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A FRAGMENT OF THE GENERAL INCONSISTENCY

George Vlahov

In August, as part of a very limited and feeble public discussion about the proposed language laws, a Macedonian academic, Professor Siljanovska-Davkova, explained that the intended legislation is unconstitutional and moreover, she logically argued that it might lead to the creation of a grave 'lost in translation' societal scenario.

SDSM mainstream and social media warriors responded by attacking her as a "purveyor of hate" and a "primitive". Additionally, some of them loudly asserted that hate speech needs to be punished and that the government should introduce severe penalties etc. Though, more recently, on the 29th of September to be exact, when an ethnic Albanian member of the government, MP Zijadin Sela, on Albanian language television, declared that Macedonians "are cannibals and barbarians who are expelling the indigenous people of Macedonia" [i.e. the ethnic Albanians], the very same governmental lackeys responded with silence.

Let us reiterate this enigma: a Macedonian academic who spoke no hate, was condemned as a savage by self-proclaimed Macedonian scourges of racism, who only shortly thereafter, chose to ignore genuine hate speech expressed by an ethnic Albanian MP, who is a member of the current government. The latter applied the adjective "barbarian" to all Macedonians, it is an adjective that happens to be a synonym for the epithet, that Macedonian anti-racism champions applied to the Macedonian academic, "primitive".

This cannot be simply dismissed as an extreme and unusual example of stupidity. No, the people in question are not that foolish or perhaps, more precisely, would not be so incautious as to enact such a crude display of double standards, if they were not gripped by deep, unspoken fears that are distorting their ability to reason. The distortion of their reason lies not only in their manifestation of blatantly inconsistent behaviour, but also in a belief that such a

performance would actually deceive anybody, whether ethnic Albanian or Macedonian. Though the attempted deception is undoubtedly more for the benefit of Macedonia's Albanians.

In other words, those *ethnic Macedonian* commentators, contrary to their public presentation of themselves as fearless anti-racism soldiers, in reality, a reality that in this particular case is appallingly stark, perceive themselves to be members of a cultural group positioned on the weaker side of intra-societal relations of power. Even though they would absolutely deny that to be the case, their behaviour demonstrates it to be so. They are stern in their fight against hate speech, if it comes from a Macedonian, to the extent that they will present the Macedonian as a merchant of hatred even if he or she was not really expressing hate. And to use a cliché, their silence in relation to Sela and others of his ilk, is deafening.

It could also be that in some cases, their inconsistent behaviour is related to an acceptance of dogmatic interpretations of trendy identity political theories connected to postmodernism. Interpretations which assume minorities to *always* be in a substantially disadvantaged position on power spectrums. That assumption is ironic as postmodernism developed, among other things, as a response to modernist universal grand narratives that ignored the peculiarities of this or that particular social context.

It is apt to note that ethnic Albanian political leaders, academics and others, regularly proclaim that Albanians are "not a minority, but an integral part of the country". Well, so the other minorities in Macedonia are *not* an integral part of the country!? Certainly there are no demands from ethnic Albanians or anybody else to make any of the other minority languages, official languages of state. And clearly, in the minds of Albanian leaders, it is not enough that they already have linguistic and other rights that are equal to any and far outstrip those of most other minorities. It does not matter to them that they are not culturally, or more specifically, linguistically disadvantaged in any official,

juridical manner; or, that if there are any remaining regulatory shortcomings or loopholes, they can be attended to without recourse to the extreme of converting Albanian into a co-official language of the state. In short, Albanian political leaders simply do not care that such a drastic reconfiguration is unnecessary, unconstitutional and will likely, eventually lead to exceedingly onerous and destructive difficulties for an already dysfunctional state.

The threats contained within the language of "we are not a minority", are serious and the actions of the SDSM media cabal, despite making an art form of pretending that no such threats exist, demonstrate that it is acutely aware of the existential dangers lurking within the essence of 'we are not smaller than you'. Yes, one can cynically ignore the current demographic reality by gazing at nativity statistics and indeed, with the aid of the latter, various Albanian leaders have sought to widely implant the idea that there will shortly be a very substantial demographic transformation.

"We are not a minority" also implies that 'we are the ones who have the power and there is nothing you can do about it'. Anybody who visits Macedonia can, with little effort, view a symbol of that power in those regions where ethnic Albanians predominate; for there, the state flag of another country, Albania, flutters prominently on publicly owned buildings. That is a perfectly lawful practise in Macedonia, but there is no other European country in which it is either lawful or considered appropriate. That the power underpinning that fluttering symbol is real, can be demonstrated in a myriad of ways, but, it is sufficient here, to aver the obvious: by all accounts, that power is successfully compelling the acquiescence of SDSM to the implementation of otherwise unnecessary legislation, that may put the long term viability of the state, into serious question.

It is also contextually pertinent to underline that ethnic Albanian political leaders in Macedonia, designed their current policies in general and their language policy in particular, quite openly, i.e. shamelessly, in consultation with the premier of another country - Albania. Albania's premier

recently went as far as making ethnic Albanian citizens of Kosovo, ministers in his new government. True, those ministers are now also citizens of Albania, but they were conveniently made so, only shortly prior to accepting their ministerial posts. It is reasonable to speculate that the Albanian premier has similar plans for some 'lucky' ethnic Albanians in Macedonia. The context is often made more bluntly clear on social media, by ordinary ethnic Albanians, who regularly remind Macedonians that Macedonia is bordered to the north and the west, by two ethnic Albanian dominated states.

In case there is any doubt about our intentions, we emphatically declare that we have no problem with ethnic Albanians possessing all the rights that are due to them and we would unequivocally condemn anyone who might attempt to revoke those rights; but we do have a problem with the current Albanian political pursuit of an ethno-centric outcome, which, if achieved, would not only undermine the rule of law, but would also be unavoidably implemented at the expense of all the other inhabitants of Macedonia.

10/10/17

P.S. For those of you who do not regularly follow the news, MP Sela remains very comfortably ensconced in the government of the Republic of Macedonia.

"In short, the Albanian political leaders simply do not care that such a drastic reconfiguration is unnecessary, unconstitutional and will likely, eventually lead to exceedingly onerous and destructive difficulties for an already dysfunctional state."

EUROPE'S MARGIN OF APPRECIATION FOR GREECE

Dr. Vasko Nastevski

In July 2015, the AMHRC organised an international scholarly conference in Lerin on the theme - Macedonians as a Minority or Peripheral Group in European Modernity. The following is a short summary of one part of the paper delivered by Dr Nastevski at the Conference. The papers from the conference will be published in full in a forthcoming book.

The European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) is a judicial organ established in 1959 with the express responsibility to supervise the enforcement of the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (European Convention). The Preamble to the European Convention itself proclaims that states party to the European Convention have a 'profound belief' that fundamental human rights are 'best maintained ... by an effective political democracy'.^[i] Indeed, the ECHR frequently declares that 'democracy ... appears to

be the only political model contemplated by the Convention and, accordingly, the only one compatible with it'.^[ii] Moreover, democratic society includes 'tolerance and broad-mindedness'^[iii] and that:

democracy does not simply mean that the views of a majority must always prevail: a balance must be achieved which ensures the fair and proper treatment of minorities and avoids any abuse of a dominant position.^[iv]

The foundational doctrine governing the judicial methodology employed by the ECHR to

interpret and apply the various provisions of the European Convention is known as the 'margin of appreciation'. It is a doctrine that provides deference to national authorities to limit or restrict the human rights enunciated in the European Convention. This so-called 'room for manoeuvre' is found in each of the Articles under the European Convention that provide for certain personal freedoms, such as the right to freedom of assembly, conscience and expression. For example, the restriction on the exercise of human rights must

be either 'prescribed by law', the restriction must have been 'pursued for a legitimate aim' or it must be shown that the interference in question was 'necessary in a democratic society'.^[v] The ECHR margin of appreciation is a judicial methodology that clearly suits countries such as Greece when asked to consider its own experience of human rights violations.

