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In Review: McDougall's 2009 UN Report

Macedonians, a Reminder of Realities
Greece Needs to Accept

By George Vlachos

Introduction

The United Nations Report on the **"Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in Greece"** was prepared by the U.N.'s expert on minority issues Ms Gay McDougall and is dated 18/2/09. The Report is based on information gathered by a mission to Greece that was undertaken by McDougall on behalf of the U.N. from September 8 – 16 in 2008. Although there are many facets to the Report, as indicated by the heading above, the focus of this discussion shall be on Greece's Macedonian minority.

The mistreatment of ethnic minorities in Greece is a perennial issue. The Report found that there has been some **improvement in Greece's treatment of its Roma and 'Muslim' communities**, though it also makes it abundantly clear that there is still a fundamental xenophobic essence pervading Greek national culture and that it remains a serious problem. The Report explains that **"Greece recognises only one minority, the Muslim minority in Western Thrace..."** (p.2) and aptly reminds the Greek authorities that **"Minorities are constituent groups of Greek society, not a foreign element"** (p.2).

The Fusion of Ethnicity and Citizenship = Denial of the Ethnic Other

The Greek state has entwined Greek citizenship too closely with Greek ethnicity and thus ethnic minorities are not only denied various citizenship rights, they are often treated as dangerous foreigners – in spite of the fact that their ancestors inhabited regions like Macedonia and Thrace, long before these lands were annexed by the Greek state, early in the 20th century. The Report put it this way:

"One also senses an interest in promoting a singular national identity. This approach may leave little room for diversity. It can contribute to a climate in which citizens who wish to freely express their ethnic identities face government blockages and in some instances, intimidation from other individuals or groups. ... Some consider those who want to identify as a person belonging to a minority ethnic group to be conspirators against the interest of the Greek state" (p.22, point 82).

The most peculiar and incredible aspect of the Greek fear of the *other* is that it extends to the point of actually denying the existence of any ethnic minorities. This not only indicates that the xenophobia is quite extensive in scope; it also encourages the perception of a Greek political and administrative elite that has lost the capacity to engage in reasoned discussion. As the Report explains, the Greek authorities refuse for example, to admit the existence of both ethnic Turks and Macedonians (p.2). Indeed, on the issue of the existence of Macedonians, the Report states that there is in Greece, a rather *vehement denial* (p.13, point 41). That this denial is quite futile and senseless is made clear in point 45 of the Report, which emphatically states:

"The independent expert met numerous individuals identifying as ethnic Macedonian. Some de-

scribed themselves as fluent in the Macedonian language having learned it within their families as it is not taught at school. Others described frustration that they lack fluency due to lack of learning opportunities. They claim to have made numerous approaches to the Greek Ministry of Education regarding language education, which have never been acknowledged" (p.14).

The Report further explains that:

"The response of earlier Greek governments was to suppress any use of the Macedonian language and cultural activities. In recent times the harsh tactics have ceased but those identifying as ethnic Macedonian still report discrimination and harassment. [This is elaborated upon in points 46 and 47 on p.14 of the report.] They consider it of crucial importance for their continued existence that their ethnic identity and distinctiveness is respected. The Macedonian language is not recognised, taught, or a language of tuition in schools" (p.13, point 41).

A Tradition of Denial

An ethnic Greek tradition of denying the existence of Macedonians extends back at least to 1912. It was in 1912/13 that the Greek state, via its military forces, illegitimately occupied and seized around 51% of Macedonia. Since 1912/13, with a view to aiding the denial and concealment of Macedonians, successive Greek governments have implemented various abusive measures. Some, though by no means all of these, are noted in the Report:

"In the 1920s and 30s laws required the replacement of non-Greek names of towns, villages, rivers and mountains with Greek names. The family names of the

Macedonian speaking population were also required to be changed to Greek names. Individuals seeking to re-instate Macedonian family names have had their petitions refused by authorities on administrative grounds. Community representatives note that traditional names continue to be in common usage and call for reinstatement and the official usage of a dual nomenclature e.g. Florina/Lerin” (p.13, point 42).

One might refer to these measures as a form of *symbolic* ethnic cleansing. We note here, how this UN Report, unlike recent **“human rights” reports issued by the U.S. State Department**, values the self ascription of Macedonians and avoids the disrespectful practice of referring to Macedonians and the Macedonian language with the generic linguistic and ethnically meaningless label **“Slavic”**.

In renaming Macedonians, the US State Department is serving to encourage the **Greek state’s current stance and to reinforce** the maintenance of negative stereotypes. The terms **“Slav”, “Slavic” and “Slavo”, have long been in pejorative use** in Greece and current Greek policy is in fact to refer to Macedonians as **“Slavophone-Greeks”**. **In any case, to include “human rights” in the title of a report which does not respect the self ascription of the people it is describing, is to preach one thing and practice another.**

International Politics does not offer a Legitimate Escape for Greece

There is an international political aspect to the present day Greek policy of minority denial. To quote the Report: **“The Greek government’s understanding of the term minorities is too restrictive to meet current standards...”** (p.21, point 81) because it treats minority issues as if they are inter-state matters. However as the Report rightly asserts, the **“decision that a certain group should receive the protections due to minorities does not have implications for inter-state relations”** (p.2). Certainly it would not have any legal implications.

Though we here suspect that Greek governments of all persuasions are motivated by the fear that their policy of preventing the international integration of the neighbouring Republic of Macedonia, would be practically undermined if the step of finally recognising the existence of Macedonians is taken. Such a development is quite possible; however it can in no way justify the continuing

mistreatment and non-recognition of Macedonians in Greece. In any case, **Greece’s significant efforts to prevent the international community’s acceptance of the Republic of Macedonia** are also quite unjust. The Greek state objects to the name democratically chosen by the inhabitants of the Republic of Macedonia, however, it simply does not have a right, legal or moral, to impose a name change of any kind on that country.

The irony in this discussion is that the Greek state is more than happy to complain about the treatment of ethnic Greek minorities in other countries, especially in neighbouring Albania. Yet the Albanian state not only recognises the existence of its Greeks, it affords **them rights in practice which Greece’s unrecognised minorities can only dream about**. The shameless nature of the double standard is revolting and makes it impossible to express even a **smidgen of ‘sympathetic understanding’** for Greek state policy and practice in regard to the minorities inhabiting Greece.

Discriminatory Laws

Issues connected to respect for the law and for the elimination of discriminatory laws are extensively examined within the Report. For example the Report explains that the Greek state apparatus and judiciary, in refusing to permit the registration of a Macedonian organisation, *Home of Macedonian Culture*, is in contravention of European Court findings (p.13, point 43). Moreover, the Report condemns the **Greek state’s introduction of discriminatory laws in 1982 and 1985, which were specifically designed to prevent ethnic Macedonians who fled Greece for their safety during the Greek Civil War (1946 – 1949), from reclaiming their Greek citizenship and property**. These laws, which are still in force today, explicitly state that only **“Greeks by Genus”** are permitted such rights (pp.13-14, point 44).

The Report also emphasises that the Greek state needs to bring itself up to date as its

“...interpretation of the term “minorities” is too restrictive to meet current standards: it focuses on the historical understanding of “national minorities” created by the dissolution of empires or agreements concluded at the end of wars—the so-called Minority Treaties. This historical paradigm limits the definition to those

communities identified in specific bilateral treaties...” (point 81).

This is a polite way of informing the Greek political establishment that requirements have changed since pre-WWII Europe and that the Greek government needs to:

“...consider its obligations with respect to minority populations as arising within the post-1945 legal framework of modern human rights treaties and jurisprudence based upon the principle that protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, including those of persons belonging to minorities, is the responsibility of the state in which the persons and/or minority groups reside. These rights are universal and are elaborated in multilateral treaties and other documents that constitute core aspects of human rights law, including minority rights” (pp.22-23, point 86).

More reasons as to why Greece needs to be reminded of its legal responsibilities are made clear in point 84:

“...Roma (those who are not Muslims), Muslims who are not from Western Thrace, those who claim a Macedonian ethnicity and more recent but settled immigrant communities are limited with respect to the full enjoyment of their rights of self-identification and the particular enhanced protections that they may be due as minorities. ... Further, those who identify as belonging to an ethnic Macedonian minority face social pressures and a challenge to their motives by the government. Associations have been denied registration because their name includes the words “Turkish” or “Macedonian”. Their rights to freedom of expression and freedom of association as protected under Article 19 and Article 22 of the ICCPR respectively have been infringed” (p.22).

This point is particularly important because it underlines that Greece is not only legally obliged to reverse its policy of minority denial; the Greek state also has obligations which require it to take positive steps to ensure that Macedonians, Turks and other minorities are protected from xenophobic social elements.

Conclusions

Taking all of the above into account, the Report logically advises that:

“The government should retreat from the dispute over whether there is a Macedonian minority or a Turkish minority and place its full focus on protecting the rights to self-identification, freedom of expression and freedom of association of those communities. The Greek government should comply with the judgments of the European Court on Human Rights that associations should be allowed to use the words Macedonian or Turkish in their names and to freely express their ethnic identities. Those associations denied in the past must be given official registration promptly. Their further rights to minority protections must be respected as elaborated in the Declaration on Minorities and the core international human rights treaties. (90)

The government should guarantee the right to personal security and freedom from intimidation or discriminatory actions by private or public actors on the grounds of the exercise of their right to self-identification.” (91)

These findings are not new and have been made by other reputable organisations, like the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) and Helsinki Watch; the question that needs to be asked, is: when will institutions like the U.N. and the E.U. consider implementing some serious sanctions in **order to ‘encourage’ Greece to end the practice of mistreating its ethnic minorities?**

In the immediate aftermath of the Report’s publication, the Greek government made it clear that it was not going to accept the Report’s criticisms and that it certainly was not going to recognise the existence of the Macedonian minority. The mainstream Greek daily newspaper, *Ta Nea*, on the 7th of March 2009, reported that the Greek Foreign Minister, Dora Bakoyannis, responded by expressing her **“annoyance”** at the Report’s author, Gay McDougall and this was specifically connected to the Report’s recognition of Greece’s Macedonian minority.

More than three years have elapsed since the publication of this UN Report and despite the election of a new Greek government, we may categorically assert that the Greek state has done *absolutely nothing* in regard to implementing the necessary changes, in relation to human rights for Macedonians. Consid-

ering the precariousness of the Macedonian minority’s position in Greece, the danger is that any further delays in attempting to bring Greece into line might be too late to be of any assistance to Macedonians....



A Few More General Observations on the Greek Denial of Macedonians

The desire of mainstream Greek nationalist culture to see the death of Macedonian ethnic/national identity is something that has become increasingly detestable. Many years of observing it and interacting with it first hand, has certainly contributed to making it so. It is also very discouraging to observe that there has not been any major effort from within the mainstream of the Greek world, whether in Greece or Greek Diaspora communities, to develop some sort of reconciliation movement or social re-education programs.

Yes there are honest Greek historians like Litoksou and Sofos; debunkers like the Anti-Nationalist Movement of Greece and the Greek Helsinki Monitor – but they are still only peripheral in their influence at best. There is next to nothing from the mainstream of Greek political or academic culture, other than efforts to sure up the denial and the hatred.

Official report after report from ECRI, the UN, Helsinki Monitor, various academics and supposedly legally binding obligations and still nothing; nothing **but the “annoyance” of the Greek mainstream and elites.** Present day Greek national culture is certainly a phenomenon which the advocates of primordialism should be looking into...

For it is a social phenomenon that seems to have become so obdurately

attached to a perception of itself as the **culture of an ethnically ‘pure’ nation-state**, and to an interconnected mythical version of its historical origins, as to have become unmalldable in this regard. Those citizens of Greece who exhibit ethno-cultural difference, by, for example, possessing and speaking a native language which is not Greek, perforce, generate existential historical uncertainty and thereby create an anxious **surplus energy within the ‘pure’ Greek majority**, which is then sublimated into peculiar forms of xenophobia and ethnic hatred.

When objective outsiders point out the facts, in the eyes of Greek political leaders, **they are alchemised into “Skopje conspiracies”.** The comparatively small and weak Republic of Macedonia, somehow managed to **‘manipulate’** the UN. Gay McDougall met with **‘phantoms’** in Aegean Macedonia; **‘phantoms’** indeed from one perspective – **the Macedonian ‘bogeymen’** who by their mere ethnically distinct existence, undermine the fairy tale propagated by Greek historiography, of the modern **Greek nation’s direct social descent from the ‘glorious’ ancient Greeks and Macedonians.**

Modern Greece – Romance Without the Rational

The romantic gaze of western European modernity, which liked the idea of creating a reminder of the Classical past, might have been enough to begin to build a modern Greek state in the **1830’s, but it was never going to be** enough to sustain the state in terms of a stable and proficient long term existence.

Tales of the ‘glories’ of the ancient City States and the Eastern Roman Empire seemed to provide enough glue to begin the process of creating a nation out of the disparate linguistic cultural elements (speakers of Albanian, Vlach, Greek, Slavic, Italian and Turkish) inhabiting the former Ottoman province **during the early years of the new state’s** existence. But there is more to western modernity than just romance – the work ethic; the pursuit of economic, legal and bureaucratic rationalism in rejection of hereditary rights, nepotism and cronyism; civic acceptance of cosmopolitanism and secularism etc.

