

AMHRC REVIEW



winter 2010

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Related organisations

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



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2010 Gala Ball DVD Now Available



Now you can re-live the highlights from this annual event by ordering the official DVD. Hear from the distinguished Professor of Balkan and Slavic Linguistics from the University of Chicago, Dr Victor Friedman, and Editor-in-Chief of the new Nova Zora newspaper in Greece and Vinozito representative, Dimitri Jovanov. Plus as a special bonus the DVD also features the popular AMHRC membership commercial that was launched earlier this year on YouTube. Duration approximately 80 minutes.



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Macedonians Demand End to Name Negotiations

MHRMI and AMHRC—
Toronto, Canada and Melbourne, Australia (August 19, 2010)

Macedonians in the Republic of Macedonia, and throughout the world, are showing overwhelming support for the "Our Name is Macedonia" ad campaign, which demands that Macedonia end all negotiations with Greece over its name.

Ads are appearing in print and online editions of major newspapers, television commercials are airing, billboards in the centre of Skopje are going up, and hundreds of thousands of flyers are being distributed throughout the country.

MHRMI and AMHRC will also hold its third press conference announcing another update to the campaign.

However, some Macedonian media outlets have decided to ignore the message of the ad campaign and publish articles attacking the Macedonian Diaspora for initiating it, and even criticizing the child that appears in the ad in a desperate attempt to detract from the message. They have decided to continue their own campaign of scare-mongering, trying to convince the Macedonian public that a name change is necessary in order to enter NATO and the EU.

This ad campaign is not about embracing or rejecting NATO and EU membership. It is about finally putting an end to the nonsensical "name negotiations".

The focus never should have been on Macedonia to compromise its own name and identity. The focus should be on NATO, the EU, and its member-states upholding their principles, supporting and recognizing Macedonia. NATO and the EU should reprimand Greece for handcuffing them based on its xenophobic policies.

Countries that have recognized Macedonia must publicly support it and not call for "compromise".

The first UN mediator for the name dispute, Robin O'Neil, said that "Macedonia must not and will not change its name in order to appease Greece. If Macedonia succumbs to pressures and changes its name, such events will only give more firepower to Greece until it reaches its final goal - Macedonia to vanish from the map."

Even changing the name bilaterally would change it permanently everywhere. 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".

donia".

By continuing the negotiations, we are telling the world "we will change our name". We have the power to end this. 127 countries have recognized Macedonia, including 4/5 United Nations Security Council members. Stop negotiating our own name.

MHRMI and AMHRC call on Macedonians, in the Republic of Macedonia and abroad, to join our call for Macedonia to immediately cease name negotiations and demand immediate international recognition.

To view the ad campaign online, please visit:

Our Name is Macedonia

www.mhrmi.org/our_name_is_macedonia

To put a banner on your website, please visit:

www.mhrmi.org/our_name_is_macedonia/web



Торонто, Канада и Мелбурн, Австралија (19 август, 2010)

Македонците од Република Македонија и од целиот свет дадоа огромна поддршка за рекламната кампања **"Нашето име е Македонија"**, со која што се бара Македонија да ги прекине сите преговори со Грција за своето име.

Рекламни банери се појавуваат во печатените и интернет изданија на поголемите весници, се емитуваат телевизиски реклами, се поставуваат билборди во центарот на Скопје, а и неколку стотини илјади летоци се дистрибуирани низ целата земја.

ММДЧП и АМКЧП ќе ја одржат и својата трета прес-конференција на која што ќе бидат изнесени најновите информации во врска со кампањата.

Инаку, некои македонски медиуми се одлучија да ја игнорираат пораката од рекламната кампања и објавуваа статии со кои што се напала македонската дијаспора за оваа иницијатива, а во очајнички обид да се потцени основното барање на кампањата си дозволија дури и да упатат критики за детето кое што се појавува на постерите. Тие одлучија да продолжат со нивната сопствена кампања на сеење страв, обидувајќи се да ја убедат македонската јавност дека промената на името е неопходна за да се влезе во НАТО и ЕУ.