Prescribed by law

The ECHR provides that a restriction of human rights 'prescribed by law' does not necessarily always have to mean something which is codified or legislatively enacted. It can include common law or other secondary sources such as royal decrees, emergency decrees or certain internal regulations 'based on law'. The qualification being that they are accessible and foreseeable. The ECHR goes further and accepts that many laws will be 'inevitably couched in terms which ... are vague'^[vi] and 'whose interpretation and application are questions of practice'.^[vii] Accordingly, different Orders or Instructions, which themselves do not have the force of law, 'may ... be taken into account in assessing whether the criterion of foreseeability was satisfied'.^[viii]

In the case of *Sidiropoulos v Greece*, the Greek authorities concluded that the proposed registration of a Macedonian association was 'contrary to law, morality and public order'.^[ix] Further, this was the case as some of the founding

members of the proposed association were 'engaged in promoting the idea that there is a Macedonian minority in Greece'; that one of their members 'refused ... to accept that he was Greek'; and that the association's promulgation that there is a Macedonian minority in Greece is 'contrary to [the country's] law'.^[x] Notably, in reaching this conclusion, the Greek courts relied on non-legal extraneous materials to justify their decision to refuse the registration of an association by members of the ethnic Macedonian minority, including sensationalist and highly pejorative newspaper articles appearing in the Greek press.

The ECHR agreed that the interference by the Greek authorities was 'prescribed by law', and therefore allowable, without any hint of irony despite that the applicants submitted that 'all the judiciary [in Greece] subscribed to the idea that there was no Macedonian minority in Greece and that the very mention of Macedonian consciousness amounted to treason'.^[xi]

Legitimate aim

The ECHR allows an interference in the rights of individuals where the domestic restricting measure is pursued for one or more legitimate aims. The term itself, or even the concept of 'legitimate aims' is particularly vague and abstract, it has the effect of allowing the government, or the national authorities, to seek the justification for domestic measures under the broad meaning of things like

the 'protection of morals', or 'public order'. The ECHR tends not to exercise 'strict supervision on the merits of the legitimate aim' argued by States, the requirement of a legitimate aim is said to be a mere formality.^[xii] This can again be demonstrated in the *Sidiropoulos* case. Greece submitted several reasons for interference with the rights of the individuals belonging to the Macedonian minority (interference which was not denied by Greece). Having regard to the 'situation prevailing in the Balkans at the time and to the political friction between Greece and [the Republic of Macedonia]', the ECHR accepted that the interference was pursued for a legitimate aim, being 'to protect national security and prevent disorder'.^[xiii] The essential merits of this claim were barely tested by the ECHR, effectively it was enough that Greece said it.

Necessary in a democratic society

The requirement of 'democratic necessity' essentially involves a 'proportionality' review. This is quite simply a judicial creation, inspired by the early European principles around democratic legitimacy. The test of proportionality requires that there be a reasonable relationship between a particular objective to be achieved and the means used to achieve that objective.^[xiv] Indeed, the flexibility afforded to national authorities to 'legitimately' restrict the rights of individuals assumes the existence of responsible

political democracies operating within a broader European project that embraces certain 'European values'. Whilst such trust in national authorities may appear acceptable in democratically governed countries, it leaves it open to States with a history of egregious human rights violations the possibility to 'legitimately' escape sanction under the European human rights system.

Greece again provides a useful example. The principles and values expressed through the European Convention are surely quite distant from the political system in Greece, which simply denies the existence of any minorities. The incongruity is evident in the *Ouranio Toxo v Greece* case, where Greece sought to justify its interference in the rights of members of a political party representing the ethnic Macedonian minority by arguing that displaying the word 'vinozito' written on a sign in Macedonia could provoke 'feelings of discord among the inhabitants'.^[xv] Therefore, removing the sign was considered by Greece to be a 'democratic necessity'. Whilst in this case the ECHR did find that Greece was in violation of Article 11 of the European Convention, especially given the attitude of public authorities in exacerbating the tension and clearly failing to take appropriate measures to prevent or contain the violence,^[xvi] the margin of appreciation doctrine was able to be employed by Greece to paradoxically submit that a

clearly undemocratic interference in the rights of its ethnic Macedonian minority should be excused due to 'democratic necessity'.

Conclusion

Europe's 'margin of appreciation' is a judicial methodology that may have been adopted initially on the assumption that the participant European countries subscribed to various 'European values' that promote ideals such as democracy, tolerance and broadmindedness, but ultimately it is a practice that allows Greece to police its own record on human rights. Greece may well be subject to the European human rights system, but as a consistent abuser of human rights, especially against its Macedonian minority, Europe's margin of appreciation for Greece seems somewhat problematic. Ultimately, affording undemocratic countries deference to apply democratic principles seems inherently self-contradictory.

Dr. Vasko Nastevski

^[i]Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms as amended by Protocols No. 11 and No. 14, Rome 4.XI.1950, Preamble, p.5.

^[ii]*Refah Partisi (The Welfare Party) and Others v Turkey*, (Application Numbers 41340/98, 41342/98, 41343/98 and 41344/98), Grand Chamber, Judgment, Strasbourg, 31 July 2001, para. 45.

^[iii]*Handyside v United King-*

dom (Application no. 5493/72) Court (Plenary) Judgment, Strasbourg, 7 December 1976, para. 49.

^[iv]*Young, James and Webster v United Kingdom*, (Application Number 7601/76, 7806/77), Court (Plenary), Judgment, Strasbourg, 13 August 1981, para. 63.

^[v]Steven Greer, 'The Interpretation of the European Convention on Human Rights: Universal Principle or Margin of Appreciation?' 2010 *3UCL Human Rights Review*1, 9-10.

^[vi]*Kokkinakis v Greece* (Application No. 14307/88) Court (Chamber) Judgment, Strasbourg, 25 May 1993, para. 40.

^[vii]*Sunday Times v United Kingdom*, (Application No. 6538/74) Court (Plenary) Judgment, Strasbourg, 26 April 1979, para. 49.

^[viii]*Silver et al v United Kingdom* (Application Nos. 5947/72, 6205/73, 7052/75, 7061/75, 7107/75, 7113/75 and 7136/75) Court (Chamber) Judgment, Strasbourg, 25 March 1983, para. 88.

^[ix]*Sidiropoulos and Others v Greece*, ECtHR, (57/1997/841/1047), Judgment, Strasbourg, 10 July 1998, para. 36.

^[x]*Ibid* para. 10.

^[xi]*Ibid* para. 25.

^[xii]Pablo Contreras, 'National Discretion and International Deference in the Restriction of Human Rights: A Comparison Between the Jurisprudence of the European and Inter-

American Court of Human Rights' 2012 11(1)*Northwestern Journal of International Human Rights*28, 42.

[xiii]*Sidiropoulos and Others v Greece*, above n 9, para. 39.

[xiv]Richard Clayton and Hugh Tomlinson,*The Law of Human Rights*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2000, p.278.

[xv]*Ouranio Toxo v Greece*, (Application Number 74989/01), First Section, Judgment, Strasbourg, 20 October 2005 [Final 20 January 2006], para. 32.

[xvi]*Ibid* paras. 42-43.

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HOME OF MACEDONIAN CULTURE

David Vitkov



"House of Macedonian Civilisation and Others v. Greece" (1295/10).

On 11 September 2017, the County Court of Florina/Lerin yet again denied an application for registration of the *Home of Macedonian Culture*. This latest refusal (the third since 1989) comes after two separate judgements (1998 and 2015 respectively) from the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) which ruled that in denying the cultural association official registration, Greece had violated Article 11 (Freedom of Association) of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR).

Importantly, ethnic Macedonians in Greece are not the only group in Greece to have been denied the right to form cultural associations. There are several high profile Turkish cases for which Greece has also been found to have violated the ECHR that are still awaiting execution and have been denied registration for decades.