Albanian, Vlach and Greek speaking merchants, who more or less had some **feel for the ‘ways of the west’, did play a** crucial role in the establishment of the

new state, but they were not the only **important 'players'** – the Orthodox Church, with its dreams of recreating the Eastern Roman/Byzantine Empire and various culturally heterogeneous **'bandit' type leaders of the peasant masses**, who possessed values more in line with those of the romantics, were no less important in the process of constructing this *new* nation state, called Greece.

The compromises implemented to establish the new order were hardly an equitable balance between what is required by modernity and those social forces that had little in common with such requirements. Considering the nature of the pre-modern Ottoman context out of which the new state emerged, it is no surprise that salient aspects of the rational and cosmopolitan sides of modern nation building were short changed in the process; and the Greek nation-state has been stumbling along ever since, enduring crisis after crisis, economic - the current financial collapse of Greece is the latest in a series of major economic crises which extend back well into the 19th century* - and political, from the Asia Minor disaster of the **1920's, to the Metaxas dictatorship in the 30's and the despotism of a military junta in the 60's and 70's. This is not** however to suggest a teleological determination of events.

Rather, it is to observe that decisions have been made throughout the **nation's existence to neglect the development of a cultural shift** that would encourage the rise of a more socially aware/responsible citizenry focused on creating a *contemporary common-wealth* and instead, to maintain, via the state education system, an intense dependence on preserving the unity of the nation by imbuing every generation with an obsessive affinity for the **'glorious' ancients and a deep belief in the conjoined myths that they are the sole legitimate 'inheritors' of this 'glory',** and its direct ethno-cultural descendants. It was thus that the diverse cultural origins of the new nation were systematically obliterated and **'forgotten' and 'maintaining' the ethnic 'purity' of the nation** developed into a core value of modern Greek national culture.

The Greek Economic Catastrophe and Greek Xenophobia in Relation to Macedonians

The continuing fanatical determination **of many Greeks to place 'top priority' on denying the Republic of Macedonia and Macedonians in general, their human rights,** indicates that they see very little

of worth in the Greek nation at present, other than something *quite removed* from the present - their imagined ancient ancestors. As if the purpose of the nation is to exist, mainly as a reminder **of an extremely distant 'magical' past,** even if only as a very mediocre modernistic reflection of it. The *angel of history*, **to use Walter Benjamin's phrase, can be quite cruel.**

At first glance, it's really quite astounding, the whole economic edifice of Greek society is rapidly crumbling and yet all that many Greeks can still think about, is how to destroy the **"Skopians"** (a pejorative term commonly used by representatives of the Greek Government, ethnic Greeks in Greece and the Greek Diaspora, in reference to Macedonians).

Actually, the dynastic elites who have **been mismanaging the country's affairs** for generations (it is common knowledge in Greece, that the leadership of the country has been mostly in the hands of a few families whose surnames appear again and again, in the upper echelons of the political and economic realms), instinctively, for their own sakes, attempt to strike out any evidence which might undermine the ancient fairy tale, as it may be all that stands between them, the disintegration **of the nation's current form** and the emasculation of their privileges.

Thus, when everything else is failing, and it certainly appears at present that all else is indeed failing in Greece, then it can seem even more imperative to despise and deny those social elements, who by their ethnic *otherness*, put both the ancient narrative and the ethnic **'purity' of the nation into question.** Moreover it is useful for those in power to in fact point out the existence of these *others* and then to also deny it, by playing silly semantic games with ancient names. The propagation of xenophobia in this form serves not only to prevent **the deconstruction of the 'glorious' ancient direct descent narrative,** it also assists, like the ancient narrative itself, in diverting attention from the serious problems stemming from a culture that is ill equipped to navigate the challenges of modernity.

It appears to be common in popular thought to think of the current **fiscal collapse of Greece and the country's pervasive xenophobia** as social phenomena which are not directly connected or even quite unrelated – actually, upon reflection, it is obvious that they are intimately entwined. Those European and sensible Greek political leaders who think that *now is not the time, the main thing*

at this moment is to put the country's finances in order, are missing the point – **the mismanagement of Greece's finances** is connected to every other aspect of **Greece's inability to bring itself** more into line with all that is worthy within Modern thought, values and standards.

Choosing to not utilise the financial bail outs as a means to pressure the country to end its human rights violations and continuing to pander to its unjust campaign against the Republic of Macedonia, **is affording Greece's corrupt elites** the ability to unnecessarily delay the process of fundamental bureaucratic, economic and educational reform, as well as aiding them to maintain their hegemony via myths and xenophobia....

George Vlahov

* *"Greece is the only known example of a country that has lived in bankruptcy since the day that it was born. If such a situation were to prevail in France or England for just one year, we would see terrible catastrophes. ...*

... The powers that protect Greece have been obliged to guarantee the solvency of the Greek state so that it can negotiate with external lenders. But the loans thereby obtained have been squandered by the government without any benefit to the country: and now that this money has been spent, the guarantors have no other option but to have the good grace to pay the interest, which Greece cannot reimburse.

Today, the country has given up all hope of paying off its debts. And if the three powers continue to pay indefinitely in its stead, Greece will not be much better off because its outgoings will always be greater than its income.

... The taxpayers have followed the example of the tax collectors: they do not pay. Wealthy property owners, who wield significant influence, succeed in frustrating the state by bribing or intimidating its agents. The agents, who are poorly paid and may be dismissed at every change of minister, do not defend the interests of the state as they do in our country.

Their sole aim is to cultivate the rich and powerful and to line their pockets in the process. As for the small property owners, who are called on to pay for their wealthy neighbours, when they are not protected by their own poverty, they have powerful friends to ensure that their goods may not be seized.

... In Greece, the law is not the intractable entity that we know. Tax collectors are careful to listen to the taxpayers, sure in the knowledge that when formality has been swept aside by brotherly feeling, it will be easy to reach agreement. The Greeks know each other very well and like each other a little. But they have virtually no acquaintance with the abstract being we call a state, which they do not like at all. Finally, tax collectors are prudent: they know they should avoid exasperating their countrymen, that there are bad stretches on the road home and that accidents can happen.

They believe, as they did in the time of the Turks, that their masters are their enemies and that a man's most noble right is the right to hold on to his money. It is for this reason that ... Greek ministers of finance produced two revenue budgets. One, the current fiscal year budget, indicated the sums the government ought to receive; the other, the administrative budget, indicated what it hoped to receive."

These extracts come from an article that was written by Edmond About in 1858. It was recently reproduced on the internet by *presseurop*: <http://www.presseurop.eu/en/content/article/1521511-greece-1858-plus-change>

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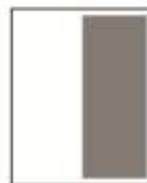
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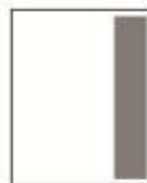
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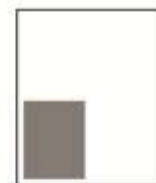
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Our Mirror and the Foresight of LePen

By George N. Papadakis



"It is unacceptable for Mr. Schauble to ridicule my fatherland. I do not accept him as a Greek! Who is Mr. Schauble to laugh at Greece? Who are the Dutch? Who are the Finnish? We have always been proud to defend the liberty, not only of our fatherland, but also the liberty of Europe."

No, these words were not uttered by some hooligan, demonstrator, housewife or by any other ordinary person, but sadly, just a few days ago, by the first citizen of this country, the President of the Republic. My opinion of Karolos Papoulias is known to those of you who regularly read my column. So in short, I will reiterate that it is embarrassing for all of us to have such a person "representing" us at the highest level of government. He is typical of the recalcitrant elements in post-dictatorial Greece – deeply anti-Western and anti-European, frequently spouting the deliriums of Fascism. In 2005, he was taken out of mothballs and imposed on us by Kostas Karamanlis. **If he had not so been utilised, I'm quite sure, that at best, he would have been a comrade of the likes of Papathemelis, Psodiadis and other such "progressive" forces in this miserable country.**

Note well, I do not contend that Papoulias is responsible for the woes of the country and its current situation. He has been a puppet his whole life and he will remain that way until the end. Though the fact that a person like him reached – and the way he reached – the highest rung of the state, tells us much about our catastrophic situation. In sober countries, when one is invited on multiple occasions to be a witness in defence of one of the greatest war criminals of the 20th century (Karadzic) and **when one, of one's own accord, seeks to be a defence witness for another major criminal (Milosevic), one either simply resigns from public office on account of the pressure of public disapproval or, one is forced to resign by those who 'appointed' you. But in "heroic Greece" there was no public disapproval and the political parties were so satisfied, that they gave him the opportunity to renew his mandate.**

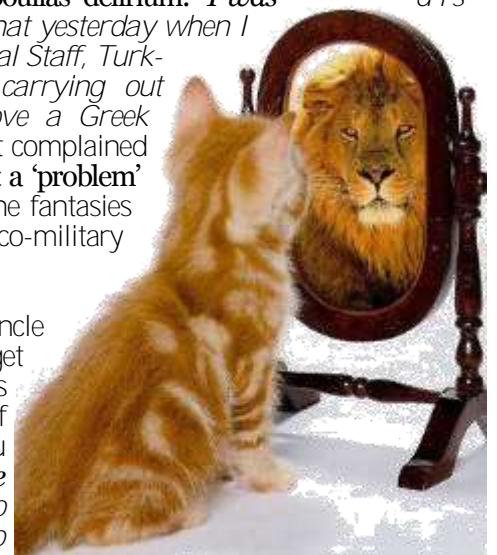
All the same, the President prefers his past not to be mentioned **and also wants the rest of us to forget it. This is why he won't now go to The Hague as a witness, unless the International Court surpasses itself and invites him, as Karadzic's lawyers recently did.** Given the abuse he received during the parade last October in Salonika and with another parade fast approaching, he has decided to utilise, fully, the elements of populist nationalism to try to salvage as much as possible for the 25th March, the Greek National holiday.

Recently and rather pathetically, he declared that he will decline to receive his salary, which means he is making a donation of 278,000 Euros to the GNP. Yes, this is the annual wage of **the President of the Republic, it's more money than Obama** earns. After already gaining 1.5 million Euros from his Presidential mandate, our good Papoulias has converted himself into a major sponsor of our bankrupt state. In a country which has obviously been heading for bankruptcy since at least 2009, because, apart from everything else, it was paying such abnormally large sums, it is astounding that it had not occurred to anyone to end this embarrassing waste.

A few hours after this donation, our old leader went to the Ministry for Defence and he attacked our European partners with the words I quoted at the beginning of this article. It is embarrassing that a large number of Greeks think in these terms about our European partners and we might have held back our disdain if this was just talk from some ordinary person. But in scandalous service to intolerant populism these words were heard via an official report and with the permission and approval of Papoulias.

If I was in the position of Schauble, the Dutch, the Finns and the other Europeans, I would never again consider giving financial aid to this country of political bandits who have not learned and never will learn to be anything else. Likewise, if I was the General Secretary of NATO, I would have put the leader of these bandits in his place. Anders Fogh Rasmussen, after he made the mistake of visiting Athens last February was the **next recipient of Papoulias' delirium: "I was dis-**
turbed by the fact that yesterday when I was with the General Staff, Turkish aircraft were carrying out flight missions above a Greek island" the President complained **to Rasmussen about a 'problem'** that exists only in the fantasies of the Greek politico-military establishment....

If you thought that uncle Karalos might forget about Macedonians and the Republic of Macedonia, then you are mistaken: **"The efforts of Skopje to alter history and to**



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(Continued from page 9)

present Alexander as a Skopian, are a *joke*", declared the castigator of all "*deep Slavs*". This, if you didn't know, is how he referred to Macedonians in Greece during a visit to Strasburg in 2006, where he attempted to spread the fiction of their non-existence.

One would laugh if one didn't have to cry, as Karalos Papoulias is an accurate reflection of the Greek political establishment/system when it looks at itself in the mirror. It is an establishment which is bankrupt; has bankrupted the country and yet still refuses to go. How sincere was the idea of reducing the number of parliamentary representatives from 300 to 200 – something which was so heavily propagated at the beginning of the crisis? Why was it forgotten? Is the economy now proceeding so well that we can maintain the luxury of paying these 300 their inflated salaries, not to mention the ceremonial one (Papoulias) we send to parades and on journeys around the world?

Though I have forgotten. Our most important problems are the Turks and the Macedonians. And there are 'Papouliasites' everywhere:

"A logical cause for concern is information from the Skopian news agency MIA, that the Australian government decided from now on to refer to the Skopian community in that country as Macedonian and not as Slavomacedonian, a term which it had been using since 1994. If this information is accurate, there is a great need to end this new direction of the Australian government, as it is against international law and the

decisions of the UN and at the same time is harmful to the traditionally good relations between Greece and Australia."

Who spoke these words? *New Democracy's* spokesperson for foreign affairs, Panos Panayotopoulos. So now our enemies include the Australians, the Europeans, the Americans, the IMF...basically the whole world...

The Prescience of Lepen

In a few days the national elections will be held and they will "offer" Macedonians the "opportunity" to choose from among 29 different political formations and coalitions. Regardless of whether the elections result in the parliamentary entrance of neo Nazis from *Golden Dawn*, they *might* have afforded a party like *Vinozhito (Rainbow)* an excellent opportunity to significantly raise their percentage of the vote.

Though something like that would only be applicable if the elections were held in another more democratic country. In present day Greece, which is going from bad to worse, the political system still does not permit such hopes. In other words, the decision of *Vinozhito* to not participate in the parody implemented by the old and new carriers of the Greek system is fully justified.

