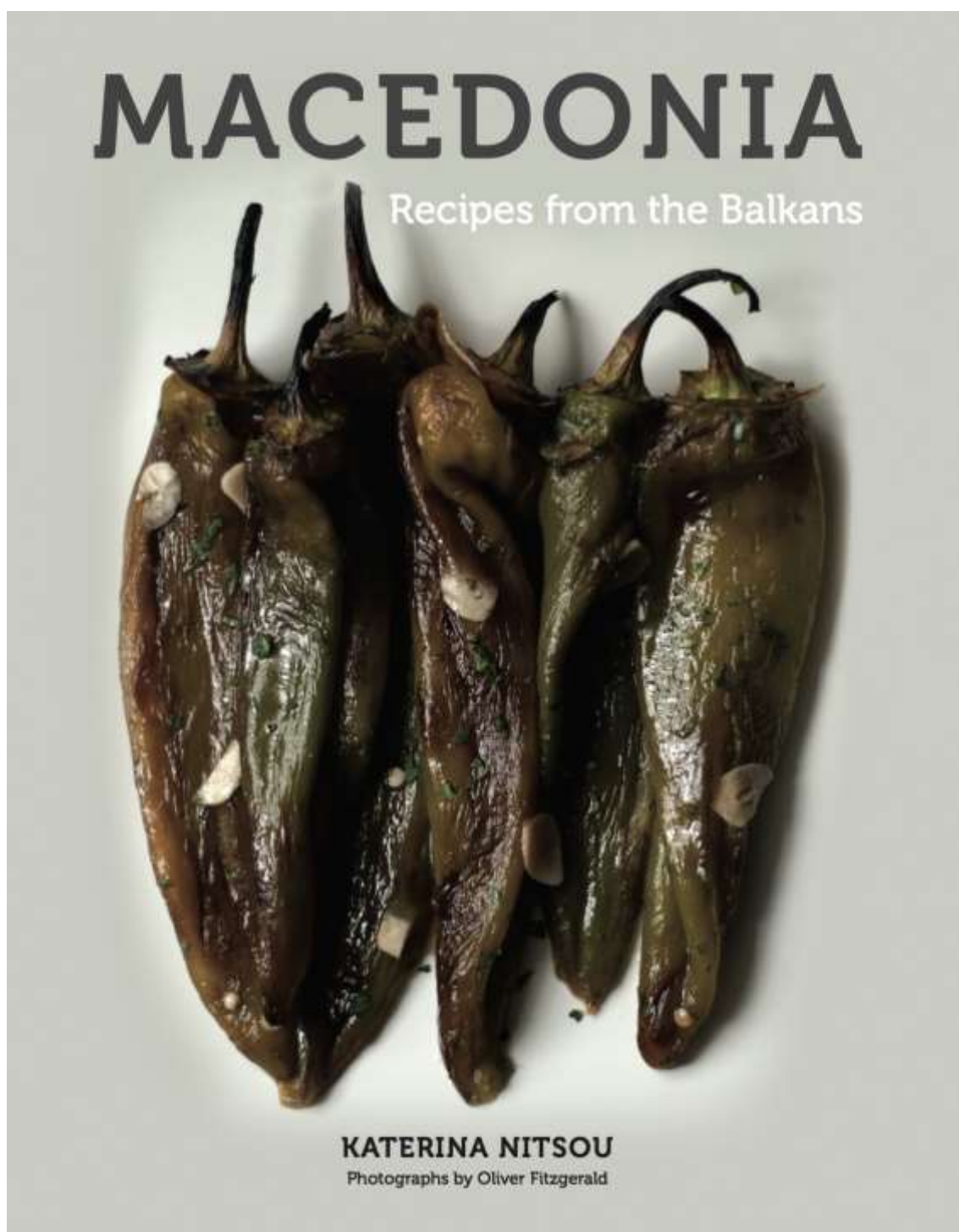
Seres region, which was predominantly Macedonian, though the town of Seres had a large number of Greeks, as did the southern part of the Seres region. The line then cuts through the region of Zihen onto the region of Drama, where the border line between the two ethnic groups comes to an end, at the eastern border of Ottoman Macedonia, i.e. at the Mesta River.

Put bluntly, the borderline between the Macedonian and Greek ethnic groups in Ottoman Macedonia, began south of the town of Kostur and then continued south of Kajlar along a path between the towns of Negush and Ber, leading towards Salonika and ended near the town of Drama. All the same, north and south of this imagined line, there was often a large Ottoman Muslim population, as for example in the Kajlar region. Moreover, there were also pockets of Vlach, Albanian, Romany and Jewish inhabitants.

According to Vasil Kanchov, the numbers were as follows:

	Macedonian	Greek	Ottoman
Kostur	51,000	9,600	4,000
Kajlar	8,000	1,800	27,000
Kozhani	/	10,000	14,500
Ber (together with Negush)	6,300	15,000	7,300
Salonika	27,000	31,000	32,000
Lagadino	10,000	9,000	20,000
Seres	40,000	28,600	28,500
Zihen	16,200	14,000	10,200
Drama	9,000	4,600	26,500
Combined	167,500	123,600	170,000

AN INTERVIEW WITH KATE NITSOU



Macedonian Human Rights Movement International President, Bill Nicholov, had the pleasure of interviewing proud Macedonian chef, and the face of MHRMI's donation campaign, Kat Nitsou, following the release of her widely-acclaimed Macedonian cookbook.

Congratulations on publishing your "Macedonia: Recipes from the Balkans" cookbook! Macedonians everywhere are very excited about it. Describe what it has been like preparing and finally releasing it.