Although Greek courts have cited absurd and irrelevant "national security" and "public order" concerns, as well as the standard and deeply bigoted "non-existence" of a Macedonian minority in Greece claim, as the basis for the refusals, the real reasons behind the continued denial are very much tied to potential legal and

political ramifications at home and abroad, should registration be granted.

It should be noted that there are many cultural associations and organisations registered in Greece bearing the name "Macedonian", therefore the name of the association *per se* is not the reason for refusal. However, the *Home of Macedonian Culture* is the *first* association seeking registration by the Greek state, that has openly declared itself, in its statute, as an ethnic Macedonian one i.e. a distinctly non-Greek entity, which seeks to preserve Macedonian ethnic identity, Macedonian language etc. Of course, such a concept is unthinkable to the Greek state which has historically and continues presently to have an active policy of denying and suppressing the dissemination of such ideas. And of course, that policy is in violation of human rights principles and accords.

By allowing the registration of the *Home of Macedonian Culture*, Greece would be implicitly recognising (legally and for the first time), that there are citizens of Greece, who identify as ethnic Macedonians (i.e. possess a non-Greek ethnic identity). Additionally, the state would be acknowledging that such associations are legitimate and are indeed permitted to co-exist with self-identifying Greek-Macedonian (ethnic Greek) associations. Furthermore, such an admission, however tacit, might result in international ramifications, namely, in relation to Greece's international political imposition of a dispute over the name of the Republic of Macedonia. If a Macedonian ethnic organisation is registered by the Greek state, then it significantly weakens Greece's already tenuous arguments against the name of the Republic of Macedonia. Namely, if in Greece itself, the ethnic Macedonian *Home of Macedonian Culture* can exist alongside, for example, the ethnic-Greek *Pan-Macedonian Association*, then why could a state called Republic of Macedonia, not co-exist alongside the internal official regions of Greece known as West Macedonia and Central Macedonia?

Given what is at stake, it is likely that Greek courts will not permit (acting in contravention of the ECHR but in total conformity with Greek

policy on the Macedonian question) the registration of this or other openly ethnic Macedonian cultural associations anytime soon. Unless of course, there is external pressure on Greece, namely from the monitoring bodies of the Council of Europe that are supposed to exist in order to ensure that recalcitrant states like Greece, fully comply with judgements by the ECtHR. It is a disgrace that after two judgements from the ECtHR, the applicants of the Home of Macedonian Culture are still unable to register their association. It should be enough to go through the arduous ECtHR process once to have justice done; but three times (which is what the applicants are now facing) just makes a mockery of the system and demonstrates its weakness.

Though, from the standard Greek nationalist perspective, the status quo is perfectly fine. On average, once every decade Greece will be condemned by the ECtHR and pay a few thousand euros. Greece will promise to abide by the decision and then the country's internal courts will continue to ignore the judgement, when deciding on the new applications. The Greek judiciary knows there will be virtually no repercussions, no great sanctions to fear, maybe a bit of embarrassment, but when in 2017, a state continues to deny the existence of ethnic minorities within its borders, shame is the last thing on their minds.

It is time for the Council of Europe to apply the necessary pressure on Greece to ensure that the *Home of Macedonian Culture* is registered and so that the denial of the right of minority groups in Greece, to form cultural associations, finally becomes a relic of the past.



ANTI-MACEDONIAN PRACTICES AND JUDICIAL INADEQUACY IN EU GREECE

Marianna Bekiari

In the lead up to the European parliamentary elections on 7 June 2009, the European Free Alliance - Rainbow Party (Vinozhito) sent audiovisual material, partially in the Macedonian language, to numerous television channels and radio stations, as did the other political parties in Greece. The electoral laws in Greece stipulate that "small" parties are entitled to five minutes of airtime.

Some channels played the Vinozhito advertisement but only after midnight. Moreover, the four largest television channels refused to play it at all, asserting that the content could not be understood by the public, as it is not in Greek. Actually, most of it was in Greek and in any case, that is not a lawful reason for refusing to air the advertisement. Vinozhito was the only party treated in this discriminatory manner.

Post the European elections, towards the end of 2009, Vinozhito filed lawsuits against the four television channels, i.e. ANT1, SKAI, MEGA and ERT. This legal action was begun at the Court of First Instance in Athens and among other things, is based on the claim that the above mentioned television stations violated electoral laws and infringed upon the right to freedom of expression. Almost seven years have passed since Vinozhito began the legal action and after a series of unjustifiable administrative delays, postponements and an illogical ruling which compelled Vinozhito to lodge an appeal in relation to its complaint against MEGA, justice still does not appear to be in sight.

Marianna Bekiari is a Lerin (Florina) based member of EFA Rainbow / Vinozhito

JUSTICE DELAYED

Dr. Vasko Nastevski

A familiar refrain in societies that purport to operate on the basis of the rule of law is that 'justice delayed is justice denied'. A venerable politico-legal system will inherently see the desirability of avoiding delay in the administration of justice. This has been an unshakable legal principle given conspicuous impetus since the



magna carta declared *nulli vendemus, nulli negabimus aut differemus, rectum aut justiciam* ('To no one will we sell, to no one will we deny or delay, right or justice').

The consequences of any delay in the administration of justice may be self-evident, but clearly not persuasive for the Greek judicial system, when determining matters involving the Macedonian minority in Greece. Delays in the provision of legal resolution increases the loss suffered by the party making a complaint whilst extenuating the impugned action. Further, unreasonable and gratuitous delays inevitably distort and corrupt the litigation process itself, exponentially perverting the reliability of any adjudication.

Another basic tenet of the rule of law is the concept of natural justice, which presupposes basic fairness and is founded on the notion that logical reasoning may allow the determination of just, or fair, processes in legal proceedings. This is reflected in the maxim that not only does justice need to be done but justice needs to be seen to be done. The two rules associated with this concept are that a party whose interests will be affected by a decision should be afforded a hearing and that a party should be judged by an independent process. The threshold standard requires an absence of impediments for fair proceedings.

Given the exorbitant delay in the legal proceedings brought by Vinozhito in relation

electoral advertising, not only has there been no justice provided, but one must also question the fairness of the proceedings. Being dragged through seven years of perverse administrative and legal processes, one must conclude that neither has justice been seen to be done. It is notable that the concept of basic rights grounded in the *magna carta* has influenced the framing of the primary source of legal rules in most Western liberal societies. The Greek Constitution itself purports to reflect this legal tradition. However, for the members of the Macedonian minority, a small, socially and institutionally marginalised group in Greek society, there appears no end in sight to this struggle.

IN MEMORIAM



Tashko Bulev (1940-2017)

Members of the Australian Macedonian Human Rights Committee (AMHRC) were deeply saddened to learn of the recent passing of Tashko Bulev (Anastasios Boules), a long-time human rights activist and advocate for the Macedonian minority in Greece.

Born in 1940 in the village of Gorno Verbeni (Xino Nero), Lerinsko, Tashko was destined to lead a difficult life. Tashko's father was killed on the Albanian front ten days after his birth and his mother passed away when he was only three. An aunt who cared deeply for him, took on the responsibility of raising Tashko.

In 1967, when Greece came under the

rule of a brutal, extreme nationalist military dictatorship, Tashko was compelled to leave his village and without official travel documentation, he managed to escape to Germany, where he remained for seven years, i.e. until the demise of the junta in 1974. While in Germany, Tashko met his wife, Evangelia. After returning to Greece they had three children. Tragically, they would later lose their 20 year old son in a road accident.

In spite of the serious difficulties he regularly encountered, Tashko maintained a strong social conscience. He became an active member of the Macedonian human rights movement in Greece, from its beginnings in the

1970s and he remained part of the movement until his recent passing.