Оваа рекламна кампања не се однесува на прифаќање или откажување од членство во НАТО и ЕУ. Се работи само за барање конечно да

се стави крај на безсмислените "преговори за името". Македонија воопшто не треба да се фокусира на правење компромис за сопственото име и идентитет. Македонија треба да се фокусира на зачленување во НАТО, зачленување во ЕУ, на почитување на принципите на кои што се засновани овие организации, како и на барање поддршка за признавање под името Република Македонија. НАТО и ЕУ треба да и упатат јавна критика на Грција заради тоа што станаа заложници на нејзината ксенофобична политика.



Државите кои што веќе ја признаа Македонија мора да и дадат јавна поддршка, а не да бараат "компромис".

Првиот посредник на ОН за спорот околу името, Робин О'Нил изјави дека "Македонија никако не смее да го смени своето име и да и' попусти на Грција. Ако тоа го стори, тогаш Грција ќе поставува нови и нови барања се додека не ја постигне својата крајна цел, а тоа е Македонија да ја сними од мапата".

Дури и промена на името само за билатерална употреба може да доведе до трајни промени. Земјите кои што веќе ја

признаа Македонија велат: "Доколку се постигне билатерално решение, ние ќе ја почитуваме таа одлука и ќе го користиме новото име за Македонија".

Со продолжување на преговорите, ние самите му изјавуваме на светот дека "ќе го смениме нашето име". Ние самите имаме моќ да му ставиме на ова крај. 127 земји веќе ја имаат признајто Македонија под името Република Македонија, вклучувајќи и 4 од 5 постојани членки на Советот за безбедност при Обединетите нации. Прекинете ги преговорите за нашето име.

ММДЧП и АМКЧП бараат од сите Македонци во Република Македонија и странство, да се придружат на барањето Македонија веднаш да ги прекине преговорите за името и да побараат неограничено меѓународно признавање под името Република Македонија.

За да се потпишете, или за да ја видите рекламната кампања, посетете не на страницата: **Нашето име е Македонија**

Рекламен постер на англиски јазик : www.mhrmi.org/images/campaign.pdf

Рекламен постер на македонски јазик : www.mhrmi.org/images/campaign.mk.pdf

За да преземете рекламен банер и да го ставите на вашиот вебсајт, посетете ја страницата : www.mhrmi.org/our_name_is_macedonia/web

"НИКОЈ НЕМА ПРАВО ДА ПРЕГОВАРА ЗА МОЕТО ИМЕ!"

www.mhrmi.org/our_name_is_macedonia



AMHRC Delegation in Macedonia



Left to right: International Coordinator of the AMHRC Mr David Vitkov, President Ivanov and Mr Jason Kambovski Vice President of the AMHRC

In June 2010 an AMHRC delegation, led by Jason Kambovski and David Vitkov, visited the Republic of Macedonia. A number of meetings were held with various state officials and representatives of numerous non governmental Macedonian organisations. The purpose of the tour was to exchange ideas and to discuss means of improving cooperation. In particular, an opportunity was taken to survey the difficulties facing Macedonian human rights activists in Greece and Bulgaria. Lastly, the AMHRC delegation was given an audience before the President of the Republic of Macedonia, Mr. Boris Ivanov. Messrs Kambovski and Vitkov explained the opposition of the AMHRC to any kind of name change and in the event of a name change, the very dire consequences, with regard to Macedonian identity, that would ensue for the Macedonian community in Australia and beyond. The meeting concluded with a discussion about the Macedonian community in Australia and the role of the AMHRC.

Dear editor of *The Age*

September 16 2010

I read with interest the text about saving the girl from an arranged marriage dated September 15, 2010. Even though these events are rare in modern Macedonia they unfortunately still occur in some rural parts of the country.

The Government of the Republic of Macedonia is making efforts to integrate the Muslims in all facets of social and political life and noticeable progress has been made to date. For example, the Muslims and other ethnic minorities are part of the Macedonian Parliament and all levels of the government.

We can compare this with so called "modern democracies" like France and Italy, both of which are currently expelling their Roma (a.k.a. "Gypsies") refugees from another EU member, Romania; while Macedonia has a Roma representative in its very Parliament.