And what about Vinozhito's members and supporters? What are they going to do? Maybe an excursion through the wonderful flora of this year's Spring? That would be a very good choice. Though no doubt there will be some who will insist on passing through the booths and casting a vote. The sentences below are devoted to them and will serve as a

small reminder for their habitual forgetfulness.

If some of you are so perverse as to be thinking of voting for Antonios Samaras and his ultra-right wing creation, which was at one time *New Democracy*, it should be enough for me to remind you of what he has said about the Macedonians: "*an ideology which has already been defeated, it is laughable to speak of a Macedonian nation*" and on the question of the name of the Republic of Macedonia: "*time is running in Greece's favour, there is no reason to rush on this issue. In a short time, the Skopian statelet will fall apart....*"

The new president of PASOK, who has been a minister in every government the party has formed since 1993, has been somewhat cleverer. For a long time he rarely referred to the issue and on the occasions he did, he would only say that: "*the importance of the question of the name is so big that no individual can deal with it singlehandedly*". However, Macedonians and democratically minded Greeks have not forgotten that over all the years Vangelis Venizelos has been a leader in PASOK, absolutely nothing has been done to improve matters, quite the contrary and past declarations, for example, about the unconditional return of Macedonian political refugees, are just dead letters.

Some might logically decide to avoid these two unsuccessful major parties that have brought the country to the brink of an abyss and decide to vote for one of the extant alternatives. So let us examine some of them. The Stalinist-nationalist KKE (Greek Communist Party), which at one time recognised the Macedonian nation and the right to self determina-

tion, today, is their avowed enemy: *“The Macedonian nation does not exist and thus there is no Macedonian minority, that is demonstrated by a whole series of scientific studies and therefore the neighbouring state [the Republic of Macedonia] has no right to raise such a question, nor to monopolise the term Macedonia”*, asserted the party’s General Secretary, Aleka Papagira. If that isn’t enough to deter you from this party, then I don’t know what is....

SIRIZA, once we exclude some insignificant elements involved in the formulation of the party’s policies, is definitely in line with all the other parties: *“We believe that they [the Macedonians] are a Slavic race which over time settled the wider territory known as Macedonia, which*

bursts, whatever their source and should at once proceed with the adoption of a mutually acceptable name in order to stand side by side in international organisations and to cooperate on all levels” - the hunter asks its prey to be obliging.

May be Dora Bakoyanis’ *Democratic Simahia*. Bakoyanis is the person primarily responsible for blocking Macedonia’s entry to the EU and NATO (I personally believe she did Macedonia a favour in regard to NATO) and her position on the Macedonians in Greece: *“it is a joke to discuss the Macedonian nation and language. In Greece there is no so called Macedonian minority. Full stop.”* Thus you also should place a full stop here.

ticking of PASOK governments over the last 19 years. What I will say, is that I now recall with some surprise, the accuracy of statements made by the founder and one time leader of an ultra-right wing party in France, *National Front*, Zhan Mari Lepen, during a visit to Greece in the 1990’s. He was asked by some journalists whether he believes that in the near future in Greece, there would arise some nationalistic party with voting support comparable to his party: *“You have no need, in your country every party is nationalistic!”*

It is sad to have to agree with such a person, but that is how matters stand. So if you are going to insist on ignoring the beauty of Spring by voting, remind yourselves of what has been said above. And



means they have the right to use this name but with a difference which will distinguish the Greek Macedonians from the Slavs of Macedonian geographic territory”. This is the position of the President of the party, Alekis Tsipras and together with Euro-parliamentarians Lafazanis, Papadimoulis and Houndas, he always votes against the Republic of Macedonia’s Progress Reports and totally stands by the so called Greek national line.

What about *Democratic Aristera*, led by Fotis Kouvelis? Absolutely not. Meaningless statements like *“Greece and Skopje [sic] should sideline and condemn dangerous nationalistic and irredentist out-*

What is left? Panos Kamenos (his surname means *burnt*) and his *Incendiary*, oops, I mean to say *Independent Greeks*, declare: *“The question of Skopje cannot be resolved via some compound name with a geographic prefix, as is still argued by Greece today. We should fight for the word Macedonia to be eliminated from the country’s name.”* That is the position of this new party, worse than Samaras...

I will not labour overly on my comments in relation to the ultra right wing LAOS or in relation to the party led by Katseli and Kastanidis, both of whom actively participated in the anti-Macedonian poli-

if you decide to put in a valid vote, then look for the leaflets of *Drasi-Filelefteri Simahia* (if politicians from the centre of the spectrum interest you) or those of OAKKE (if you are an incurable leftist). There you will find some Greeks with open minds who have decided to ignore the political costs of fearlessly standing on the side of the Macedonians and of democracy.

George Papadakis is a member of Vinozhito and a journalist who writes for Nova Zora.

Translated from Macedonian to English by George Vlahov of the AMHRC.

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

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

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

WE ARE WINNING. 127 COUNTRIES HAVE RECOGNIZED MACEDONIA, INCLUDING 4/5 UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL MEMBERS. WE HAVE THE POWER TO END THIS. STOP NEGOTIATING OUR OWN NAME.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Greece is holding the EU and NATO hostage

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

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

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

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

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

THE MOST BASIC HUMAN RIGHT IS SELF-IDENTIFICATION.

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

DEMAND AN END TO 'FYROM' REFERENCE.

DEMAND IMMEDIATE INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION.

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and other Macedonian organizations - www.mhrmi.org/our_name_is_macedonia

OUR NAME IS MACEDONIA



For Many Years to Come: Nova Zora, as the Persecution Continues

By Dimitri Jovanov

Pleasure, joy, comradely interaction and so on, are words that were used by those present, to describe the dinner dance held in celebration of the second birthday of *Nova Zora*, the newspaper expressing the voice of Macedonians in Greece. The evening officially began at 8.30 pm on March 17th in the Nih-teri Hall in Sorovichevo, Lerin County. Some thought the hall would be too large for the event – as it turned out, it was too *small*. Some people were left without a seat – though not many actually sat; the dancing was continuous and carried until four in the morning.

Macedonians from all parts of Aegean Macedonia attended – from Kostur to Ser. The hall was already full by the time of the official beginning. Proceedings began with a speech delivered by the editor of *Nova Zora*, Dimitri Jovanov. This was followed with a delightful performance by the folk dancing group belonging to the cultural association of the Lerin village, Ofchareni, musically accompanied by the group, *Musicorama*.

The highlight of the evening was the performance of the renowned musician from the Republic of Macedonia, Stefche Stojkovski, whose family originated from the village of Ekshi Su or Gorno Vrbeni. A very touching moment during the course of the evening occurred when a young girl from Kuskush sang the traditional Macedonian song, Jovano Jovanke.

The evening was also utilised to distribute a large number of Macedonian-Greek dictionaries and issues of *Nova Zora*. This second anniversary celebration of the paper has created much optimism and a hope that the Macedonian human rights movement in Greece will continue to grow and that the **official recognition of Greece's Macedonian minority is not far away**. Though that will ultimately depend on all of us!

The speech which began the evening, delivered by the editor of *Nova Zora*:

“Dear Macedonians, welcome to the second celebration of our newspaper, the newspaper that belongs to all of us, Nova Zora. This is a celebration for all Macedonians. We are struggling for the rights of Macedonians in Greece, we are going forward and we will not stop. We have a newspaper, we have a party, Vinozhito, we have cultural associations, internet radio and television, we have orchestras and we have people.

Present today are Macedonians from Kostur, Lerin, Kajlar, Voden, Negush. Enidzhe, Solun and even from Ser and also very notably, we have among us some democratic Greeks who support us in our struggle for recognition and rights.

The time has come for Macedonians in Greece to be recognised; for the Macedonian language to be taught in schools; for Macedonian political refugees to be permitted to return and for Macedonian culture to be allowed to flourish. Nova Zora is struggling for all these things and it is also trying to enlighten the large number of Macedonians who still believe the lies propagated by the Greek state, a state which should use the socio-economic crisis as a means to lay the foundations for democratisation. It's time!

Last year at the first Nova Zora celebration, we quoted a well known statement from the great Macedonian, Krste Petkov Misirkov: ‘we are, however many

we are'. Well at this second celebration we can freely assert that we are definitely more than we were. So I would like to thank all you involved in the distribution of the newspaper across the whole of Egej and other parts of the world. Likewise, a big thank you to our partner organisations, the AMHRC in Australia and MHRMI in Canada, for their enormous support. The newspaper belongs to you all and whoever can donate some financial support, or write for the paper or aid in its distribution, should do so.

Present here today are representatives of various groups including: the Macedonian Child Refugee associations in the Republic of Macedonia; Macedonian organisations from Albania, Bulgaria, Germany and Belgium. We are here, will remain here and will not stop while Macedonians in Greece and throughout the world, do not exist as that which they are: Macedonian!

Enjoy your evening and to your health as Macedonians!



Dimitri Jovanov

The Persecution Continues

Some people believe that times have changed and that the Greek authorities no longer persecute Macedonians in their daily lives, especially in relation to their employment. These people are most definitely mistaken. Presently the harassment continues, though the state and its numerous branches carry this out in a more covert and sophisticated manner, but, **as always, it is done in the name of “Democracy” and “the national interest”.**

The covert manner ensures that the public rarely hears about it and even if there is some public scrutiny the maltreatment is usually disguised as something other than ethnic bigotry. Thus it is often the case that even the victims remain unaware

of the true reasons for their plight. Moreover, in the cases where the victims do become aware, they rarely pursue the course of publicising their plight via the lodgement of an official complaint, for fear of even sterner reprisals.

Recently the editorial board of *Nova Zora* was made aware of a case of workplace victimisation by a Macedonian who found he could no longer tolerate the discrimination against him and decided to inform our newspaper about it. His name and title are Archimandrite Panteleimon Skenderis (Skenderov) and he hails from the village of Popozhani, Lerin County. He is 47 years old and has served for nearly 20 years **in the church of St. Varvara in Salonika. His “error” was** threefold; firstly he refused to forget his Macedonian ethnic origin, secondly, he refused to stop speaking the Macedonian language and thirdly, he refused to allow any frivolous expenditure of the church funds raised from the congregation. As a result, the infamous Metropolitan of Salonika, Anthimos and his servants, declared an unscrupulous war against Skenderis. They relocated him to another smaller church (St. Teo-



dora) in Salonika and applied various unseemly forms of pressure in an attempt to compel his resignation from the church. Eventually this caused Skenderis so much distress, that he sought psychiatric aid and hospitalised himself. Shortly thereafter, he returned to active service, but the abuse from Anthimos continued. In an effort to alleviate this, Skenderis applied to be returned to his old church or to be relocated for service in Lerin County. In response, Anthimos declared him to be “mentally ill” and revealed that he has documents in his possession, proving this to be the case.

This is of course, totally unlawful. The laws of the land forbid the public distribution of such information and absolutely guard the confidentiality of such documents. So how did the papers find their way into the hands of Anthimos? There is indeed reason to wonder if the Greek Church constitutes a state within a state?!

“All of this is happening to me because of my [ethnic] origin and because of my refusal to disavow it. My presence ‘dirties’ the Metropolitan’s ‘pure’ flock. Through the pressure and slander, their aim is to make my life so intolerable that I resign”, Skenderis asserted to *Nova Zora*.

We now need to ask: which of the Gospels or Holy Scriptures is concerned with ethnic discrimination and the banning of languages? This needs to be answered so that we can understand how the House of God was converted into a place for such activities....

Dimitri Jovanov, editor of *Nova Zora* a monthly pro-Macedonian newspaper distributed throughout Aegean Macedonia and beyond: <http://novazora.gr/>

Translated from Macedonian to English by George Vlahov of the AMHRC.



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Од петокот, 22 јуни 2012 година, AEA Publishers пре-зеде обврска да го издава и “Австралиско Македонскиот Неделник”. Му посакуваме добредојде на тимот што го правеше AMH и сега заедно ќе соработуваме во ширењето и зачувување на македонскиот јазик, гордо веќе ги нашите македонски симболи низ целиот ав-



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Создадена е уникатна можност за подборо информирање на нашата заедница и веќе од следниот четврток, 5 јули 2012, *Australian Macedonian Today* (Денес) ќе излегува секој четврток, додека *Australian Macedonian Weekly* (AMH) ќе излегува секој вторник. Со тоа, драги читатели, ќе можете изворно и побрзо да се информирате во текот на целата недела,

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ва година да создадеме електронско издание кое ќе може да се следи низ целиот свет.

Им благодариме на верните читатели и рекламери за довербата, се обврзуваме на повисоки дострели. А нашата заедница ќе продолжи да се гордее што има два силни весника, кои чесно ја информираат и достоино ја претставуваат на овој континент.

ОД 5 ЈУЛИ 2012 СЕКОЈ ЧЕТВРТОК ЌЕ ИЗЛЕГУВА



Australian Macedonian

TODAY

Австралиско Македонски ДЕНЕС



Драги читатели, веќе од наредниот четврток 5 јули 2012

“Австралиско Македонски Денес” ќе излегува секој четврток. Ќе добиете и неспоредливо похармонично покривање на сите настани во двете наши татковини, со посебен акцент на активностите што ги остварува нашата заедница во Австралија.

Beyond Human Understanding?