Many of his colleagues fondly remember his courageous propensity to publicly declare his Macedonian identity. Dimitri Jovanov, the editor of Nova Zora and fellow Vinozhito - EFA member, put it this way: *Tashko was a great man and probably the most fearless Macedonian advocate in Greece. He was a mentor to the younger generation of activists and has left an indelible mark on the struggle for Macedonian human rights in Greece.*

The most well known example of Tashko's fearlessness, occurred in March 1992, when he was interviewed by the Greek weekly magazine "ENA". In response to a question about his identity, Tashko emphatically declared: "I am not Greek, I am Macedonian."

The interview, which was conducted with fellow Macedonian human rights activist, Hristos Sideropoulos, drew the attention of the public prosecutor in Greece who subsequently charged the pair with criminal conduct. Their "crime"? In declaring that there is a Macedonian minority in Greece, *they have spread...intentionally false information which might create unrest and fear among the citizens and might affect the public security or harm the international interests of the country*

(Greece). After substantial international pressure from various European sources, the charges were eventually dropped, though not before creating widespread international exposure of Greek state sanctioned racism directed at the Macedonian minority.

The persecution did not prevent Tashko from continuing to actively advocate for the rights of Macedonians in Greece. In 1993 he stood as an independent candidate in the national elections and was a founding member of the Home of Macedonian Culture. Soon after the establishment of Vinozhito, he became an active member in the party's peak decision making body, its Political Secretariat and also participated as a candidate in every Vinozhito election campaign.

His colleague in the Vinozhito Secretariat, Pavle Filipov (Voskopoulos), adds: *He was always present at all the important gatherings and meetings with various NGOs and foreign observers. The Greek secret police constantly tailed him and pressured him, but for Tashko, it was of no concern. He was a rare man with an exemplary mindset. I remember when Vinozhito first opened an office in Lerin (during the early 90's) and Tashko made his arrival known by loudly banging on the door. A colleague opened the door and Tashko, with a smile, bluntly asked: 'will you have me?' He came in, we all*

hugged him and then sat down to plan our activities. Tashko was the personification of holding one's head up high ('gore glavata').

Tashko was an unswervingly principled servant of the Macedonian human rights movement, the memory of his dedication is an inspiration to present day human rights advocates and we hope it will serve to rouse future generations.

David Vitkov - with thanks to Marianna Bekiari.

THE GLORIFICATION AND VICTIMIZATION OF GREEK NATIONAL HEROES:

The Examples of Pavlos Melas & Kote Hristov

Dr. Dimitar Ljorovski Vamvakovski

The armed intervention on the territory of the Ottoman Empire (1904-1908), organised by official Athens, shortly after the annexation of part of Macedonia by Greece (1912-1913), was given a mythological or idealized form by Greek historiography, which in turn has been used as an integral aspect in the construction of Greece's modern national ideology.

A thesis was developed, positing the existence of a historical continuity in the struggle of the Greek people for the creation of a Greek nation state. In modern times that continuity is supposed to have begun in 1821 and the Greek "Macedonian struggle" was deemed to be the "second important point of national life after 1821". The Greek historian Apostolos Vakalopoulos, described the second stage as reaching its "culmination in 1904-1908, as the Macedonian struggle was then systematized and reached its peak." This thesis developed by the Greek academic and political elite, is designed to convince the general public in Greece to believe that the struggle for "Macedonian Hellenism," which the Greek state implemented by financing paramilitary terrorists to invade Ottoman Macedonia, was fought for the liberation of Macedonia from the Ottomans in order to affix adjoining "historical Greek territories" to the already established Greek nation-state.

However, the ideological content of the Greek national position in relation to the "Macedonian struggle" and the very activity of the Greek paramilitary formations on the territory of Ottoman Macedonia does not demonstrate the assertion that the main goal was the liberation of Macedonia, but rather that the struggle was primarily directed against the indigenous Macedonian national liberation movement, in particular the Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (MRO) and also against the rival propaganda institutions of other Balkan states (Bulgaria, Serbia and Romania). The same applies to the Balkan Wars 1912-13, which were presented as liberatory by the Balkan states, including the Kingdom of Greece.

In the case of the Greek "Macedonian Struggle", the process of glorifying participants on the Greek side, especially those who died, involved and still involves portraying them as "victims" who "heroically" fought and "martyred" themselves for the Greek nation. In the creation of this narrative, no consideration was given to whether the Greek "martyrs" died in battles with the Ottoman armed forces, with the forces of the MRO, or the paramilitary formations of the other Balkan states that operated on the territory of Ottoman Macedonia.

The most striking example in this regard was the death of the "greatest Greek hero" of this period, the Greek Army officer Pavlos Melas. It was the very death of Melas, in battle with the Ottoman armed forces that was used by the Greek national ideologists to create a perception in the Greek world, that the battles in Macedonia were fought for the "freedom" of Macedonia. Melas died on 13 October 1904 in the village of Statica, Kostur Region, under extremely suspicious circumstances. He was killed during an armed clash with the Ottomans, although he went to Macedonia not in order to fight against them or to free Macedonia from them. On the contrary, to a certain extent, Melas considered the Ottoman government an ally in the fight against the forces of the MRO. None-the-less, it was on the foundation of a victimization narrative in relation to the death of Melas, that Greek nationalism built the myth that the "Greek population" and the Greek paramilitary formations, fought for the liberation of Macedonia from Ottoman domination.

The example of Kote Hristov from the village of Rulja is similar. In this case, Kote's origins were used to show that some of Macedonia's most numerous indigenous population (which, according to Greek nationalist doctrines was essentially Greek, but had in Medieval times been "Slavicised") considered itself Greek and that it fought under the banner of the Greek nation in order to liberate Macedonia from Ottoman domination. But history shows something completely different. Namely, Kote originally emerged on the scene as a bandit who protected the local Macedonian population in parts of the Kostur, Lerin and Prespa regions, from the tyranny of Ottoman agas and beys. With the emergence of the Macedonian Revolutionary Organization and the need for the formation of organizational-agitation groups, the Kostur Committee of the MRO decided to appoint Kote as the first commander of MRO's Kostur guerilla forces during the first half of 1900.

However, Kote found it difficult to break with his past as a marauder and to accept the organizational discipline required by MRO. This brought him into conflict with MRO's Kostur regional leadership. The latter decided it was

necessary to sideline Kote by sending him to the Principality of Bulgaria. Kote agreed to go, but on his way to Bulgaria, while in the Lerin region, the organization ordered his "liquidation". An attempt was made, but it was unsuccessful. After recovering from his injuries, Kote returned to the Kostur region and broke off all contact with the Kostur committee of the MRO. This benefitted the Greek nationalist cause as the Metropolitan of Kostur, Karavangelis, bribed Kote to work for the forces of Greek nationalism. The Greeks mostly deployed Kote in efforts to paralyze the activities of the MRO in the region where he had influence.

Hence, it is remarkable that Kote is still utilized as a symbol to denote "the struggle for the liberation of Macedonia" from Ottoman rule; the truth is that the institutions of Greek nationalism used him to directly fight against an organization, which *really* was conducting a struggle for the liberation and creation of an autonomous Macedonia. There are some other twists in the story of Kote, worth mentioning. Although he fought against the armed structures of the MRO and had been sentenced to death by the Kostur Committee, on several occasions, during the Ilinden Uprising in 1903, Kote initially took an active part in the battle, on the side of the rebels. However, the institutions of Greek nationalism, via Karavangelis, reminded Kote that his sons were now under their care in Athens and thus convinced him to distance himself from the uprising. Kote acquiesced, but his employers began to treat him with caution and distrust. Eventually, Karavangelis decided to rid himself of Kote by revealing his location to the Ottoman authorities. The result was that Kote was captured and hanged in Bitola on September 27. By neglecting all these historical facts, Greek nationalism has managed to create a picture of Kote, in the mind of the Greek public, especially in northern Greece, as one of Greece's "greatest martyrs and heroes" who died for "the freedom of Macedonia".

Translated from Macedonian by George Vlahov.