It is disappointing that your text only describes an unfortunate event and ignores all the good things and integration processes that are happening right now in the Republic of Macedonia.

I would also like to draw attention to your writer Paul Millar, who either still lives in the past by using the derogatory term "the former Yugoslav republic of Macedonia" in regard to naming of the Republic of Macedonia or is unaware how offensive this term is to all Macedonians.

Please make a note to all writers and editors in your respected newspaper to refrain from using the derogatory "FYROM" terminology. This term is for use only in the United Nations system to which The AGE newspaper is not part of.

Over 127 countries in the World have recognised the Republic of

Macedonia by its name, including USA, Canada, India, Russia, China and New Zealand to name a few, although Australia unfortunately, is not among them.

Perhaps you would like to write about this and ask our so called multicultural government why it is still held hostage to an irrational name problem and not recognising the Republic of Macedonia by its name: Republic of Macedonia?

Regards,
Goran Babusku
Bsc. E.Eng
Ivanhoe, VIC



Goran Babusku is a valued supporter of the AMHRC and we would like to encourage more of our members to find the time to become active and write letters on behalf of our community.

"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.

MHRMI
MACEDONIAN HUMAN RIGHTS MOVEMENT INTERNATIONAL
www.mhrmi.org

AMHRC
AUSTRALIAN MACEDONIAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE INC
www.macedonianhr.org.au

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

OUR NAME IS MACEDONIA

БОРБАТА ЗА МАКЕДОНИЈА ПРОДОЛЖУВА

Колку би сакал да напишам дека Македонија е безбедна, сигурна и просперитетна држава и дека никој од нас не треба да се грижи за нејзината судбина. За жал, тоа не е така. Македонија овие денови прослави скоро 20 години од независноста но продолжува да биди опкружена со непријатели и, што е најопасно, да биди поткопувана одвнатре со домашни непријатели и платеници. Дали Македонија всушност се наоѓа во состојба на перманентна војна ќе се обидам да дадам одговор тука.

Велат дека Македонија од независноста до денес немала права македонска влада. Уште од почетокот наместо агресивно настапување пред меѓународната јавност со барање за независност и самостојност тогашните влади го избраа патот на наведната глава како да се срамеа дека сме Македонци или како што велат други, тотално неспособна да се снајдат во новите услови. Место да го гледаат примерот на Словенија и Хрватска кои веднаж побараа независност и признавање и дури беа спремни да војуваат за тоа, нашите политичари се обидуваја да ја спасат Југославија. Резултат на тоа е дека, и покрај меѓународните мислења (Бадинтер) дека Македонија треба веднаш да се признае како независна држава ние и ден денес мака мачиме со негирањето на соседите и најмногу, со оспорувањето на јужниот сосед на нашето име, идентитет и јазик. Се чини дека нашите лидери го одбраа патот на попустливост во однос на овој сосед и решија да го сменат знамето и уставот и најважно, да преговараат за името на државата без да бараат алтернативни патишта додека нашиот јужен сосед покажуваше краен цврст став. Во меѓународната политика нема правдина и македонските сојузници и пријатели (НАТО, ЕУ и САД) наоѓат дека денес е полесно да не притискаат нас да го смениме името отколку да ја притискаат Грција.

Како одговор на ваквата политика и со оглед дека во сите анкети македонскиот народ во огромен

процент (80-90%) не подржува промена на името за влез во НАТО и ЕУ две организации за заштита на човековите права решија да се спротистават на ваквите тенденции и ја започнаа една од најсветлите акции во македонската историја за заштита на нашето национално име и идентитет, или со други зборови отворија нов фронт во борбата за нашето опстојување како народ. Меѓународното македонско движење за човекови права (ММДЧП) со седиште во Торонто и Австралиско македонскиот комитет за човекови права (АМКЧП) со седиште во Мелбурн со здружени сили ја започнаа кампањата за прекин на преговорите за нашето име со мото „Никој нема право да преговара за моето име“. Кампањата скоро веднаж беше подржана од околу 150 организации низ целиот свет и таа подршка се зголемува секој ден. За почетокот беа објавени реклами



на цели страници во дневните весници Дневник и Утрински весник. Потоа беа објавени Интернет реклами во дневниот весник Дневник како и Интернет реклама на страницата на телевизијата Канал 5 како и рекламни спотови 3 пати на ден во ТВ програмата пред вестите. Во исто време истата реклама се објави на 11 билборди низ центарот на Скопје со проценка дека околу 150,000 души ќе ја видат пораката за прекин на преговорите секој ден.