By Jim Thomev

First, the bad news

What was once believed by Byzantine theologians about certain religious controversies may also be true about the world **crisis of today: that it is not only beyond ordinary people's understanding, but beyond the human mind (at its best).**

Before the gentle reader turns to the next article or rereads the previous one, in this august periodical, let me assure him or her that I do not want to spend the next few minutes of **anyone's time upsetting them by talking about the inadequacy of human reason in general and to repeat what some of the worst pessimists in the world today are saying about how certain the doom of the human species is, as well as the loss of its home, the planet earth.**

To state that our social and political world is flooded on a daily basis with toxins, or is awash with bullshit, is to state the obvious. **("Bullshit" as a descriptor is very limiting and a symptom of the glib simplifications of our age and the frequent devaluation of human experience that often leads to the notion that life is not up to much.)**

And as far as generalisations go, the idea that it is beyond the human mind to understand, let alone do something constructive about the **"encroaching catastrophe" facing the human species, is not particularly helpful when it comes to solving the problems of everyday living, let alone the practical politics of**

living with other human beings in a world increasing in both its complexity and its problems.

However, relief is in sight for the reader and a Macedonian proverb will deflect us into another line of approach, hopefully **more comprehensible and easier to bear: "јазико шета кај забо шо боли"** [нека ми простат високо образованите во литературниот јазик за употребата на народниот израз од моето село] *"the tongue instinctively goes to the tooth that causes pain"*.

So, we may as well start with a few comments, if any are really needed, about all the bad news coming from Greece these days.

All reports focus on the Greek nation as a huge problem both to the world and to itself. Its financial mismanagement has been, well, Herculean. Wry commentators who speak of it as the **"the Greek tragedy" do not give us a clear idea of what precisely the "tragedy" is about and, more importantly, who should or should not be shouldering the responsibility for the calamity.**

From the ancient world I think the tragedy of kings or exceptional people that the original art form of poetic drama depicted is not strictly analogous here. But very much to the point is another literary monument, titled *The History of the Peloponnesian War*, written by a man who was an Athenian general





Jim Thomev

who was a participant and who was also ostracised by his government.

Thucydides conceived his history as a tragedy (like the poets) presenting the war between Athens and Sparta and their allies as a prolonged crisis, a tragic drama. He described in painstaking detail, every battle, and political debate and development of war that lasted nearly three decades (431 BC to 403 BC). The outcome, the catastrophic defeat and destruction of the Athenian Empire (officially the Delian League) is presented as the culmination of the hubristic arrogance of the powerful city-state Athens. In the fifth century before the Common Era the high level of cultural achievement by Athens had led to an overweening pride. Thus Thucydides invokes the notion that Athens had overreached itself in its most ambitious project during the war, the Sicilian expedition which led to a total destruction of its fleet – the source of its power. This appalling military blunder was the fatal mistake it had made, the *amartia*, (literally, missing the target) comparable as Aristotle would have explained a generation later to the error of judgement made by the hero of the tragedies staged at the Dionysian summer festivals of the time.

In Greece today, the form of *hubris* that has been displayed is a product of nationalistic egoism. The notion that the Modern Greek state has been or is in some way **“exceptional” or “special”, had reached phenomenal heights of self-delusion.** It has certainly been a source of much grief for the minorities in Greece which are not recognized or respected. The Greek state has taken a propagandistic line on the history of the region since its inception in the 19th century combined with an aggressive sense of superiority toward all other surrounding peoples and nations, and as a strategy for its hegemony being especially harsh and aggressive towards the Macedonian people and their attempts at self-affirmation.

No nation in human history, since borders and territories began to divide groups, has ever given serious grounds for a belief in its superiority over others. Still less has such an attitude ever vindicated any religious zealot, politician, lobbyist or pimp, to exploit and humiliate other people, take their land and subjugate them, let alone attempt or commit genocide. To understand this aspect of the gross historical injustice involved in this approach is to make civil progress.

But I will leave all further parallels drawn with the collapse of ancient Athens with modern Greece to those readers who find it interesting and have the leisure to pursue it. I think the essential point about hubris has been made, with the differences between then and now, infinitely vast.

One thing the Greek voters should not have done in the recent elections (June 17) is put back into power the very parties and politicians who have been responsible for dragging the nation into an economic quagmire that will punish even the unborn for generations to come. It really is like asking the surgeons that botched an operation to have another go at fixing it, especially when the case calls for even more delicate, bolder and more skilful hands.

Those Greek politicians, who have demonstrated such singular ineptitude in their governance of the country, should leave the corridors of power; abolish themselves for the sheer incompetence they have demonstrated. These are also the same people who have perpetrated and condoned the continuous humiliation of the Republic of Macedonia, a sovereign state.

When the Republic declared its independence in 1991 the governors of Greece whipped up hatred, chauvinistic arrogance and aggression, angry passions, and suspicion against the Macedonians; subsequently, they slapped on embargoes, and have attempted over twenty years to destroy the new nation in every conceivable way. The gutless and self-absorbed EU has merely looked the other way, putting up with Greece even at its worst behaviour; thus when it was revealed that the Greek entry into the Eurozone was more than a little dodgy with the books being cooked to a crisp, no action or sanction or whatever was taken to change the situation. The super Greek patriots, always with an inflamed sense of their own **importance due to the “exceptional” heritage,** even gave up the drachma to get the huge bundles of Euros that were so generously offered by the richer members of the club. The comic pathos of grandiose delusion and pretension in the contemporary situation of Greece, the stark cleavage between aspiration and actual achievement, will not need an author of the genius who created Don Quixote to make its absurdity apparent to the world.

I believe that changing attitudes toward minorities in Greece and the Republic of Mace-

donia in particular, will not happen overnight. The significant support for the Golden Dawn extremists that has emerged in recent times is not very reassuring to say the least. The idea that a political party has a platform which wants to take Istanbul and stud the northern borders with landmines is crazy and outrageous. Greece has always been a problem-child for Europe and the horrendous developments in recent weeks mean that national priorities will have to be drastically altered. Future Greek politicians will have to seek cooperation with as many nations and peoples as they can, and as Greece has little to contribute in many areas and generating revenue will be difficult, it is imperative that the dead-end nationalistic politics be abandoned.

Clearly not only Greece, but the Europeans need to rethink and get better advice about the seriously flawed financial system they are locked in at present.

The situation will not be resolved by experts who depend on patronage and preferment from their clients. Nor will they get any wise advice or leadership from the wealthy elites in the West, nor will the media moguls of the calibre of Murdoch promote the common good as a priority; and sectional propagandists are equally unhelpful or useless. If the price is the only **thing worth bothering about let's not expect too much principle** or concern for why it matters to save anyone else except oneself, let alone the world. If the free marketeers can be dislodged from their folly with the argument that no kind of market is **possible, if there is no more world...no doubt we'll see some progress.**

The case of modern Greece points to a complex almost unwieldy situation: that what happens in one nation has repercussions for what happens throughout the world, even when **that nation represents a mere 0.5% of the world's economy.** This has highlighted that there are aspects of the problem that cannot be within human control. They are random developments, unforeseeable, and sometimes may not be remediable. **The fact that the Europeans don't seem to have any clear answers** is very telling.

Part of the difficulty in knowing the problem let alone the solution is that the **"experts" are often in conflict. Some are extremely bleak others take it less hard and are even light-hearted about it.** One expert actually said about the Euro crisis, that all the hype and carry on was typical of our Western media. He believed that Greece would just default, drop out of the Euro-zone, and everything will be forgotten very soon and it will be business as usual for the rest of the world while Greece sorts out its attitudes about what went wrong and gets down to some hard work.

Well, in this context, why should I not suggest an opinion that is really not all that outrageous: if Greece had a sensible and cooperative as opposed to a stupid and arrogant (i.e. trying to destroy it) policy toward the Republic of Macedonia, it would not be in such a dreadful quandary today. This may seem a whimsical notion for it appears the conflict between Greece and Macedonia is a petty dispute over a name and therefore a mere trifle in the international scheme of things.

Not so. Let me quote the sequence of a famous English proverb so that the reader can see how causal chains can be

pretty amazing in illustrating that what on the face of it seems trivial betokens very serious consequences:

*For want of a nail the shoe was lost.
For want of a shoe the horse was lost.
For want of a horse the rider was lost.
For want of a rider the message was lost.
For want of a message the battle was lost.
For want of a battle the kingdom was lost.
And all for the want of a horseshoe nail.*

Am I suggesting in perverse hindsight that the Hellenic Republic has collapsed in recent years because the chickens have come home to roost due to its ill-considered treatment of the Macedonians and the Republic of Macedonia? Of course not. To start with, the collapse of the Greek economy does not have a single cause; however, in the chain of causality, surely the mindless self-betraying nationalism must be both a symptom and a cause for the national catastrophe. It is ludicrous for Greece and its Diaspora communities to have squandered so many human and material resources in trying to destabilize the Republic of Macedonia. What could be less productive (not to mention poor accounting if money for value is an issue) than to purvey the illusions and be enemy-focused when it is totally unwarranted from every point of view. The whole strategy has been so misconceived that it would enter the realm of the farcical were it not so lamentable. As the end has been ludicrous, the means have been and remain appallingly wasteful, unimaginably gratuitous acts.

Greece is far from being the only problem for the Euro-zone or the rest of the markets that it affects. Indeed, it is an unfair **simplification to lay the blame exclusively at Greece's door, even though they do have to wear most of it,** as the financial profligacy with foreign loans and the national failure to pay taxes are inexcusable. For all that, the immense material and moral problems and failures of the European family cannot be blamed on the problem-child they were too short-sighted and incompetent to deal with.

And some good news from the secular pulpit

The solutions will have to be found in every country on earth among good willed people who of necessity must become the **informed and influential majority in each country. It's a tough call,** as one of the biggest problems is getting the positive and constructive message across.

A sceptical and critical approach is clearly indispensable toward all media outlets, as they are invariably promoting sectional interests and are full of prejudices and the heavy bias is always promoting their self-interests. This should be patently obvious to anyone who can read newspapers with serious attention.

The virtues of doubt and a questioning approach should be integrated in every school curriculum as early as possible in the lives of children. The nature of human judgement should be made clear; how it is dependent on the context and that it invariably reflects the interests of the party or the speaker. The **notion of "objectivity" in matters of judgement is a furphy, an absurdity.** In other words, a major aim of all study in our schooling should be the pursuit of good judgement, rather than the acceptance of views and presentations of the world in a pas-

sive and trusting way – docile obedience does not make life worth living in the long run, even though it may be a device for survival in the short term.

Individual nations can't save the situation, but human beings recognising their common humanity across the world and every conceivable border can work on the idea of a more just world. This can be done, through painstaking efforts, through self-education, through developing perspectives that transcend the version of capitalism which purports that individual development must occur at the expense of other people. The hungry suffer and die, the fearful live a life of slavery, and the rich are bored and become destructive. The Chinese philosopher **Chuang Tzu said he wasn't interested in either winning or losing** – he just wanted to get rid of having to play the nasty game where people must either lose or win.

I have not written the previous paragraph to merely cheer myself up, or delay the upping of my daily dosage of Panadol.

I have genuinely been heartened in recent years by noticing that among the younger generation there is another perspective growing which is going against the general grain of a society that does not fulfil the deeper needs for a purposeful life. There are segments among the youth of today that do not see **their responsibility as becoming an “anybody” that makes commerce function and flow in the machinery of the corporate state for a small group of people to get filthy rich.** It is rather weird to reflect that there is not a single sacred text in the world which enjoins that becoming rich should be the aim of life. I hope this is an early sign of a future in which people will spontaneously express their deepest, real needs, and choose the knowledge that is appropriate to those needs. Moving with zest

and energy toward a new order with more constructive social patterns setting in, is necessarily positive, and good, just as hope is always much better than despair.

But, some will object, wasn't that what the so-called counter-culture people, of the late sixties and early seventies in the last century were banging on about?

Yes, but that was then days, and many of those guys still living **have grey hair or replaced hair now, and...besides the younger generation have to live their lives and work out their tasks and be true to their own sense of responsibility which is: not to become a cog, nor an instrument, or just a means for others to make money with...all must live as an end in him or her self, as life is the greatest value.**

The task of liberation from oppressive ideas and the options imposed by undemocratic or deceptive means by a general media controlled by people who are worshippers of the dollar, is fresh for every generation. This is not a matter of ideology. It is the very serious business of vocational responsibility in a world that narrows individual options while it promises the opposite...**it is the vocation of becoming fully human beings who reduce the negative qualities that each of us carry as imperfect creatures.** It is necessary to always plead the struggle against fatalism or passive acceptance of the notion that nothing that we can do will make any difference. That is, ditching the approach our **Баби** best expressed with, **и ова ќе помини** – “this too shall pass...”

*Jim Thomev
Melbourne July 2012*

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On 14 May 2012, the Danish Minister for Foreign Affairs, Nikolai Vammen, whose country currently holds the rotating presidency of the EU, made the following statement during a visit to Macedonia:

“This country must become a member of the EU within a certain period of time. At the moment dialogue is taking place at a high level, the roadmap has been established and that is the framework within which we are working. Denmark, as president of the EU, completely supports this process. I am convinced that we will see important steps forward by the government in close cooperation with the EU. After resolution of the dispute regarding the name, further important steps forward will be able to be made. I remain an optimist that the dispute will be resolved in the shortest possible time frame and that is one of our priorities.” (<http://www.utrinski.com.mk/default.asp?litem=ID=EACAB1621EAE5C46A26A1B2343E40028>)

Such statements are but a variation of the familiar mantra repeated by EU and NATO representatives to Macedonia for more than a decade: *“Change your name to please the Greeks and then we will consider when to let you into our exclusive clubs”*.