OUR POSITION ON THE AGREEMENT ON GOOD NEIGHBOURLINESS BEWTWEEN MACEDOIA AND BULGARIA OMO, MHRMI and MAEI

29/7/2017 - While we express our in-principle support for good neighbourly relations, advancement of relations and the integration of Macedonia into European and Atlantic structures, we cannot at the same time not condemn the contents of this agreement which, despite all the fine phrases, is in fact contrary to the abovementioned values.

The Agreement on Good Neighbourliness between Macedonia and Bulgaria is inequitable and satisfies Bulgarian nationalist aspirations more than it does Macedonian national interests. It calls into question the sovereignty of the Republic of Macedonia and the freedoms of

certain parts of its citizenry and violates its authority as an independent state possessing the same rights and entitlements as other states. good neighbourliness can only be constructed on the basis of equality and good will and not by means of blackmail, humiliation and abuse of one's position of power.

By means of this agreement Macedonia has taken a further step towards its abandonment of the Macedonian minority in Bulgaria. The earlier declarative abandonment has now become part of the Agreement on "Good Neighbourliness". That is a logical and shameful next step which comes after 25 years of violation of the

Constitution by the governments of the Republic of Macedonia which have completely and consistently ignored their constitutional obligation to care for and protect the rights of the Macedonian minorities in the neighbouring countries and especially in Bulgaria and Greece. The agreement is anti-constitutional precisely for this reason!

Macedonia, via this agreement, in accordance with the views of Bulgaria, undertakes that not only will it not make representations on behalf of the Macedonian minority and support its organisations in Bulgaria (Article 11.5), something which it has not done up until now anyway, but also will not allow any activities by such organisations to occur on its territory or allow activities by its own citizens on Macedonian territory which support such organisations (Article 11.2). Nor will it allow media coverage of the activities and problems experienced by Macedonian organisations and the Macedonian minority in Bulgaria (Article 11.6)

In addition, it creates a mechanism thorough which Bulgaria can place certain conditions on and blackmail Macedonia during the process relating to its integration into European and Atlantic structures. (Articles 8 and 12). It creates the possibility for Bulgaria to intervene in independent academic research and media freedoms and imposes a redefinition of concepts such as hate speech in relation to each and every opinion which supports the notion that Macedonians are a separate and distinct national and ethnic group. The statements of certain officials in Bulgaria bear witness to the fact that this is indeed Bulgaria's intention and that the agreement is but a first step and not a final solution, despite attempts by certain naïve politicians in Skopje to portray it as such.

The terminology used: "two states and their peoples", "the Macedonian language, according to the Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia", "joint history" relativises the Macedonian nation. Macedonia and Bulgaria share joint moments in history, but not a joint history and are two separate nations with their own separate languages, cultures and histories. Joint celebrations of whatever type in a situation where

the Macedonian nation and identity are openly denied by Bulgaria will only serve to satisfy such negation and will not contribute to overcoming any misunderstandings which may exist.

This agreement represents an unprecedented interference of politics in the study of history-it prescribes the formation of political bodies which will interpret history and report back to their respective governments. We wish to remind that history is a science and any kind of interference by politicians in its study is inadmissible. This represents but another tool for blackmail through which Bulgaria will insist on the acceptance of the Bulgarian view of the history of Macedonia becoming a condition for the gaining of membership of European institutions under the guise of "good neighbourliness".

We therefore consider the Agreement unacceptable, insulting to Macedonia and the Macedonian people, unprincipled and shameful for both signatory countries. In addition, contrary to the expectations of the signatories, it will not contribute to good neighbourliness, but will only increase mistrust and create genuine hate of Bulgaria, instead of the imaginary hate that Sofia now complains of.

Neither the Macedonian minority in Bulgaria, the Macedonian Diaspora, and we are convinced, the Macedonian nation in general feel bound in any way by the unequal clauses of this agreement. They will oppose every attempt to limit their human freedoms, will continue their struggle for dignity, rights and justice and oppose every attempt to prevent that struggle from continuing, irrespective of whether it emanates from Sofia or Skopje.

OMO "Ilinden" PIRIN (Bulgaria)

**Macedonian Human Rights Movement
International (Canada)**

**Macedonian Alliance for European Integration
(Albania)**



MACEDONIAN LITERATURE IN ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Dr. Michael Seraphinoff

Macedonian may arguably be the oldest written Slavic language as the basis for Kiril and Methodius' 9th century translations of Christian liturgical texts into what we today call the Old Church Slavic language. However, it is also the

most recent Slavic language to receive official recognition and standardization after the establishment of the Republic of Macedonia as part of Yugoslavia in the late 1940's.

The number of literary works by Macedonian

authors in English translation today is only surpassed by translations in Serbian and/or Croatian during the former Yugoslavia. Particularly since the full independence of the Republic after the breakup of Yugoslavia in the 1990's, the pace of publication of English language translations has increased dramatically. This is due in part to the growing interest in English stirred by the large concentrations of Macedonian immigrants, numbering in the hundreds of thousands in major cities throughout English-speaking Canada, the United States, Australia and the United Kingdom.

I have participated in this as the author of a number of works on Macedonian themes published in the English language. These include my doctoral dissertation published by the University Press of America in 1996. In addition to this work, *The 19th Century Macedonian Awakening, on the life and works of Kiril Peichinovich*, I have translated a number of literary works, including the short story "Tatko" by Zhivko Chingo, published in *Short Story International* in 1983, the novel *The Legend of Kalesh Andjaby* Stale Popov, published by the Literary Association "Grigor Prlichev" of Sydney in 2005, and a translation of *Silyan the Stork*. I have also written a novel with a Macedonian theme as well as co-authored a Macedonian history book.

Macedonian literature in English translation has grown from its modest beginnings in the 1950's to its rich flowering in the 1990's to the present day. The first English language translations of Macedonian short stories and poetry appeared in literary /scholarly journals. The journal *Macedonian Review*, beginning in 1970, published hundreds of short works. It also published the first book-length English translations of works of Macedonian literature, beginning in 1973 with the *The Sirdar*, an epic poem written in the early 19th century by Grigor Prlichev and translated by Peggy and Graham Reid, and *White Dawns*, a book of poetry written in the 1930's by Macedonia's most famous poet of the common man, Kocho Ratsin.

Foreign publishers began to offer works of Macedonian literature in English translation by the mid 1970's as well. *The Big Horse and Other*

Stories of Modern Macedonia was published by the University of Missouri Press in 1974. Editor Milne Holton relied on translations of the stories by Alan McConnell for his selection of works by twenty of Macedonia's most prominent writers of the post World War II era. In 1976 the University of Bradford, UK, published a set of selected poems by prominent Macedonian poet Gane Todorovski under the simple title, *Poems*. The translators of this collection were Ljubica Janeshlieva and Graham Reid. In 1977 the University of Pittsburgh Press published an anthology of the poetry of twenty six poets of post World War Two Macedonia entitled *Reading the Ashes*. The poems were translated by various translators and compiled and edited by Milne Holton and Graham Reid. A book of translations of folk poetry (songs) from Macedonia's rich oral tradition appeared in 1978 under the title *Songs of Macedonia*. The publisher of this book was Mid-Day Publications Ltd., Oxford, UK, and the translators were Andrew Harvey and Anne Pennington.

By the 1980's Macedonian literature appeared in an increasing number of foreign literary publications. The Indian publisher A K Dash of New Delhi published a selection of Macedonian poetry in 1981, beginning with folk poetry from the oral tradition and church Panegyrics of Kliment of Ohrid from the 9th century and including works of several 19th century Macedonian poets and some twenty prominent poets of the 20th century. The editors Sitikant Mahapatra and Jozo Boskovski selected works by a number of translators for this collection entitled *Longing for the South*. In 1986 the Yugoslavian publisher Stremezh of Prilep published an anthology of modern Macedonia poetry by some of Macedonia's most popular poets of the 20th century in a parallel text format with translations by Michael Szporer. Another publishing house in the Republic of Macedonia that publishes occasional book length translations of Macedonian literature is Mislja. Perhaps the most successful of their translations was Bozhin Pavlovski's novel of Macedonian immigrant life in Australia, *West Austin* the 1980's.