Почетокот на кампањата беше одбележана и со конференција за медиумите одржана заедно со претседателот на Македонската алијанса г. Џорџ Атанасоски. Велат

дека Грците фрлаат големи пари за да го скршат моралот на македонскиот народ и да не натераат да се предадеме и ние очекувавме дека се работи само за време кога ќе реагираат на нашата кампања. На самата прес конференција беше очигледно дека некои медиуми се крајно непријателски расположени спрема нас преку поставување на прашања и сомнежи дека дијаспората нема право да се меша во внатрешните работи на Македонија бидејќи дијаспората не прави ништо за Македонија за разлика од дијаспорите на соседните земји. Тоа се потврди и следните денови кога се појавија разни написи и известувања на некои телевизии и весници во кои се негираше кампањата и придонесот на дијаспората на Македонија. Дури и еден медиум за кои мислевме дека е патриотски и пријателски

расположен на индиректен начин ја исмејуваше нашата кампања со објавување на променета реклама на насловна страна во која се алудираше дека дијаспората си ги сменила личните имиња игнорирајќи го фактот дека кампањата се однесува на националното а не на личното име.

Ваквото однесување се повтори и по одржувањето на втората конференција под наслов „Дали и зошто треба да се прекинат преговорите за името“. На конференцијата учествуваа проф. Др.

Љубомир Цуцуловски, м-р Јанко Бачев, претседател на Народното движење за Македонија, г. Џорџ Атанасоски, претседател на Македонската алијанса, политикологот проф. Д-р. Жидас Даскаловски, г. Александар Дамовски, поранешен главен уредник на Нова Македонија, Време и Дневник, и г. Слободан Чашуле, поранешен министер на надворешни работи на Р. Македонија. Сите учесници контстатираја дека преговорите за името треба веднаш да се прекинат од истата причина која ја наведовме и ние: кога некој преговара за нешто тој дава сигнали дека ќе направи

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компромис. Ние, се разбира, не може да правиме компромис за нашето национално име. Додека одгласот од народот беше екстремно позитивен истите медиуми повторно ја применија истата тактика и оштро не нападнаа. Главната причина, спрема нив, е дека дијаспората не придонесува за Македонија и дека заради тоа не смее да се меша во политиката на републиката. На нашето укажување дека дијаспората дава огромен допринос и дека проблемот со името ги засега сите Македонци во светот овие медиуми одговорија со уште повеќе непријателски написи.

Стана очигледно дека мораме да одговориме на овие напади и да одржиме нова конференција на тема „Допринесот на дијаспората во македонската економија“. Со оглед на тоа дека бевме обвинети дека нашата кампања е организирана и платена од Владата на Р. Македонија решивме да поканиме независни експерти по економија. Учесници беа проф. Др. Ванчо Узунов кој веќе учествуваше во меѓународен проект за доприносот на дијаспорите во своите земји, проф. Др. Абдулменаф Беџети, поранешен министер по економија, м-р Гоце Јосифовски, повратник од САД и директорот на Агенцијата за иселеништво на Владата на Р. Македонија г. Васко Наумов. Заклучокот на конференцијата беше дека во 2009 г. парите што дијаспората ги испратила во Македонија изнесуваат официјално, според податоците на Народната банка на Република Македонија (НБРМ) околу милијарда и седумдесет и седум милиони евра но, според укажувањата на присутните експерти, сигурно се за 50% поголеми. Само за првите пет месеци во 2010 постои фантастично зголемување од 235%. Што е најважно, парите од дијаспората испратени до нивните семејства претставуваат дури 20% од БНД и им овозможуваат опстанок на над 160,000 фамилии. Беше кажано и дека дијаспората претставува огромен извор на инвестиции но македонските влади традиционално не водат сметка за овој скоро најважен сектор на економијата. Повратникот од САД г. Јосифовски го пренесе своето многу негативно искуство кога се обидел да инвестира во Македонија. Беше констатирано дека дијаспората воглавно има