Instead of taking a principled approach **and defending a nation's right to self-identify** by freely choosing a name for

An Alternative Solution to the Macedonian Name Dispute

By Dr. Chris Popov

its country (something that they would take for granted and resolutely defend in relation to their member countries, even allowing for the pragmatism inherent in the conduct of foreign affairs which gives priority to interests rather than principles) the EU and NATO have, by adopting this cynical stance, jettisoned the most basic human rights principles in order to defend the **“national interests” of one member state, Greece**. It is ironic that it is precisely Greek **“national interests”** which today threaten to lead to financial chaos in the EU and euro zone.

The EU and NATO have essentially treated the dispute regarding Macedonia's name as a **“managerial issue”** which is to be solved in a way that indulges Greek bigotry and which directly **harms Macedonia's and Macedonians' most basic rights**.

What does this EU and NATO insistence- and for that matter the insistence of the USA- **on a “bilateral solution”** to the name issue essentially mean for the Republic of Macedonia and Macedonians world-wide? It means nothing less than allowing the most implacable enemy of Macedonia and the Macedonians to pursue its goal of erasing Macedoni-

an statehood and identity by agreeing to a name which it deems as suitable in **order to achieve that goal**. The **“bilateral solution” is essentially a Greek solution** and one which, if achieved, will lead to the destabilisation of the Republic of Macedonia and the erosion of Macedonians' **distinct ethnic identity, as it will be predicated on the strategy of denying the existence of Macedonians in Greece, which is a crucial factor in Greece's irrational crusade against the Republic of Macedonia**.

The Responsibility of the Republic of Macedonia in Perpetuating the Name Dispute

The continued Macedonian participation in negotiations over the name allows the international community to continue to pressure Macedonia to change its name as such participation, **by its very nature, “validates” the Greek arguments in support of a name change**. After all, if a state is willing to talk or negotiate under duress about the sensitive, crucial and intimate matter of changing its name (and has done so for 19 years), rather than defend its inalienable rights to self-determination and self-identification, it allows the international community to adopt the line of



least resistance and continue insisting on a **“bilateral solution”**, rather than pressuring Greece to drop its irrational demands. It has also encouraged Australia to avoid recognising Macedonia as the Republic of Macedonia for 18 years by using the specious argument that as Macedonia and Greece are negotiating over a **“mutually acceptable name”**, it will await the outcome of those negotiations before taking a decision.

One here must also pose the question as to whether, given the EU's parlous financial and economic state, which will not be overcome for many years, Macedonia would want to become a member of such a body. Even if the EU were not in the precarious position it finds itself in today and was willing to accept Macedonia as a member tomorrow, economic and social conditions in Macedonia would take decades to improve and would need to be predicated upon deep and far-reaching social, political and economic reforms. However, I suspect that the major reason why the majority of Macedonians in the Republic of Macedonia seek EU membership is not because they think that economic and social improvements will flow in the near future, but because EU membership will eventually afford them the opportunity to live and work in the developed EU countries thereby providing them with the chance to improve their living standards.

The Macedonian Government has consistently stated that it will continue to participate in the shameful negotiations over the name of the Republic of Macedonia with Greece as it is **“committed to finding a solution”** and has in fact committed to doing so under UN Security Council Resolution 817 and the Interim Accord it signed with Greece in September 1995. It is clear that it is participating in such a demeaning process as a result of pressure from the EU, NATO and the USA, as well as its own mistaken belief that it should **“please”** those whose organisations it wishes to become a member of.

Successive Macedonian governments have ignored the clear message emanating from Macedonians abroad, and

indeed a majority of its own citizens, that the negotiations with Greece over its name should be abandoned and an alternative solution to the matter of **Macedonia's name sought. Yet what** would such an alternative approach entail politically and economically and what would be its likely effects, given that it would most likely entail jettisoning any long-term plans for joining the EU and NATO, as long as those organisations insist on a **“solution”** to the name dispute before countenancing formal invitations to begin accession negotiations?

Diplomatic Questions

The Macedonian Government has stated repeatedly that breaking off the name talks would lead to Macedonia's international isolation and lead to it being labelled **“unconstructive”** in the search for a solution; that is, if negotiating a **“solution”** to the name of your state with another state which has done its utmost to destroy Macedonian identity and statehood can be labelled **“constructive”** in the first place.

Breaking off the talks –at an opportune moment (many would logically argue that any moment is opportune), such as for example now, given that at the recent NATO summit in Chicago Macedonia was again denied membership essentially due to Greek objections (despite the fact that enlargement in general and a specific proposal for Macedonia to be offered membership were not on the agenda, the fact that the official NATO statement referred to resolution of the name dispute as a precondition for consideration of membership and reaffirmed the so-called consensus decision taken at Bucharest in 2008 shows that an effective Greek veto is still in place, even though it was not formally exercised in Chicago and that NATO does not care about the recent ICJ decision or Macedonia's right to self-identification) and conducting a diplomatic offensive explaining the rationale for such a decision, which in essence would be based on Macedonia's inalienable right to choose and defend its own name and identity - would undoubtedly lead to the EU and the USA expressing their displeasure and possi-

bly holding up aid and other forms of assistance for Macedonia for a short period. Other than that, I would not envisage either the USA or the EU making a serious and concerted attempt to punish Macedonia long term for doing something that they themselves would do; refusing to compromise their identity and sovereignty by refusing to negotiate a new name for their nations.

The UN?

One possible method of breaking off the name negotiations would be returning to the UN and seeking resolution of the dispute within the body that violated its own charter by insisting on Macedonia's membership of the UN under the provisional reference, **“The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”** and on Macedonia continuing to negotiate its name with Greece. The strategy for defending the name in the UN has been eloquently enunciated by Dr Igor Janev, senior researcher at the Institute for Political Studies in Belgrade. (http://www.maknews.com/html/articles/janev/name_issue_2005.html).

Without going into the detail of Dr Janev's proposal, it essentially involves seeking a resolution in the UN General Assembly which would seek to deem illegal and exclude the additional conditions imposed on Macedonia in the relevant resolutions at the time of its admission to UN membership. Given that the issue involved (i.e., the issue of Macedonia's name) does not involve an issue which represents a **“threat to the peace, breaches of the peace, or acts of aggression”** and is deemed **“non-essential”** and because Macedonia is already a member of the UN, the Security Council can be bypassed and would only require Macedonia to obtain a simple majority of those present and voting at the UN General Assembly to replace the provisional reference with its democratically chosen name. Given that over 130 countries now recognize Macedonia as the Republic of Macedonia, it is quite probable that Macedonia, even in the face of fierce Greek lobbying and the support of some of Greece's EU and NATO allies, would obtain the necessary simple majority and have its

name in the UN accepted as the Republic of Macedonia.

Such an approach would of course require Macedonia to undertake an intensive diplomatic campaign of lobbying, however given the chances of success, such a campaign would be viewed as a strong expression of the Macedonian **government's commitment to defend Macedonia's identity and sovereignty.** While the problem of the Greek veto in NATO and the EU would remain, the **fact that the UN, the world's pre-eminent international organisation, had accepted Macedonia's admission as the Republic of Macedonia** would bring enormous pressure to bear on Greece to drop its irrational demands and isolate it even more internationally, given its already weak international position. It goes without saying that the UN approach could be undertaken without Macedonia formally withdrawing from the Interim Agreement of 1995 and formally ending the negotiations with Greece, if it wished to keep its diplomatic **"options" open, however, it would acquire greater political weight** were Macedonia to renounce this agreement and end the negotiations as a way of signalling its intentions to forcefully prosecute the case for defending its name. Though there are risks with this approach and one might prefer to argue that Macedonia does not need a vote of approval from anyone, in relation to its name.

Economic Possibilities

On the economic front, an alternative approach flowing from the political decision to end the negotiations with Greece would entail the strengthening of bilateral economic relations with an ascendant China and India, the oil-rich countries of the Middle East, East Asian economies, as well as of course with individual EU member states and the states of the former Soviet Union, primarily Russia and Ukraine. To the **government's credit, it has been pursuing** such ties more energetically in the last few years. It would also involve a strengthening of ties with the European Free Trade Agreement countries (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Sweden) which have a special trade and political relationship with the EU, as a way of facilitating trade with the EU **and possibly seeking "privileged partner" status with the EU which provides**

many of the benefits of membership without formally becoming a member state. An essential aspect of **Macedonia's economic revival would also encompass** development of the country as an attractive tourist destination and the adding of value to goods which are presently exported.

However, an enormous contribution to the economic development of Macedonia, whether or not EU membership is being actively sought, would be to deepen the fight against corruption, create a professional, depoliticized civil service, increase the productivity of the workforce through the inculcation of a strong work ethic, while simultaneously **defending workers' rights and work security,** and making sure the power of the oligarchs who came to own **Macedonia's state enterprises in the 90s is broken.**

And is there really a Need for NATO Membership?

There does not seem to be any clear military rationale for joining NATO at this time. NATO seems to be an organisation without a precise goal and **raison d'être following the end of the Cold War** and has tried to remain relevant by transforming itself into a body whose **main goals are "humanitarian intervention" and the fight against the threat of terrorism or the Iranian "rocket threat."** In such a context, alternative military options which might enhance **Macedonia's security would be the formation of** a small, but effective army able to meet the challenges of the region. It goes without saying that Macedonian troops currently serving in Afghanistan as part of the NATO-led ISAF mission would have to be withdrawn and returned to Macedonia rather than defend the interests of an organisation which shows such disrespect towards Macedonia.

As with economic cooperation, Macedonia could diversify its cooperation in the military field, i.e., procurement of weaponry, training, joint exercises, including with China and Russia (which does not, however, necessitate the establishment of Russian and Chinese bases in Macedonia) in order to send the signal to NATO and the West that it is not an ally to be taken for granted. By charting a less dependent course and showing that it is willing to flirt with

adopting a more non-aligned direction in pursuit of its national interests, Macedonia would make both the EU and NATO take notice and realise that they have to make greater efforts to retain **Macedonia's support, instead of counting on slavish acceptance.** It is also relevant to note here that NATO has no mechanism for resolving military conflict between member states and also has no mechanism for defending a state against internal aggression or in a situation of civil war, which would rule out any concrete assistance were there to be a further Albanian aggression in Macedonia.

It is important to note here that the implementation of the abovementioned alternative economic and military approaches would have to take place in the face of fierce internal opposition from the Albanian minority which remains resolutely pro-NATO and pro-EU.

At the moment, while Greece has been substantially weakened by the financial **and debt crisis, paradoxically it's uncompromising stance on Macedonia** has been strengthened by this crisis in that the EU, IMF and USA are not willing to pressure it to stop blocking **Macedonia's integration into the EU and NATO** for fear that requiring Greece to back off may make it even more intransigent and less likely to adhere to the terms of the bail-out package, leading to an exit from the euro zone and a default on its debts.

However, while it must be said that the likelihood of Greece rejecting the terms of the bail-out package has substantially receded in the wake of the June 17 elections which saw New Democracy emerge as the winner, a Greek coalition government led by Antonis Samaras, who is known for his intransigent anti-Macedonian stance, raises the prospect that Greece will harden its position on **Macedonia's name and increase tensions** between the two countries.

The Cost of a Name Change is just too High

Does Macedonia risk jeopardising its statehood, Macedonian identity and culture by changing its name to suit aggressive Greek demands as the price of entering NATO and the EU? A name

change will be used by Greece as a springboard to eventually obtain the renaming internationally of Macedonians and their language and their further negation in Greece, Bulgaria and Albania. For it is clear that if a name change occurs and Macedonians become known as, say, Northern Macedonians and their language as Northern Macedonian, they will no longer be Macedonians and must relinquish their unique **past which will give rise again to claims that before Tito's time they were either Serbs, Bulgarians or Greeks or just nameless, unreconstructed "Slavs", which poses a real existential threat to Macedonia's territorial integrity and continued statehood.**

Or does Macedonia renounce the shameful name negotiations, assert unequivocally to the world that a name change is completely unacceptable as a precondition for entry to NATO and the EU, and in so doing strengthen the national identity of Macedonians, and return to the UN to prosecute its right to be internationally recognised as the Republic of Macedonia, while at the same time charting a more independent and non-aligned political, economic and military course and changing the political and work culture in the country while it waits for the EU and NATO to come to their senses and bring Greece to heel?

For the AMHRC and its partner organisations, it is clear that the only acceptable course is one flowing from a renunciation of the name negotiations. It is our fervent hope that the Government of Macedonia will develop the fortitude to take this

Dr. Chris Popov



step and show that it is prepared to resolutely defend Macedonia, its name and people rather than slavishly follow the dictates of the West, USA, EU and NATO in a futile and self-destructive attempt to show that it is being "constructive" and "flexible".

By Dr. Chris Popov

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REDEFINING THE CAFE EXPERIENCE

How Many Greeks Are There In



By Dr. Chris Popov

The last two years has seen much international and Australian reporting on the financial and economic crisis in Greece which if not resolved threatens to plunge Europe into deep recession and lead to the exit of Greece from the euro zone.