The first modern Macedonian novel to appear in English translation by a foreign publisher was

published by Mercury House, San Francisco in 1987 in a translation by the author Meto Jovanovski, with Sylvia Holton. The novel *Budaletinki*, translated into English under the title *Cousins*, describes the impossible situation that the people of Macedonia found themselves in during the Balkan Wars and World War I. It is, in my opinion, a work that captures the essence of the Macedonian tragedy of the 20th century and with such artistry and black humor to make it a worthy choice for an introductory novel of modern Macedonian literature for an English speaking world.

Publishing houses in the Republic of Macedonia have experienced increasing difficulties marketing books for foreign distribution in recent years due to limited financial resources. In the year 2000 there was a small anthology of modern selected short stories by prominent Macedonian writers published under the title *Changes of the System*, by Magor of Skopje. The editors were Richard Gaughran and Zoran Anchevski. Fortunately, there are also valuable sources of Macedonian literature, both original works and translations available on-line today through Macedonian publishers such as Blesok and Ili-Ili.

Macedonian literature also has a valuable "foreign asset" in recent times in the immigrant communities in English-speaking Canada, the US and Australia. These communities have birthed such enterprises as Pollitecon Publications of Melbourne, Australia and the Literary Society-Grigor Prlichev of Sydney, and the Brothers Miladinov Literary Society of Toronto, Canada. They are the publishers of a number of works in recent years. Among the notable titles from Pollitecon, promoted on their web site, are:

Black Seed

by Tashko Georgievski, translated by Elizabeth Kolupacev Stewart

Paperback, 113 pages, Celloglazed cover, Published by Pollitecon Publications, 1996, Price in Australia A\$15 including postage and GST, Overseas airmail A\$20, ISBN 0 9586789 0 1

Black Seed is one of the great political and humanistic novels of contemporary literature. It

is one of the few books that examines life in the Greek prison camps during the Greek Civil War, providing a rare insight into a period when the State-sponsored persecution of political dissidents and ethnic minorities, particularly Macedonians, was at its most intense.

The main character, Doni, is an ethnic Macedonian from Aegean Macedonia (northern Greece). Conscripted into the Greek army, he is accused of being a communist and along with other political prisoners is taken to one of the concentration camps and forced to "confess" and pledge allegiance to Greece. But Doni has nothing to confess; his crime is simply to be a Macedonian.

Written in a direct and succinct style, *Black Seed* is a story of courage, compassion and truth which is universal in meaning. It will move everyone who reads it.

First published in 1966, *Black Seed* won the "13 November Award" from the City of Skopje. It has been made into a successful film and has been translated into a number of European languages. This is the first translation into English.

The author, Tashko Georgievski, was born in Voden in Aegean Macedonia in 1935 and left Greece as a refugee in 1946. He has published over 12 books and is one of Macedonia's most acclaimed contemporary authors.

The Big Water

by Zhivko Chingo, translated by Elizabeth Kolupacev Stewart

Paperback, 120 pages, Four colour celloglazed cover, Published by Pollitecon Publications 2004, Price in Australia \$15 including postage and GST, Overseas airmail A\$20, ISBN 0 9586789 6 0

The Big Water is the first English language translation of the prize winning Macedonian novel, *Golemata Voda*, by author Zhivko Chingo.

Set in Macedonia immediately after World War 2, it tells the story of a group of children orphaned by the war and their life in an orphanage. Full of characters and incidents, the book presents a child's view of life that is both humorous and bleak and, by its end, very moving.

At a metaphoric level, the novel presents a strong critique of the authoritarianism of both institutional life and the Communist system, and their inability to reconcile with the needs and nature of the individual.

At the human level, *The Big Water* is a very positive and moving story of the emotional development of children, and of the fundamental and irreplaceable role of the mother. Readers will remember this story and its climax long after they have finished the book.

The translator, Sydney lawyer Elizabeth Kolupacev Stewart, has previously translated another prize winning Macedonian novel, *Black Seed* (Crno Seme) by Tashko Georgievski. Both translations are notable for being true to the authors' direct, poetic and very readable narratives.

The Big Water is the seventh book published by Pollitecon Publications. It is available in Australia for \$15, which includes postage and handling. Overseas airmail is A\$20.

Please check the Pollitecon website for newer translations, some of the most recent, translated by Risto Stefov, are available as free downloads.

My own contributions to the translation of Macedonian literary works include the following, available through the Canadian Macedonian Historical Society:

The Legend of Kalesh Andja

A novel by Stale Popov

Translated by Michael Seraphinoff

ISBN 0 9757332 1 4

Paperback 200 pages

Published by The Literary Society- Grigor Prlichev, 2005.

Price: CAD\$15, US\$11

The author Stale Popov was born in a small, isolated mountain village of Macedonia in the final, turbulent decades of the Turkish Empire. From this background he is able to write a story for us in a voice of the traditional village storyteller that takes us on a journey into the heart and soul of the medieval Turkish Empire in

Europe.

His story of the brave peasant girl Andja is based on an old legend and a documented peasant rebellion against Turkish rule in the year 1565 in the Mariovo region of Macedonia. Popov offers us a window into a world and a way of life that is foreign to us today. And yet, *The Legend of Kalesh Andja's* story of a struggle for freedom and justice, from far away and long ago, can still move readers, both young and old.

Silyan the Stork

The folklore collector and tailor from the Macedonian town of Prilep, Marko Tsepenkov (1829-1920), heard this tale from one of his visitors some time in the mid-nineteenth century. Tsepenkov collected many such Macedonian folk tales from the oral folk tradition and wrote them down for the first time. The tale of Silyan the stork is probably the best known and the longest of all Macedonian folk tales. Tsepenkov certainly added his own personal artistic touches to the story as he wrote it down. The present translation is essentially faithful to the original with only minor interventions in order to make it more accessible to modern day readers. The translation of this story derives from the text as published in the book *SILYAN THE STORK*, Tsepenkov, Marko, Kultura, Skopje, Republic of Macedonia, 2001. (That book contains both the original written in the nineteenth century dialect of the Prilep region of Macedonia by Marko Tsepenkov and a modern day standard literary Macedonian language version created by Jasminka Janeva.)

Professor Christina Kramer of the University of Toronto has written a useful article on works of Macedonian literature in English translation at the map world literature, word press.com website (#9, 2016/12/07/9). In this article she mentions the project of the Macedonian government to complete the translation of some 130 works of Macedonian literature into English that is under way. This project will make many more works available to English-speaking readers, although she considers the translations that she has seen to be somewhat uneven in quality. She also has a list in her article of "Must-read classics from Macedonia available in

English.” She describes the books that she would urge us all to read:

Pirej, Petre Andreevski [trans. Will Firth and Mirjana Simjanovska; Pollitecon Publications]. *Pirej* [or *Bristle Grass*] is widely recognized as one of the most important Macedonian novels of the 20th century. The story, narrated from the differing perspectives of the two chief protagonists, Jon and Velika, describes the cataclysmic events in Macedonia during the first decades of the twentieth century, decades marked by war, partition, famine. The differing viewpoints allow the author to cross-cut between the unfolding events and the impact of war at the front and in the village.

Poems, Blazhe Koneski [translated by Andrew Harvey and Anne Pennington; Makedonska kniga]. No list of Macedonian literature would be complete without mention of Blazhe Koneski. Unfortunately, little of his work has been translated and it is not widely available outside of Macedonia. This small volume is, at least, an introduction to Koneski, one of Macedonia’s greatest writers and linguists.