негативно искуство со процесот на инвестирање во Македонија и дека Владата треба да направи многу тоа да се промени. Директорот на Агенцијата за иселеници г. Наумов наведе неколку примери на успешни инвестиции од дијаспората, како на пр. Ренова и Везе Шари. И н ф о р м а ц и ј а т а з а конференцијата беше следена од сите македонски медиуми и беше пренесена доста коректно – општиот заклучок беше дијаспората многу допринесува за економијата на земјата и најверојатно ја спасила државата од банкрот. Пред фактите и боговите молчат, така овојпат немаше негативни реакции и се чини дека оваа битка ја добивме иако војната продолжува се додека не сме сигурни дека името нема да ни се смени. Се разбира, нашите непријатели, и внатрешни и надворешни, се добро финансирани и успехот на нашата кампања директно ќе зависи од доприносот на секој Македонец, дали морално или финансиски.

Во моментот кога се пишува овој текст се планира продолжување на кампањата преку печатење на 200,000 летоци со пораката „Никој нема право да преговара за моето име“, потоа уште една прес конференција под наслов „Зошто и дали треба да се прекинат преговорите за името“ и редица други активности, многу од кои ќе зависат од паричните можности.

Ситуацијата во Македонија е многу чудна и неверојатна. Додека во соседните земји, како веројатно и во сите земји во светот, постои консензус за важните национални прашања во Македонија такв о нешто нема. Додека, како што спомнавме, народот во сите анкети се изјаснува дека 80-90% е против промена на името од друга страна скоро сите медиуми заговараат промена на името и шират пропаганда дека ако државата не влезе во НАТО и ЕУ веднаж таа сигурно ќе се распадне. И не само тоа. Иако на сите нас ни е јасно дека вистинскиот проблем на Грција не е името на државата туку нашиот идентитет, тоа не им е јасно на

повеќето од нашите медиуми. Како е можна ваква двојност на мислењето на народот и медиумите? Дали медиумите, како и сите други политичари и јавни личности, се можеби поткупени од нашите непријатели? Сите знаеме дека Грција троши огромни пари во светот а специјално во Македонија за да го скрши моралот на народот преку страшните приказни дека ако не влеземе во НАТО и ЕУ готови сме. Каде се манифестираат овие пари? Кој ја нападна нашата кампања за прекин на преговорите? Грците? Бугарите? Србите? Албанците? Многу малку. Најголемиот напад и противење дојде од поголемиот дел на нашите медиуми. Дали може од сето ова да заклучиме дека грчките пари завршуваат во мекедонските медиуми...? Што значи ако некој плаќа личности кои работат за промена на најсветото на еден народ – идентитетот? Она за кое сме се бореле, за кое изгинале илијадници наши браќа и сестри, за кое се пролеани реки од крв? Дали тоа не е вид на специјална војна, која не се води со пукање и со оружје, туку со пропаганда и поткупување?

Денешната ситуација во Македонија ме потсеќа на сличната која постоела пред стотина години, кога пропагандите на балканските држави се бореле за срцата и умовите на Македонците. Сите знаеме дека имало семејства кога еден брат се изјаснувал како Бугарин, друг Грк а трет Србин. Разликата е дека тогаш немавме држава а сега имаме. Како е можно

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Slavko Mangovski at the press conference launch of the ad campaign in Skopje.

United Macedonians Organization of Canada Supports Call to End Name Negotiations

Toronto, Canada, August 30, 2010

The United Macedonians Organization of Canada (UM) proudly supports the Our Name is Macedonia campaign, initiated by Macedonian Human Rights Movement International (MHRMI) and the Australian Macedonian Human Rights Committee (AMHRC). The Campaign demands that the Republic of Macedonia end all negotiations with Greece over its name. For over 50 years, the United Macedonian Organization of Canada has been working to defend Macedonian rights throughout Macedonia and the world. Macedonians must unite and tell the Macedonian government,

and the world, that the name negotiations must be stopped.