In Australia, and especially in Melbourne, the reporting in the print, electronic and on-line media on the crisis in Greece and the efforts being made by the local Greek community to assist their homeland, have been accompanied by a repetition of myths about the size and influence of the Greek community in Melbourne, mainly in an attempt to give such reporting more poignancy and topicality.

Chief among these myths is the claim that Melbourne is **the “third largest Greek city in the world”**. This myth has been peddled indiscriminately by the Greek community and its leading organizations –and uncritically accepted by the mass

media- in an attempt to advance the political, social and economic interests of the Greek lobby by creating the perception that such a **“large and influential” community** counts and must be taken into account by politicians and decision-makers.

Over the last few decades the figure of 300,000 Greeks in Melbourne has been widely bandied about. For example, on 19 February 2012, the Melbourne Herald Sun in an article **entitled “Melbourne in a Greek rush as new wave of new migrants arrive” stated the following:** *“And Melbourne - which has more Greek-speaking people than any city outside Athens and Thessaloniki - will take the lion's share, says Greek Orthodox Community of Melbourne president Bill Papastergiadis.”* Further on in the same article the claim was made that: **“Melbourne already is home to more than 300,000 Greeks, with many arriving in the 1950s and 1960s when govern-**

ment migration schemes sought Greeks and Italians.” <http://www.heraldsun.com.au/news/more-news/melbourne-in-a-greek-rush-as-new-wave-of-migrants-arrive/story-fn7x8me2-1226274790235>

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) has also uncritically accepted the myth regarding the number of Greeks in Melbourne. In its Country Brief on Greece of November 2011, the Department makes the following **claim:** *“Large numbers of Greeks migrated to Australia during the 1950s and 1960s; the 2006 Census records 109,980 Greece-born migrants, and 365,145 people of Greek ancestry living in Australia (based on country of birth of parents). Some estimates suggest the Greek community in Australia could be as large as 600,000. The Greek population is concentrated in Melbourne (41 per cent) and Sydney (30 per cent). Melbourne, Sister City to*

Thessaloniki, has been described as the third largest ‘Greek city’ in the world and is an important overseas centre of Hellenism.” (http://www.dfat.gov.au/geo/greece/greece_country_brief.html)

It is imperative that we examine the statistics provided by both official Australian and Greek bodies on the size of cities and population settlements in Greece and Australia respectively in order to determine the veracity of the claim that **“Melbourne is the third biggest Greek city in the world”**.

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), at the time of the 2006 Census - full statistics are not yet available for Melbourne for the 2011 Census - 365,200 persons in Australia identified their ancestry as Greek and 252,200 persons indicated that they spoke Greek at home (<http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/7d12b0f6763c78caca257061001cc588/5a47791aa683b719ca257306000d536c!OpenDocument>). According to the ABS, at the 2006 Census there were 149,195 persons in the Melbourne Statistical District claiming Greek ancestry; that is those who self-identified as Greeks in response to the Census Question: **“What is the person’s ancestry?”** (<http://www.censusdata.abs.gov.au/ABSNavigation/download?format=xls&collection=Census&period=2006&productlabel=Ancestry%20>

(Region)%20by%20Country%20of%20Birth%20of%20Par-ents&producttype=Census%20Tables&method=Place%20of%20Usual%20Residence&areacode=205) According to the official Hellenic Statistical Authority, as of 2011 there were five cities in Greece itself with a larger "Greek" population than Melbourne, assuming that all those counted considered themselves to be ethnic Greeks: Athens: 3,074,160; Salonika: 790,824; Patras: 214,580; Heraklion: 173,450 and Larissa: 163,380. [http://www.tovima.gr/files/1/2011/07/22/](http://www.tovima.gr/files/1/2011/07/22/apograh22.pdf)

[apograh22.pdf](http://www.tovima.gr/files/1/2011/07/22/apograh22.pdf) Furthermore, outside of Greece, the population of the Greek-Cypriot controlled part of the Cypriot capital Nicosia/Lefkosia was 206,200 in 2001. In 2001 Limassol, the second city in Cyprus had a population of 161,200 (<http://www.cyprus.gov.cy/portal/portal.nsf/AII/817E9279C04E4480C2257023002B858C?OpenDocument>).

On the basis of the above official government statistics, which must of course be given more credence than estimates arrived at as a result of questionable methodology, statistical irregularities and of course, political expediency, it ap-

pears that Melbourne, far from being the "third largest Greek city in the world", is in fact the eighth largest Greek-populated city in the world. There are seven cities in both Greece and Cyprus with larger Greek populations. As a percentage of Melbourne's population of 3,446,756 at the time of the Census of 2006, those 149,195 persons who identified as Greek made up 4.33% of the overall population. It is therefore incumbent on government agencies and the mass media in Australia to reflect this reality and present the facts as they are, rather than blithely and lazily accept the "estimates" provided by the Greek community and its lobby groups which

have as their prime goal the boosting of their numerical clout in pursuit of specific political, social and economic goals. Australian multiculturalism and the functioning of its democracy will only be enhanced if this reality is reflected in mainstream reporting and government publications.

Dr. Chris Popov

Editor's Note: This article was written before the release of data on 21 June 2012 from the Australian Census of 2011.



MEMBERSHIP FORM

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"НИКОЈ НЕМА ПРАВО ДА ПРЕГОВАРА ЗА МОЕТО ИМЕ!"

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

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

НИЕ ПОБЕДУВАМЕ. ВЕЌЕ 127 ЗЕМЈИ ЈА ПРИЗНАА МАКЕДОНИЈА ПОД ИМЕТО РЕПУБЛИКА МАКЕДОНИЈА, ВКЛУЧУВАЈЌИ И 4 ОД 5-ТЕ ПОСТОЈАНИ ЗЕМЈИ ЧЛЕНКИ НА СОВЕТОТ ЗА БЕЗБЕДНОСТ НА ОБЕДИНЕТИТЕ НАЦИИ. НИЕ ИМАМЕ СИЛА ДА СТАВИМЕ КРАЈ НА СЕТО ОВА. ДА ПРЕСТАНЕМЕ ДА ПРЕГОВАРАМЕ ЗА НАШЕТО СОПСТВЕНО ИМЕ.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

ЕУ и НАТО се заложници на Грција

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

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

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

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

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

НАЈОСНОВНОТО ЧОВЕКОВО ПРАВО Е ПРАВОТО НА САМОИДЕНТИФИКАЦИЈА.

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

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НАШЕТО ИМЕ Е МАКЕДОНИЈА



silence is not an option.

MHRMI and AMHRC call on Macedonians throughout the world to show their support for human rights for Macedonians throughout the Balkans.

MHRMI and AMHRC finance and organize all Macedonian human rights activities and work directly with every Macedonian human rights organization including Vinozhito, OMO Ilinden PIRIN, MAEI, Nova Zora, Narodna Volja, Ilinden Tirana, the Home of Macedonian Culture, and all others.

By supporting us, you are directly supporting the cause of human rights for all Macedonians.

Among our many initiatives are:

- Macedonian language classes in Aegean Macedonia and Albania, including the opening of another new kindergarten class in Korca, Albania;
- In addition to the MHRMI/AMHRC-purchased and financed radio station in Lerin, we recently opened a TV station in Korca;
- The historic Detsa Begaltsi lawsuit against Greece for the return of confiscated property, citizenship and financial compensation;
- The funding of pro-Macedonian newspapers and publications in Aegean Macedonia, Pirin Macedonia and Mala Prespa;
- The landmark European Court of Human Rights judgments against Bulgaria and Greece for violating Macedonian human rights;

- The operation of human rights offices for Macedonians in Bulgaria, Greece and Albania;
- The crucial Our Name is Macedonia campaign, which demands that Macedonia end all negotiations over its name; and
- Funding successful election campaigns for Macedonian candidates in Bulgaria, Greece and Albania.

We also lobby strongly for recognition of Macedonia and Macedonian human rights in Washington, Ottawa, Canberra, Brussels and throughout the world, specifically:

- Meetings with Canadian, American, Australian and European heads of state and parliamentarians;
- Meetings with Foreign Affairs officials from Canada, Australia, the US State Department, Council of Europe, among many others;
- Attendance at United Nations, OSCE and other international human rights conferences and
- Meetings with UN Ambassador Nimetz to reiterate our demand that the international community support the end to the "name negotiations".

Macedonians are organized, energized and determined to pursue their struggle for universal human rights. The biggest challenge we face is a financial one. Please show your support by joining the MHRMI Human Rights Fund or the AMHRC's Macedonian Minorities Support Fund.

Thank you in advance.

Show Your Support For Macedonian Human Rights



Confidential Australian Government Document Reveals: Greece Eventually Will Have to Accept the Use of 'Macedonian'!

Melbourne, 22 February 2012

An internal Australian government document released to the Australian Macedonian Human Rights Committee (AMHRC) under the *Freedom of Information Act* reveals that in relation to the use of the term 'Macedonian', the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs (DFAT) advises that:

"...Greece eventually will have to accept the use of 'Macedonian' to describe nationality and ethnicity" (Ministerial Submission, 09-1054, 26/05/2009, page 12).

The confidential and frank Ministerial Submission prepared by DFAT for the Minister for Foreign Affairs provided background information and advice on the "name issue" between Macedonia and Greece. The document, although heavily redacted on alleged national security grounds, also contains information on the 1994 "Slav Macedonian Directive" which renamed the Macedonian community. The brief claimed that a change in the Australian Government's "Slav Macedonian" policy might lead to a reaction from the Greek government and Greek community in Australia *"who would fear a subsequent change in policy on the country name"* and that a change in policy would *"advantage"* the Republic of Macedonia (Ministerial Submission, 09-1054, 26/05/2009, page 11-12).

On 13 February 2012, the Australian Macedonian Human Rights Committee (AMHRC) announced that after a sustained lobbying campaign, the Australian Government finally withdrew its discriminatory and racist "Slav Macedonian" Directive which renamed the Macedonian community in 1994. The Department of Immigration and Citizenship has also confirmed

the re-adoption of the term 'Macedonian' in relation to the Macedonian community.

In relation to Greece's refusal to accept the official name of the Republic of Macedonia, the Australian Government has "encouraged" both sides to find a mutually acceptable "solution" to this issue. The Australian Macedonian Human Rights Committee (AMHRC) encourages the Australian Government to convey its own advice to the Government of Greece that it will **"eventually have to accept the use of 'Macedonian'."** This advice should also be extended to include the inevitable acceptance of the recognition by Greece of the **Republic of Macedonia's right to its democratically chosen name.**

Over 130 countries (two-thirds of UN members) recognise the official name of Republic of Macedonia in their bilateral relationships. Despite the fact that all of Australia's major allies have recognised the Republic of Macedonia (eg USA, UK, Canada) as well as other powers such as Russia, China and India, Canberra continues to use the so-called "provisional reference" which was only intended for "all purposes within the United Nations", 'pending resolution of the so called name issue'.

Whilst the AMHRC is pleased with the Australian Government's current shift in policy toward the Macedonian Community, it now reiterates its call upon the Government to take the sensible step of recognising the Republic of Macedonia by its democratically chosen name. We also reiterate our call upon the Macedonian government to end all name "negotiations" with Greece.

Following the Australian Macedonian Human Rights Committee's announcement of the cancellation of the 1994 "Slav Macedonian" directive which renamed the Macedonian community in Australia, the English edition of the Melbourne based newspaper *Neos Kosmos* published a highly distorted article on the issue. The article quoted several Greek community organisations which reacted to the issue in a typically misleading manner. A local organisation calling itself the "Australian Hellenic Council" (AHC) accused Macedonian and Turkish diplomats in Canberra of "open interference" in an Australian policy matter. The AHC claimed that **"it is unacceptable for the representatives of foreign governments to actively guide and participate in efforts to determine Australian domestic and foreign policy"**.

However, Freedom of Information documents released to the Australian Macedonian Human Rights Committee (AMHRC) demonstrate interference in Australian policy on Macedonia by another foreign government. Internal correspondence from the Minister for Foreign Affairs to the Minister for Immigration and Citizenship on the issue of Macedonia's name, reveals that, **"the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade frequently receives representations from the Embassy of the Republic of Greece asking that the Australian Government maintain its present approach"** (Correspondence dated 8 October 2008).

The Australian Macedonian Human Rights Committee (AMHRC) wonders whether the Australian Hellenic Council and other Greek community organisations will also condemn this "open interference" in Australia's domestic and foreign policy?

Of course, the interference of Greece in Australian domestic and foreign policy is nothing new. In fact this was detected almost twenty years ago by Dr Andrew Jakubowicz, Professor of Sociology at the University of Sydney when he noted that:

"...the Australian government had allowed itself to be manipulated by ultra-nationalists in the Greek community in particular, under direction or stimulation from Athens, into at-

tacking one of the basic principles of multiculturalism, the right of groups in Australia to identify themselves as they believed was most appropriate." (A. Jakubowicz, "The State, Multiculturalism and Ethnic Leadership in Australia" 1995, page 8)

Dr Jakubowicz also found that:

"In 1992/1993 the Greek government, anxious to ensure diasporic solidarity and support in what it feared would be a potential conflict in the Balkans, brokered a rapprochement in Athens between the Australian Communities and the Archdiocese. With that rapprochement in place, the former left/right tensions could be suppressed and replaced by a call to Hellenic unity, an ultranationalist ethnically based reprise that could transcend more rational political debates and seek for an emotional trigger to release the growing political clout of the Greek community in Australia. There is a strange twist in the situation, in that it is the multiculturalist environment of Australia that has legitimised the retention of Hellenic cultural politics here, while in Greece this same Hellenic cultural politics rejects a multicultural acceptance of diversity (e.g. Macedonian language and culture) within that country." (A. Jakubowicz, "The State, Multiculturalism and Ethnic Leadership in Australia" 1995, page 8)

The Australian Macedonian Human Rights Committee (AMHRC) calls upon the Australian Government to free itself of the destructive influence of the Greek Government on its policy in relation to Macedonia's name. Australia should now move to adopt a policy on this issue which in accordance with the position of over 130 countries (two-thirds of UN members) and all of its major allies (eg USA, UK, Canada) as well as other powers such as Russia, China and India, i.e. to recognise the official name of Republic of Macedonia in bilateral relations.