My Father’s Books, Luan Starova [trans. Christina E. Kramer; University of Wisconsin Press]. *My Father’s Books* is the first of the novel-memoirs that comprise Luan Starova’s multi-volume *Balkan Saga*. Starova, an Albanian-Macedonian, explores themes of shifting cultural, linguistic, and religious identities following the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the rise of new nation states. *My Father’s Books*, through a series of short vignettes, introduces us to *the Father*, the main protagonist of the series, and to major events that washed over the Balkans. It is one of the most gentle and profound accounts of the complexity of identity-formation and the power of literature to sustain us.

pH Neutral History, Lidija Dimkovska [translated by Ljubica Arsovska and Peggy Reid; Copper Canyon Press] is a superb collection, a finalist for the Best Translated Book Award of 2013.

Kramer also has a list of “Best new books from Macedonia available in English” which she posts, because, as she writes: “I have had the good fortune to work with wonderful writers these

past few years and would love to highlight their work”:

Freud’s Sister, Goce Smilevski [translated by Christina E. Kramer; Penguin Books]. Smilevski’s novel, a winner of the European Prize for literature in 2010, has been translated into more than thirty languages. The novel achingly imagines the life of one of Freud’s sisters, Adolphina, forgotten to history and left to die along with her other sisters in the concentration camps.

A Spare Life, Lidija Dimkovska [translated by Christina E. Kramer; Two Lines Press], a winner of the European Prize for literature in 2013. This novel traces the lives of conjoined twins Zlata and Srebra as they come of age in Skopje, Macedonia against the background of the dissolution of Yugoslavia.

Time of the Goats, Luan Starova [translated by Christina E. Kramer; University of Wisconsin Press]. The *Balkan Saga* continues in this work. [The 3rd in the series, *The Path of the Eels* will be released in early 2017 by Autumn Hill Books].

Also: **Alma Mahler** by Sasho Dimoski, [translated by Paul Filev] will appear in 2017.

I hope that I have stimulated some readers’ interest in works of Macedonian literature in English translation that they might not have heard of or had the opportunity to enjoy yet.

MACEDONIANS IN AMERICA

Victor Sinadinovski

One of the most perplexing and disturbing criminal cases in the history of Macedonian-Americans is the stabbing deaths of six Macedonian men (all from Prespa) in March of 1906, which at that time was "the bloodiest tragedy in the history of Minneapolis."^[1] The murdered were Andry, Antonas, Nicolas and Gole Kaleff, Krste Lovka, and Kire Demitre.^[2] Their house was located on Tenth Avenue, not far from downtown Minneapolis.^[3] Four of them were found in their beds upstairs, while two others were later discovered in the cellar.^[4] The police categorized it as a "carefully planned murder."^[5]

"The four upstairs were murdered as they slept. Their throats were cut and they were stabbed 19 to 20 times each."^[6] All the knives were new and of the same make (long, bowel patterned knives), indicating that they were purchased at the same place and time.^[7]

Shortly after the murders, Nido Lazaroff, a Macedonian living in Indianapolis, sent a telegram to someone in Minneapolis. The telegram stated: "Please send information about six Macedonians murdered in your city. Their relatives live here." This was an extremely helpful clue for the Minneapolis police because they had not been aware that Macedonians lived

in Indianapolis. They asked Indianapolis police to investigate and to gather any information from relatives or friends of the deceased.^[8]

As a result of these quick and preliminary investigations, two Macedonian men were arrested. One even had blood stains on his clothes. The police, however, had no proof of their involvement and were forced to release them. The two men then fled Minnesota as quickly as possible. They were last spotted in Chicago, where some people thought that they had boarded on a train for either New York or Indianapolis. Others indicated that they were on their way to Washington in the northwest.

The police, however, had very little to work with.[9]

Instead, they brought in a 50-year-old Macedonian from Duluth, Minnesota, by the name of Peter Stoyanoff (also known as Ian Sekuloff), to assist in answering questions about the Macedonian colony in Indianapolis. The police discovered that Stoyanoff was actually a relative of one of the murdered victims and a friend to the rest.[10] For two hours, the chief, assistant county attorney, and several detectives interrogated Stoyanoff. However, after the questioning, the cops determined that he was innocent of any crime and would only be useful for background information. "His demeanor was straightforward and apparently honest. He gave what information he possessed with the utmost readiness, but it proved to be of little value as far as locating the criminals is concerned." [11]

Stoyanoff had just visited the men a day before their murder. He indicated that he was on friendly terms with all of them, but "that none of them had great confidence in his fellows." "Although they all had money", he said, "neither would tell the other how much he possessed and where he kept it." He told police that they each kept their possessions in a belt "which they carried buckled around their waists." The Macedonians were so careful with their money that police found "one money belt securely sewed up in a bucket."

Stoyanoff several times iterated that he believed robbery was a motive, because only one money belt containing \$304 was found in the home. From his personal relationship with the men, he knew there had to have been more money saved up between them and that the men never dared to combine their money to stash it in the same place. He was determined that it was robbery and not some sort of Balkan feud.[12] Stoyanoff was released, and he said that he would be back in Duluth if the police needed him.

The police were not convinced that robbery was the sole motive but rather that robbery was simply a cover up or a convenient bonus for the criminals. Further, they had a bunch of evidence at the crime scene that suggested it was planned and related to some sort of possible political feud. The evidence included brand new gloves with blood stains on them, which seemed to be gloves that could fit a large man. There was also a jumper that men often wore over their clothes; it too had blood on it, but no gashes, suggesting that the attacker who shed it was not injured. The gloves and jumper were all thrown into the corner of the room.[13] Further, there was a letter written in Macedonian. When detectives would interview Macedonians to translate the letter and to make sense out of what had happened, all Macedonians had the same reaction: "They'd stare at it a

few minutes and then shake their heads, pleading that if they told us what was in there they wouldn't live long," recalled one detective.[14]

Eventually, the police gathered evidence that at least one of the two suspects released earlier was actually involved in the murder. Thomas Wilson, of a hardware store in Duluth, identified that the knives used in the murders were sold by him. Also, after being given descriptions of the two men, he was confident that one of those descriptions fit the man who bought the knives from him. Upon hearing the description, he stated: "That's one of the men who bought the knives. I took particular notice of him, as he was dressed in the same cloth as worn by American soldiers." The police asked him if the buttons on his coat were stamped with a horseshoe, and Wilson replied, "They were; I noticed that, too." [15] The two men, however, were long gone.

Meanwhile, in Cleveland, police there arrested three Bulgarians – two men and one woman – who they believed may have been involved in the murders. Shortly after the murders, they had boarded a train from Minneapolis to New York. As the investigation unfolded, the police started to pursue another theory – that these three were part of a party of twelve Macedonians and Bulgarians that lured three strangers into their boarding house in order to rob them. The theory went that a fight

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then broke out with the three lured men having been killed, along with three from the party of twelve. But the three Bulgarians were let go after it was determined that their lack of English contributed to miscommunications about their involvement – they had nothing to do with the case.[16] Police also determined that the latest theory was invalid and Stoyanoff's account of the relations of the six Macedonians was indeed accurate and truthful.