As stated by MHRMI/AMHRC, Macedonians must also demand that countries that have recognized the Republic of Macedonia publicly support it and not call for "compromise". UM is lobbying internationally in order to gain this support and calls on Macedonians throughout the world to join us.

The Our Name is Macedonia campaign is the most crucial work being done since independence and is the reason that UM is proud to announce that it has made a financial contribution to help ensure its continued success. UM calls on every Macedonian or-

ganization in the diaspora to do the same, and to publicly show their support by signing on to the campaign.

The United Macedonians Organization of Canada is the oldest and largest Macedonian national and cultural organization in the diaspora. Our mission is to promote national unity of Macedonians worldwide. For more information, please visit www.unitedmacedonians.org or call 416-490-0181.

**Please note: The United Macedonians Organization of Canada (UM), founded in 1959, is not affiliated with the "United Macedonian Diaspora (UMD)" which was founded in 2004.*



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да македонските власти да дозволуваат вакви работи? Како е можно поранешен премиер на државата јавно да кажува дека има бугарски пасош и дека е милионер и дека крадел? Од каде се тие пари? Зошто ниту еден голем политичар во Македонија не е затворен иако сите знаат дека доста од нив

г. сеуште не се вратени во своите домови? Зошто сите не сметаат за слаба држава и се однесуваат кон нас како такви? Зошто македонскиот народ живее со 30-50% незапосленост, меѓу најголемите во светот? Зошто, зошто, зошто... Премногу зошто на кои немаме одговор, премногу проблеми за кои изгледа дека нема

Секој од нас може и мора да се вклучи во активностите на оние организации за кои смета дека најмногу допринесуваат во борбата за Македонија. Дали тоа ќе биди преку донирање пари или време или преку лобирање. Седно. Сите сме борци за Македонија и Македонија не бара да се бориме за неа. Борбата

“Денешната ситуација во Македонија ме потсеќа на сличната која постоела пред стотина години, кога пропагандите на балканските држави се бореле за срцата и умовите на Македонците.”

краделе од народот? Зошто сеуште не е извршена т.н. лустрација па не знаеме кои од политичарите биле соработници на тајните служби на Југославија и на соседите? Зошто Албанците во Западна Македонија практично живеат во своја одделна држава одкаде Македонците пополека се иселуваат? Зошто има уште разселени Македонци кои од изценираниот конфликт во 2001

решение.

Но решение, или решенија, мора да има. Решенијата сме ние самите. Решението е во секој од нас. Ред е секој од нас да стане и да се обиде да го даде својот максимален допринос за продолжување на борбата за Македонија, како што тоа го направиле нашите татковци и дедовци. Ако Македонија е во војна тогаш така треба да се однесувам.

продолжува.

Славко Манговски

Меѓународен координатор на Македонското меѓународно движење за човекови права и член на Австралиско македонскиот комитет за човекови права.

Modern Hellenism and Traditions of Intolerance

By: Ivan Hristovski



In the decades following its foundation in the 19th century, modern Greece developed extreme notions of ethno-nationalism that have attempted to ensure the multi-cultural masses adhere to the myth that the modern Greek citizen is indeed the direct descendent of the long gone ancient Hellenes. While many commentators are at present discussing Greece's catastrophic economic situation; we are going to focus here on identity problems that stem from the early 19th century when fundamentalist national myths were invented for Greece by European philhellenes.

We shall begin by stating the obvious: extreme forms of nationalism are breeding grounds for racism. Hellenism, by definition of one of its German creators, Johan Gustav Droysen, represents an intolerant assimilatory culture that has not experienced any ruptures/major transformations, from ancient to modern times (1). This Hellenism theory that Droysen concocted was taken by the chief historical revisionist of Greece in the mid-nineteenth century, Konstantinos Paparrigopoulos and was carved into separate eras which he dubbed - Ancient Hellenism, Macedonian Hellenism, Byzantine/Medieval Hellenism, and Modern Hellenism(2). Droysen offered to the Greek national historians and politicians of the mid-late nineteenth century, to the Greek nation as a whole, not simply the imaginary vision of a "Hellenic" Macedonia, but more importantly, an ideological justification for many other current politically motivated revisionist projects: the idealization of an imperial and expansionist political model; the invention of a "Hellenic" Byzantium and Middle Ages in general; the adoption of Hegelian concepts of spiritual continuity, which were not necessarily linear but were based on the ability of the "Hellenic spirit" in its various forms to absorb 'inferior' elements(3). According to Panayote Dimitras, a spokesman for the minority rights group, Greek Helsinki Monitor; racism in Greece is deep-rooted: "Greek national culture is one that believes there is a superiority of the Greek nation which is a continuous descendent of the ancient Greeks, and when you think like this about yourself it is very easy to think that the others are inferior," (4).