The AMHRC also reiterates its call upon the Macedonian government to end all name "negotiations" with Greece.

Confidential Australian Government Document Reveals: Greek Government 'Frequently' Interferes in Australian Policy on Macedonia

Melbourne, 28 March 2012

The Macedonian Community of Western Australia Successfully Resolves Dispute with Professor Melville Jones

By Chris Angelkov

The Macedonian Community of WA is pleased to announce that it has settled its dispute with the University of WA and Winthrop Professor John Melville Jones.

Professor Melville Jones has written to the community expressing regret for the remarks he made at an after dinner function in October 2010 in Melbourne, in **which he referred to the Macedonians as “not well educated” and “not in a position to question the distorted view of history” amongst other comments.** The Professor has acknowledged that his remarks were inappropriate and has expressed his regrets to the Community.

The offending remarks and caricatures have been removed from the website of the “Australian Macedonian Advisory Council” in Melbourne, an organization

that describes itself as a Hellenic- Australian Political Synergy.

The process has been time consuming and has involved a substantial cost to the Macedonian Community. Mr Chris Angelkov, the Vice President of the Macedonian Community of WA said **“it was very important that we pursued this matter as it struck at the very heart of our dignity and identity as ethnic Macedonians and needed to be prosecuted to a final resolution.”**

With the assistance of the Australian Human Rights Commission, this matter has been addressed with appropriate responses being received from both the University of WA and Mr Melville-Jones.

The Macedonian Community is pleased that the University of WA has clearly indicated that Professor Melville Jones was not representing the University of WA when making the speech. Moreover, we are especially pleased that the Vice-Chancellor agreed to meet our membership together with Professor Melville Jones to **gain a better perspective of the Macedonian people’s** history, culture and views on a variety of issues that are of great importance to our Community.

Chris Angelkov

Vice President

Macedonian Community of WA



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29th Annual AMHRC Dinner Dance

On Saturday March 24th 2012, the AMHRC held its 29th annual dinner at *Grand Neret Receptions*. Dr. Chris Popov of the AMHRC and Dr. Jim Hlavac of Monash University informed over 300 attendees about the recent completion of research into the use and maintenance of the Macedonian language in Australia. This was carried out by the AMHRC in cooperation with Monash University and will shortly result in the publication of some academic papers and eventually, a full length book study.

Attendees partied on to the music of the *Vasko Nikolovski Band* until 1am. For their substantial financial contributions to the coffers of the AMHRC, special thanks must given to: the St. George Macedonian Orthodox Community; Kire Porjazoski of Pacific Flow Technology; the Association of Macedonian Child Refugees; the Management of Neret Receptions; John Chapkoun of Chapkoun Pharmacies; Roma Caravans; Tase Filipov and Novatsis and Alexander Solicitors.





All-Macedonian Gathering In Melnik for the 97th Anniversary of the Murder of Jane Sandanski

By Stojko Stojkov



The gathering organised each year by Macedonian organisations in Bulgaria is a well-rooted tradition. The Bulgarian authorities have tried unsuccessfully to uproot this traditional gathering or to replace it with a “Bulgarian” one.

Military exercises were organised in order to order to ‘justify’ the ban on the celebration. There were other attempts to celebrate Jane’s life by the Bulgarian Parliament, by Bulgarian nationalistic parties and organisations, state institutions... absurd and grotesque – none of these neither liked nor respected Sandanski and his work. The only reason why they tried to make the celebration their own was to deny the Macedonians the right to claim him as their own.

This is a characteristic tendency of the Bulgarian state and society. If I may be so cynical as to say that if tomorrow the Macedonians started ‘celebrating’ the life of a toilet for example, the Bulgarians would immediately attempt to ‘prove’ that the toilet was their national treasure which the so-called “non-existent” Macedonians were once again attempting to ‘steal’ from them! As “non-existent” persons, we are not entitled to have a past, let alone allowed to live in the present or to possess a future. Until around five years ago, the practice of issuing bans and penalties to those who portrayed Sandanski as a Macedonian hero prevailed.

However even Bulgarian nationalism must humanise itself and thus after a 20 year struggle, the Macedonians in Bulgaria have finally succeeded in achieving the right to peacefully assemble – free and unimpeded to commemorate special occasions and to gather publically to express their views. Such views which nobody in Bulgaria wanted to hear. Accordingly, this year as in previous years, the Bulgarian media failed to turn up and report on the event. Likewise, Macedonian media were not present. It seems that in

the end they have given up attempting to enter Bulgaria, having faced a series of problems over the years at the Bulgarian border. It is a real shame! It would have been good if at least one journalist tried to attend, if for no other reason other than to verify whether the Bulgarian blockade of Macedonian media was still in place.

The gathering was held on April 22 in the town of Melnik. **The event organisers were: OMO “Ilinden” PIRIN, the Australian-Macedonian Human Rights Committee (AMHRC), Macedonian Human Rights Movement International (MHRMI), the Society of Repressed Macedonians in Bulgaria, the Traditional Macedonian Organisation VMRO (independent), Macedonian Christian Brotherhood “St. Eliiah”, Cultural and Educational Society “Nikola Vaptsarov”, Cultural and Educational Society “Ilinden”, the “Narodna Volja” newspaper and the “Makedonski Glas” newsletter.**

As is the case every year, there were Macedonians from all parts of Macedonia and Bulgaria, which this year reached around 1,000 people.

The gathering was opened by the master of ceremonies Bojan Kostov Bibishkov who with finely chosen words spoke about Jane Sandanski. After the observation of a **minute’s silence and kneeling, respect was paid to the monument in memory of Jane Sandanski.** While these rituals were taking place, the party anthem of OMO “Ilinden” PIRIN was played:

*“Narode makedonski
so kakvi idei si ti
dosta bese razbudi si ti
stanuvaj ne spij ti”*



Wreaths and fresh flowers were placed at the monument to the hero. Dimitar Ivanov of Shumen delivered a speech about the life of Jane Sandanski.

The Macedonian political party in Greece, Vinozhito and the Organisation of Macedonians from the Aegean Part of Macedonia (Bitola), guests from Skopje and Radovich also sent messages which were read out at the gathering, as well as poetry on Macedonia.

The celebration began with dances from the folkloric group from the village of Krushari (today Ambelies), Enidze Vardarsko, Aegean Macedonia – a performance which really impressed the crowd.

The leader of the group presented a **plaque and gift to OMO “Ilinden” PIRIN**. The dancers from Krushari were also impressed by the performance of the folkloric group which followed them. *“We revived folklore in our village from our grandparents”*, said members of the group who also commented on the other performances by noting, *“Hey, listen, they are the same songs and dances as ours!”* At the gathering, there were also folkloric groups from Razlog, Bansko,





Blagoevgrad and Goce Delchev. The songs and dances were decorated with Macedonian flags and continued on for hours.

The police carried out their duties normally, however the number of police officers looked somewhat disproportionate to what was required. State security agents were also present. There were no incidents at the event. However there was plenty of joy, Macedonian music and unity!

Stojko Stojkov is the Co-President of OMO **“Ilinden” Pirin, a Macedonian political party** struggling for the human rights of Macedonians in Bulgaria.

Thanks to David Vitkov of the AMHRC for translating this article from Macedonian to English.



The Macedonian Poet Nikola Vaptsarov

By Dr. Michael Seraphinoff

If Nikola Vaptsarov were a young man living today, I suspect that he would be one of the Occupy Wall street activists. Because he lived his life in Bulgaria in the first half of the 20th century, he was destined to join the Communist Party and organize against the fascist regime in power at the time. He courageously fought against the prevailing injustice of his time through the most readily available means of that time and place, the organized labor. And like so many young, brave, idealistic fighters for justice before and since his time, he perished in the struggle, and those of his comrades who eventually came to power failed to live up to their ideals and instead became "the new bosses".

Nikola Jonkov Vaptsarov was born in the Pirin Macedonian town of Bansko (today in Bulgaria) on December 7, 1909. He died as a partisan resistance fighter in World War Two at the hands of the Bulgarian authorities on July 23, 1942.

Nikola Vaptsarov came under the influence of the growing Balkan communist movement early in life. But he was also active in the movement to promote a separate Macedonian nation state that would include his own native Pirin Macedonia.

Although he always worked with his hands, he spent much of his free time writing poetry and quickly gained a reputation as a talented poet. His poems were published in a number of periodicals and his works won literary competitions. During the late 1930's and early 1940's he was part of the Sofia based Macedonian literary circle that included Kole Nedelkovski and Anton Panov, among others. His collection of poems entitled *Motorni pesni (motoring verses)* was published in 1940. Other works appeared in a collection of poems entitled *Prolet (Spring)*.

He was arrested in 1942 by the Bulgarian fascist authorities for his participation in the communist partisan armed resistance, and he was executed in the summer of the same year. While he did not live to participate in the "Macedonian spring" in the late 1940's, when his native Pirin region welcomed teachers and cultural exchanges from the recently founded Republic of Macedonia in the Yugoslav Federation, that period was, no doubt, infused with his spirit and that of his compatriots in Bulgaria. And that spirit, no doubt, inspired such poems as the work entitled "Zemja" ("Land").



Land

This land
That I trod now,
This soil
Which a spring wind awakens,
This land is not my land,
This land,
Forgive me, is a foreign land.

In the morning I make my way.
The factory drive fills with
An endless sea
Of shirts.
We merge, hearts and minds,
But... the land does not feel like mine.

Above my land
In spring
The rays
Pour forth
Gleaming
As waterfalls thunder
In sun showers
Over my home
Place.

You can feel the depths
Of the heart in the earth's breast
And see how the endless blossoms
Spring forth in May.

Above my land
Pirin mountain
Presses
Into the sky.

The pines in storm
Sing tales of Ilinden,
Above Ohrid the azure is
Endlessly clear, expansive,
While down below

The sun still brightens the shores of the Aegean.

This is all I remember.
And suddenly the blood pours
Into my heart again.

It melts from tenderness...
My land! My wonderful land!
Drenched in blood

And rocked by chaos and revolt.
Severed by barbed wire over the ridges of Belasitsa.

Nikola Vaptsarov
Translation. M. Seraphinoff

Shortly before his death he wrote this:

In Parting To my wife

I will come to you sometimes in dreams
Like some long-lost and unexpected guest.
Don't leave me outside on the step.
Just leave the door unlatched.

Silently I will enter in. Sit gently by,
And when I have looked my fill-
I will kiss you and depart.

2 pm, July 23, 1942 (14 hours
before his execution)

The struggle is cruel and merciless,
It will only end when men are free.
I fell. Someone will take my place...
One man won't change the outcome here!

A shot, and after the bullet - worms.
A logical proposition - simple and true.
But we will be with you in the storm that comes,
Dear people, such was the power of our love for you.

Nikola Vaptsarov
Translation. M. Seraphinoff



Dr. Michael Seraphinoff

Interview with Anton Klimev



Johnny Tsiglev puts another Anton in the spotlight for this issue of the *MHR Review*.
This time it's not movies though..... it's "Rock 'n' Roll".... baby!

Anton and I conduct the interview in the womb-like, soundproof surrounds of Anton's recording studio, where we share a fine drop of scotch courtesy of one of his favourite regular customers, the famous Australian actor, Vince Colosimo! We were also both equally fashionably late with a tacit understanding of each other's lateness. Not to mention it's our third attempt after a full day of catching up, philosophical banter, artsy ranting and just plain old having a laugh!

Johnny Hi Anton. How's life my fellow long haired brother from another mother?

Anton Oh, you know! First of all it's nice to be with a fellow brother from another mother!

Johnny Thanks for agreeing to be 'probed' by me, in a nice way of course! J

Anton It's my total and utter pleasure. *(Anton says with a cheeky laugh and tells me about an amusing personal story involving the two of us which occurred many years ago.)*
It's great to see you again Johnny. And let's hope to 'procreate' with these matters.

Johnny Through all the 'probing' I guess! Ha ha ha.. *(We struggle to contain ourselves and attempt to get serious and back to the interview!)*

Johnny The last time I saw you was when we (Meri and I) stumbled upon your fashion store (www.facebook.com/amkstylehouse) in Thornbury. We'll get to the music questions in a sec, but I've got to firstly ask; Why fashion?

Anton Because friends and sources who are in the industry (fashion) have 'probed' me (ha ha ha) over time to get involved in some way. I've always had an interest in clothing and design, so I thought it would be a quote, unquote "interesting" way to earn a living as we do our art, our music, as you well know my fellow artist.

It's also a good way to meet people when going overseas to do the buying. At the same time I have my studio/writing suite in the back of the premises, so I can step into my real world when I need to get away from the whole fashion thing.