While all this was going on, the six murdered Macedonians were supposed to be given a burial, but it was temporary postponed by the City as "university students made a formal demand for the bodies for scientific purposes." They were to be buried at Layman's Cemetery, and all the money found in the house was to be used for the funeral and burials.[17] The students' plea, however, never made it far. Moreover, soon after the murders, the owner of the house the Macedonians had lived in approached a police captain inquiring into whether he could rent out the house in order to charge admission to curious people who wanted to know more about where and how the murders happened.[18] But such a scheme was not allowed – the police denied a permit to operate it as a museum. The owner then announced that he was going to knock down the house and replace it with a barn. The public was very

disappointed with this idea, and many people were found hanging around the house daily peeking through its windows and hoping to get into the "house of murders".[19] Individuals were so desperate to get into the house that the police put it under constant surveillance, as they had caught several people raiding the place and either stealing items or just lurking around.[20] The owner still had not knocked down the house by the end of the year and instead sold it to people who wanted to live in the "house of death," which was the final name given to the house by the newspapers.[21] A commentator questioned why anyone would want to live in "a filthy hovel" with "stains of blood...still visible on the floors and walls." [22]

By the end of June the police began to suspect five Austrians for the murders. The Austrians had been arrested for larceny in a different matter and two of the Austrians fit the physical descriptions given of the two original suspects that were released by police in the spring. Many doubted that the Austrians were behind it because they were convinced that it was a Macedonian feud. But some of the detectives suggested that some Austrians resembled Macedonians due to the fact that Austria had ruled countries near Macedonia and that original witness accounts were mistaken in the nationality of the murderers. But Chief Doyle

was not as confident. "I am not really optimistic with regard to this clue," he said.[23] His pessimism served him right: evidence and testimony was obtained completely ruling out the Austrians of the murders.[24]

The summer had come and gone with no further clues relating to the murders. Then in October, a Macedonian who was considered the leader of the six murdered Macedonians was found dead. This leader was Peter Stoyanoff, the man who had traveled down from Duluth the day after the murders in March and identified each of the dead Macedonians. After police released him, however, they never heard from him or saw him again, until someone spotted his body floating in a river two blocks from where the six other Macedonians had been killed. The police believed that Stoyanoff was killed before he was thrown into the river, and that it was absolutely not suicide, for several reasons: there was no water in his lungs; he was missing seven toes that had been recently amputated; and several cuts and scratches were on his hands, indicating an intense struggle. Other Macedonians had previously warned police that he would be the next to die in order to finally resolve a Balkan vendetta that police still hadn't fully understood.[25] The vendetta was known to many Macedonians, but the police had difficulty in securing details. For example, back in

the spring when detectives went to Chicago and Indiana to investigate the murders, one Macedonian had told them "that the six slain men had been doomed to death years before in the old country." [26]

By the end of the year, detectives were no closer to solving the murder mystery and different theories were still abounding. One coincided with the arrest of two Bulgarian men in Indiana who had been officers in the Bulgarian army. A Greek in Minneapolis claimed that those two men were now in America trying to get money from Macedonians and Greeks in order to fund Bulgaria's campaign in Macedonia.[27] However, after interviewing the men, detectives gave up on that theory and called it "erroneous".[28]

Over a century later, the "Macedonian Massacre" remained unsolved. Some people believe that the Macedonians who committed it for political reasons got away; others think that one of the murdered men was one of the attackers and was killed in self-defense by one of the other five. Regardless, their remains are still at the Minneapolis Pioneers Soldiers (Layman's) Cemetery[29] and much of the money found on the victims and in the house (which is suspected to be a lot more than reported by police) never made it back to Macedonia.[30] where relatives of the dead had demanded it to help pursue the murderers, who they insisted were hiding

out in the Balkans.

This article is an extract from Victor Sinadinovski's book *Macedonians in America: Their Lives and Struggles during the 20th Century*. The book can be purchased online from Amazon.

[1]"Nemesis", Star Tribune (Minneapolis, Minnesota)27 Mar 1907, WedPage 2

[2]"City's Worst Murder Still Unsolved", Star Tribune (Minneapolis, Minnesota)22 Dec 1940, Sun Page 13

[3]"New Clue", Star Tribune (Minneapolis, Minnesota) · Sun, Apr 1, 1906 · Page 1, 2.

[4]"City's Worst Murder Still Unsolved", Star Tribune (Minneapolis, Minnesota)22 Dec 1940, Sun Page 13

[5]"Macedonians Killed With New, Long Knives", St. Louis Post-Dispatch (St. Louis, Missouri) Thu, Mar 29, 1906 ·Page 10.

[6]"City's Worst Murder Still Unsolved", Star Tribune (Minneapolis, Minnesota)22 Dec 1940, Sun Page 13

[7]"Macedonians Killed With New, Long Knives", St. Louis Post-Dispatch (St. Louis, Missouri) Thu, Mar 29, 1906 ·Page 10.

[8]"New Clue", Star Tribune (Minneapolis, Minnesota) · Sun, Apr 1, 1906 · Page 1, 2.

[9]"New Clue", Star Tribune (Minneapolis, Minnesota) · Sun, Apr 1, 1906 · Page 1, 2.

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[11]"Murderer is Arrested and is Then Released", Star Tribune (Minneapolis, Minnesota) ·Sat, Mar 31, 1906 ·Page 1.

[12]"Murderer is Arrested and is Then Released", Star Tribune (Minneapolis, Minnesota) ·Sat, Mar 31, 1906 ·Page 1.

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[14]"City's Worst Murder Still Unsolved", Star Tribune (Minneapolis, Minnesota) 22 Dec 1940, Sun Page 13

[15]"Murderer is Arrested and is Then Released", Star Tribune (Minneapolis, Minnesota) ·Sat, Mar 31, 1906 ·Page 1.

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[22]The Pioneer (Bemidji, Minnesota)10 Dec 1906, Mon Page 2

[23]"Clue to Macedonian Murderers Secured Yesterday", Star Tribune (Minneapolis, Minnesota)25 Jun 1906, Mon Page 6

[24]"Clear of Suspicion", Star Tribune (Minneapolis, Minnesota)26 Jun 1906, Tue Page 2

[25]"Does Death Mean Bandit's Revenge?", The Minneapolis Journal (Minneapolis, Minnesota)20 Oct 1906, Sat Page 1; "Body at Morgue is Still Unidentified", The Minneapolis Journal (Minneapolis, Minnesota)21 Oct 1906, Sun Page 6.

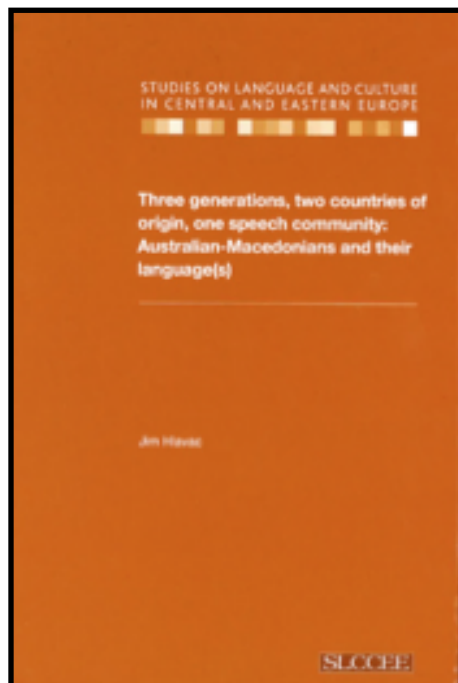
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[27]"Clue Given to Murderers", The Minneapolis Journal (Minneapolis, Minnesota)11 Dec 1906, Tue Page 7

[28]The Minneapolis Journal (Minneapolis, Minnesota)22 Dec 1906, Sat Page 6

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[30]"City's Worst Murder Still Unsolved", Star Tribune (Minneapolis, Minnesota)22 Dec 1940, Sun Page 13



This book examines speakers of Macedonian as a transposed, immigrant language in Australia. Speakers' reported use of Macedonian, English, and other languages is presented through domain-based sociolinguistic analysis. This is augmented by data on the ethnolinguistic vitality of Macedonian-speakers and by language attitude responses that record speakers' affective feelings towards different language varieties.

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MACEDONIAN SOCIETY "ILINDEN" TIRANA A Macedonian cultural association in Tirana, Albania

Website www.ilinden-tirana.com



NARODNA VOLJA A Pro-Macedonian newspaper based in Pirin Macedonia, Bulgaria, edited by Jen Petreski and Stojko Stojkov. The first edition was published in 1980

Website www.narodnavolja.com

About AMHRC

Active since 1984, the Australian Macedonian Human Rights Committee (AMHRC) is a non-governmental organization that informs and advocates about combating racism and promoting human rights. Our aspiration is to ensure that Macedonian communities and other excluded groups throughout the world are recognized, respected and afforded equitable treatment.

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