Firstly, thank you! After so many years of working on this book it is a very exciting time for us to be able to share it with the public. When we began to write this book, we didn't anticipate the path and effort that goes into creating a body of work such as this, but now that it is finished, we are very excited with the way it turned out. Each recipe was written and tested numerous times to ensure continuity. We then began to photograph each dish, many times over to ensure we captured the perfect picture. My husband Oliver shot about 31,000 pictures to arrive at 105 final pictures, one for each recipe, then we embarked on the graphic design with an amazing LA based graphic designer and embarked on printing to order. We are thrilled with the outcome of the book and humbled by the incredible support that we have received from food and cookbook enthusiasts.

MHRMI is extra proud since you've been the face of our donation campaign for over a decade! How important is it for you to display pride in your Macedonian heritage?

I think that the efforts that MHRMI put forth are very important and a great achievement toward making a difference for Macedonians globally. I'm very proud of my Macedonian heritage. It was one of the core reasons in deciding to write a Macedonian cookbook. My love of food has taught me that the best way to embrace any culture is through its food and although my book is very much for the Macedonian people, it is also for the world to learn about Macedonian cuisine and hopefully invite them to learn more about the culture and heritage. It was important to me to showcase Macedonian food in an elegant and sophisticated way and I think we achieved that with this book.

Speaking of, and this has become a trademark of MHRMI interviews, what village are you from? :) Did this influence which recipes you decided to include?

My father is from Rulia and my mother is from Breznitsa. My upbringing and memories of food definitely influenced my recipes of the book. So many of our family members and close family friends had their specialties like bourek, kifli or tavche gravche. When I was writing the recipes, I aspired to make each recipe the best it could be, and oftentimes referenced the memories of the food I grew up eating.

Not that I read Vogue, I swear :)...but Macedonia was recently announced by Vogue magazine as the "Centre of the Slow Food Movement". It's about time! As a Macedonian chef, I was excited, I mean, how excited were you about this?

This is very exciting and a step in the right direction for Macedonian cuisine and culture in regards to its global recognition. It takes our food to an international level and introduces it to a population that may not be so familiar with our cuisine and that is very exciting! Slow Food USA has supported and endorsed our cookbook on their social media and it's something we are really proud of being recognized by.

Your cookbook is a great example of promoting Macedonian culture and gaining publicity for Macedonia and Macedonians. Thank you for this. How much feedback have you received from Macedonians worldwide? Do you have a message for them and for aspiring chefs?

The feedback and appreciation of the book has been overwhelming. From Australia, to the US, UK, and Canada people have been ordering the book, emailing and sharing their excitement and feedback on the recipes they have cooked thus far. I'm so grateful that people are enjoying the book. The support has been from Macedonians and many non-Macedonians as well. I really believe that anyone who is passionate about something should stay true to what they believe in, and persevere in their endeavors, even when faced with roadblocks or challenges.

You can get your copy of Macedonia Recipes from the Balkans at:

www.macedoniacookbook.com



TAVCHE GRAVCHE

Traditional White Bean Stew

2 cups dried white kidney beans or Great Northern beans

1 tablespoon unsalted butter

1 medium yellow onion, diced

1 red bell pepper, diced

1 teaspoon paprika

2 tablespoons all-purpose flour

4½ cups boiling water

1 tablespoon salt

2 teaspoons roughly chopped fresh mint

2 teaspoons roughly chopped fresh parsley

Soak kidney beans for 6 to 8 hours or overnight in about 8 cups of water. Drain and rinse beans.

Place beans in a medium stockpot and add in 8 cups of water. Bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce heat to medium and simmer uncovered for 30 minutes. Drain beans and set aside.

Preheat oven to 375 degrees F.

In a Dutch oven, melt butter on stovetop over medium heat. Add in onion, red bell pepper and paprika. Sauté until vegetables are tender, about 3-4 minutes.

Sprinkle in flour and stir to coat vegetables. Sauté for an additional 2 minutes.

Pour in boiling water, salt and beans. Gently stir and bring up to a simmer. Cover with a lid or aluminum foil and place in oven for 1 hour.

Remove from oven. Sprinkle with mint and parsley and bake uncovered for another 30 minutes.

Serves 4-6

AUSTRALIAN MACEDONIAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE

in cooperation with

MACEDONIAN COMMUNITY OF WA INC.

MACEDONIAN COMMUNITY OF ADELAIDE AND SA INC.

MACEDONIAN ORTHODOX COMMUNITY OF WOLLONGONG "ST DIMITRIJA SOLUNSKI"

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LIVE BAND FROM AEGEAN MACEDONIA

"MUZIKORAMA"

2017 TOUR OF AUSTRALIA



PERTH - Saturday 11th March 2017

Time: 7:30pm start | Venue: Macedonian Community of WA Community Centre, North Perth
Tickets: (08) 9328 7852 or from MCWA Committee Members

ADELAIDE - Sunday 12th March 2017

Time: 7:00pm start | Venue: Macedonian Community Centre, Findon
Tickets: Lou Velov 0411 144 587

MELBOURNE - Saturday 18th March 2017

AMHRC 33rd Annual Dinner Dance

Time: 6:30pm start | Venue: Grand Neret Receptions, 19 Salicki Ave, Epping
Tickets: Tase Filipov 9850 8696 or 0431 056 353

WOLLONGONG - Saturday 25th March 2017

Time: 7:00pm start | Venue: Sun Lounge & Function Centre, Wollongong
Tickets: Ljupco Stefanovski 0448 963 805

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:



AUSTRALIAN MACEDONIAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE

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



MACEDONIAN HUMAN RIGHTS MOVEMENT INTERNATIONAL

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



MACEDONIAN ALLIANCE FOR EUROPEAN INTEGRATION

The political party of the Macedonians in Albania

Website www.macedoniansinalbania.org



EUROPEAN FREE ALLIANCE—RAINBOW

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



OMO ILINDEN PIRIN

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



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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