Johnny Growing up in the not so pc 70's, I miss some of the old school dudes who are not afraid to speak their minds.. So a quality I really value in people after not seeing them for a long time is when their core being, their essence of who they are,

remains the same over long periods of time and is not compromised to fit in with society's requirements. Being here feels like time has stood still. As though the last decade didn't happen. You seem identical!

Do you believe, like the Rolling Stones who seem like they've been cryogenically frozen for the last 40 years, the music in you has something to do with it?

Anton Very much so. And we're yet to unleash our music and art to the world. So it's like a driving force that keeps you motivated. Like a burning desire to keep procreating artistically. **Whether you reach 'super star' status or not, I don't care because it's who I am.**

Johnny I was first properly introduced to you many years ago when you recorded and produced a song for my sister-in-law and my wife Meri. I recall the final result being of great production quality.

Do you still record for others?

Anton Yes!

Johnny I guessed so!

I recently heard the story about what the now defunct-KLF did at their final farewell gig. You probably already know about it, but I thought it was an amazing thing to do and worth talking about with you. They literally burnt \$1 million UK pounds (which they earnt) in front of a small group of people as a statement to say they were making the music 'for the love', and not for the 'love of money'. A true testament to their art and ideals and questioned how we value money as a society.

As an artist, can you relate to this in some way?

Anton I can. Of course I can understand their view or angle, and I commend them for their courage, but... (slight pause)... but quietly, "I'd keep the million pounds" (*Anton says laughing in a soft voice*) and thank our beloved queen! J

Johnny Yeah, they actually made a large brick out of the ashes, as an art piece and keep it in one of their apartments. Wouldn't it be ironic if someone wants to buy it for more than a million pounds!

Anton Ha ha ha, that would be amazing!



Johnny I remember a few years ago I went along to see the late Jeff Buckley. I wasn't really into his music but went along to the Palais Theatre with my brother and some friends. However, after I heard him play, I was totally blown away. He just had the audience captivated.

What has been the most remarkable gig you've been to?

Anton Well, there have been a few I must say. But I remember in the late 80's, when I was in my late teens, I saw Pink Floyd. It was the Delicate Sound of Thunder Tour, without Roger Waters. Now that was fantastic!

Johnny And what has personally been your most memorable gig, ie: the best ever gig you have performed at?

Anton Again, there've been so many. I did a large gig in the 90's with my then band *WHITE LITE*. It was with fantastic musicians, real professionals, and as much as I'd like to say it was my most memorable, it wasn't. Certain things just didn't go as planned. It was certainly memorable, but to pin-point one as the most enjoyable is difficult because the majority are equally enjoyable.

Johnny The seminal question for all artists... Who are your past influences and your present interests?

Anton The rock genre dominates as far as influence. Apart from the usual Elvis, the Beatles etc, Pink Floyd was a large influence and also WHITESNAKE. Mr David Coverdale was a great inspiration, seeing as I was in that genre at the time.

Johnny We had a great chat about where we artists draw our inspiration from. I have my own personal view, so I'll ask the question you always get asked, but I'll ask it as a non-artist would, and that is: How do you write a song? How do you come up with it?

Anton Ha ha ha... (laughter....and it just went on..... and on....!). Let me ask you, how do you?

Johnny I've already explained it when I got interviewed for the last Review!

Anton No. But I asked you a question!

Johnny But I asked you first!

Anton Well then, just put down what you wrote!! Ha ha ha!!

Johnny Well it does come from the same place.

Anton Exactly right!

Johnny (For the readers out there, refer to the previous Review for an answer... Maybe?) J

When you write your lyrics, do you hide any meaning in allegory, you know, like when musicians use a bunch of metaphors to vent or tell a truthful story? In other words I guess; do you use

it as a form of protest or deep expression?

Anton I don't particularly have a fixed way of expressing my point of view, or love and fears, tragedies, bliss or whatever it may be, cause it could be anything. So in a nutshell, 'yes, I do' (*Anton says smiling slyly*).

Johnny One night a few years ago, hang on, I'll re-phrase it: One early morning I came home after a bit of drinking and switched the idiot box on to RAGE on the ABC (all night music video program in Australia). I was mesmerized, hypnotized and just in total awe of this song that came on. It was Radiohead's 'Street Spirit (Fade Out)' and it had an apt slow-mo in reverse film clip to go with the haunting music.

Are there any particular songs, or maybe even just one song, that you can recall off the top of your head, which just hits that spot and takes you to that special place?

Anton Well, there is a particular song which I actually wrote myself a while ago titled: *Peace and Denial*, which is very demanding rhythmically and melodically. There is a lot of deep meaning in the lyrics for me... It's dark and enlightening at the same. It gives me a hard time when I sing it. I have to be in a certain frame of mind or space to perform it to do it justice. So that's the one that really does it for me... But to get to a much, much, more popular song and not to get ahead of myself (*ha ha ha much laughter between us*), Pink Floyd's: *Welcome To The Machine*.

Johnny We have a little pause and listen to some of Anton's music playing in the background. I ask him where it's from and he says it's not rehearsed. They (he and his band mate) just played it off the cuff and recorded it. I can't believe how tight it sounds. As though it has been played a hundred times over!

Johnny You were telling me, or I guess lamenting about, a missed recording opportunity with a certain well known singer who, I believe everyone reading this, would find fascinating to hear about.

Would you like to share the story with our readers?

Anton It all started with a discussion between a great friend of mine Zoran Iliev, who's an Interior Designer and a well known prolific artist in Skopje. They call him Roger and he had a boutique called Roger. He had antique cars and motorbikes in there.. He was really out there and always designing stuff. So Zoran and I were basically like brothers. We met here in Australia and I always stay at his place in Skopje. We talked about recording for Tose..... and...well, he pulled the strings with all his contacts over there and I wrote and recorded the song here in Oz. It's called *Reason To Fly* and Tose was going to sing it in English. He was getting an album together of just English stuff. So naturally he was trying to break into the English music world scene. The tragedy is that I was in Macedonia about to meet him and he died before I got a chance.

Johnny Gee, that's shocking and sad.

Anton I remember it all so clearly. He was having a concert in the stadium there in the center (Skopje). It was a clear night and I could hear him singing from the balcony where I was

staying. We wanted to go to the concert but went to a fashion show in Gevgelija. Obviously unbeknownst to us, we didn't know he was going to die and we were going to meet him anyway. A true tragedy. The whole of Macedonia wept.

Johnny Yes, truly sad and who knows where it would have let to?

Anton Still, some good came of my trip because after he died I got to meet with a company called *M Dva (M2)*. It's basically a talent show equivalent to *Idol*, and I got to meet the organizers of the show. Even my friend Zokky (Roger) has sons who are pop stars in Macedonia, the *Roger Brothers*. Three brothers doing rap, hip hop, house, whatever you want to call it. My dear friends, children and whoever is reading this, they are fantastic! So it wasn't all in vain as there's an opening to record there again and hopefully one day we'll do a great tour in Macedonia! Ha ha ha!

ly.....well I can't say in case it incriminates me!" Ha ha ha (laughing a lot again)..... sophisticated! (and the laughing goes on...)

Johnny Like a Macedonian version of Jana Wendt!

Do you have any other rock 'n' roll stories you'd care to share? Feel free to brag and drop some names!

Anton Yes there are many crazy stories and some names that I could drop being in the industry, but I don't think you have enough pages in your magazine to cover them. :)

Johnny Well, we mentioned Vince already. That'll do for now.

Apart from fashion and music, do you pursue any other artistic endeavors?



Johnny Have you collaborated with any other Macedonian artists/musicians?

Anton Aside from growing up within that (Macedonian family) in my childhood, yes I did have a rendezvous, again in the early 90's. She was an artist called *Marion*. The Macedonian community would have obviously heard of her, and by the way, she's a great singer. They approached me when I was rehearsing with my band *Valhalla* and they heard us playing. She assumed I didn't write Macedonian music, however liked what I was doing at the time, which was some compilation albums and radio commercials. So I gave it a go and wrote two songs for her but only gave her one, called *Da ili Ne*. And it so happened they named their album by that name as it was a favoured song. Eventually Margarita (Vasileva) covered it on her SBS radio show. She (Margarita) asked me to do an interview, something to do with the Macedonian music industry in Australia, or something like that? At the time I had my hands full, so I'll say it now to Margarita; "My dear, if you remember me, and I hope you do, I'm sorry for not taking up your offer. You're a very dignified woman with a beautiful spirit"..... (Anton starts smiling)..." And I thought you were real-

Anton I've done a bit of acting. I was in two parts of a ten part series called *Tangle* with Catherine McClements. I was cast as a musician, which was funny because it was my first job and I virtually played myself. They thought I was 'The Talent'.

Johnny Yeah, it's a bit of fun and you get fed and paid for it too. I am also in a yet to be screened two part mini-series called *Howzat*. Meri has been on heaps of shows and we've also been on *Neighbours* together a few times. I've got to tell you, all the cast and crew sure know who the Macedonians are!

As most of us (Macedonians) know, all Aegean Macedonians had their old family names (amongst other things) formally Hellenized after 1926. I myself officially reverted back to my original family name before I got married. I'd like to hear why you (coming from the Republic) decided to revert back to your original family name, including the dropping of the 'ski' in your surname?

Anton It's definitely not for reasons as severe as what happened to you guys. I didn't want to be pigeon holed by those who did all the changes... Fucken bureaucrats!

Johnny Yeah, we are definitely pigeon holed by our surnames... I know it doesn't define us, and 'Anton' is definitely more exotic than 'Tony', that's for sure!

The more interviews I conduct, the more I realize that there are so many talented (young and old) Macedonian artists out there, but who are simply in hiding or just plain old undiscovered.

Why do you think this is? And do you feel we've been repressed or we simply lack the confidence to pursue our dreams?

Anton It's a great question, but very difficult to answer because there are so many events in our history that can confuse the answer. We are a great people, but there are just too many reasons why this hasn't happened. There are also many things we are ignorant of...

Johnny You were momentarily telling me when you were a young kid your father saying something like: "What, you're going to make music for a living?" And your direct response was: "Yeah! Why not?"

I understand we artists are born as artists, however, how old were you or what time in your life did you realize when you first felt you wanted to become a musician? Also, are you self taught, schooled etc?

Anton I really can't answer that as far as what time. In reality I started singing when I was about 8 years old for the Macedonian schools, where my father was president. Well obviously it was evolving before I started singing, and then in my early teens I started singing in Macedonian bands. That was probably the time I said to dad, "Yeah. Why not?" But from the age of 8 I guess I formally started training in music...

Johnny The fact that you pursued it, were you attracted to the music or the idea of the 'Rock 'n' Roll lifestyle?

Anton Both! (*Anton quickly quips with a cheeky grin*)

Johnny I am amazed how I can almost hear my lungs in the total silence of your personally built recording studio.

Do you prefer the studio work or the buzz from rocking it out live?

Anton Refer to question bla bla..... again.. 'Both'!! J

Johnny I was fascinated by a little story you told me about your early childhood. Could you briefly recount the story?

Anton The story about not seeing my brother?

Johnny Yeah.

Anton When we (the family) came here from Macedonia as little kids, I was virtually a baby and my brother who is 3 ½ years older was a little kid. He kept fainting or falling asleep all

the time and my parents were worried but nobody could work out what was wrong. So they took him back to Macedonia and he was fine.. It was something to do with the climate. My parents decided to keep him there to be looked after by relatives. Well, it was 4 years later before I got to go back. So I was 5 years old before I met my brother!

Johnny That's crazy. You virtually grew up as a single child! And what was it like when you were reunited?

Anton When I met my brother it was like, "Oh... that's my brother"!

Johnny Amazing!

Anton I also remember going back to Trnovci in Bitola. Every Spring I remember storks! They'd land on our barn!

Johnny Little words, but boy does it paint a vivid picture for me.

You mentioned briefly that you were recently approached to write and record some songs for some fairly prominent musicians, yet the style was not really your genre so you won't be performing the songs live on stage? It sounds like an interesting project. Can you tell me more about it?

Anton Yeah. It's a bunch of cool guys who have formed a record label and have asked me to come on board as a writer. One prominent artist is the iconic Mark Pellegrini. It's a fusion of modern dance, R&B, pop..... "I'm Rock 'n' Roll" Ha ha ha!!

I guess you covered my next question.

Johnny How would you describe your style?

Anton 'Rock 'n' Roll'.... Man! 'Rock 'n' Roll'!

Johnny What experienced industry insight or parting advice can you leave us with for any aspiring Macedonian musicians?

Anton Be true to yourself and guard your heart with diligence! God bless you all!

Johnny Thanks Anton. I can honestly say I've really enjoyed hanging in your studio and cool fashion store.

Anton Ha ha ha ha..... Thank you so much. Thank you and the committee for doing this. I think it's wonderful. God bless you all. Go forth and prosper! Thank you so much Johnny. It was a real pleasure!

Johnny Likewise brother!

And..... What we started the interview with, we finished it (all!) with. Compliments of Vince! J

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 ORGANISATIONS

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



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MACEDONIAN ALLIANCE FOR EUROPEAN INTEGRATION

The political party of the Macedonians in Albania

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MACEDONIAN SOCIETY "ILINDEN" TIRANA

A Macedonian cultural association in Tirana, Albania

Website www.ilinden-tirana.com

NOVA ZORA

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

Website novazora.gr

NARODNA VOLJA

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

Website www.narodnavolja.com

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