However, racism in Greece as everywhere else is an ideology that lacks real coherence (5). Detailed analysis reveals a smoke screen of propaganda which enshrouds a past very different from the one presented by Greek ultra-nationalist pseudo-history. According to one scholar

"Greeks were taught to reject everything familiar in their vernacular culture as 'foreign' to the Classical Hellenism invented by the eighteenth-century German scholars who had sired both the 'autochthonous' theory of Greek ethnogenesis and, in the lineage of 'Aryan' linguistics, the so-called racial science of the Nazis"(6). Indeed the philhellenic laboratory experiment in Greece was certainly not about fostering, preserving and integrating the existing multi-cultural landscape. The formulae in this experiment were put into production before Greece existed. One Greek scholar points out "The force of this cultural pre-construction of Greece cannot be underestimated, considering especially that the sociopolitical conditions prevailing at



Lord Byron

the end of the War of Independence point to an irreducible social and cultural discontinuity, to a zero point in the operation of those significations that were conceivably to propel and uphold the images of a new national identity" (7). All of this is relevant today because of its affects on Macedonia and the Macedonians, especially the Macedonian minority in Greece, who are faced with prejudice on a grand scale. Moreover, it is pertinent to note that this xenophobic ideology continues without serious challenge from the European Union (8).

Human rights groups say Greece has one of the worst records in the European Union for racism against ethnic minorities (9). Greece today does not recognize any ethnic minority within its boundaries. A reason for this is because this would upset the deeply entrenched philhellenic myths and Greece would have to admit that they are not a homogenous society with an essentially unbroken continuity dating back to the ancients etc. Before the independence of Greece a number of languages were

juxtaposed, including Greek, Albanian, Slavonic variations, Vlach, Turkish and Italian, suggesting that the Greek nation was composed by a very diverse ethno-cultural conglomeration and was certainly not anywhere near a purely ethno-Greek phenomenon (10). A nineteenth century foreign visitor like Edmond About, writing in 1855, stated that "Athens, twenty five years ago, was only an Albanian village" and that "The Albanians formed, and still form, almost the whole of the population of Attica ; and within three leagues of the capital, villages are to be found where Greek is hardly understood. Athens has been rapidly peopled with men of all kinds and nations" (11). About also describes a Turkish village that surrounded the base of the acropolis which formed a quarter of the town as well the Albanian majority of that quarter (12). The fact that the Parthenon was used as a mosque during the Ottoman conquests (13) and before that was a church that went between Orthodox and Latin rites (14) is testament to the simple absurdity of Droysenian Hellenism.

George Finlay, a 19th century philhellene who was in Greece during the war for independence, described an early President, George Koundouriotis and Botases the Vice President of the Greek government in 1824 as "Albanian ship owners from Hydra and Spetzas"(15). Finlay added that: "It is necessary to record the sad truth that two more ignorant and incapable persons were never entrusted with the direction of a nation's affairs. The Greeks are the most prejudiced of all Europeans when there is a question of the purity of the Hellenic race, and no people regards education with more favour; yet with all this nationality and pedantry they entrusted their public affairs, in a period of great difficulty, to two men who could not address them in the Greek language, and whose intellectual deficiencies prevented them from expressing their thoughts with clearness even in the corrupt Tosk dialect which they habitually used."(16)

Unadulterated facts, like these, about multi-cultural origins of modern Greeks are often necessarily ignored in modern Greek nationalist narratives. In this regard, striking is the general lack of reflection upon the fact that the national dress of Greece is of Albanian origin (17), or the fact that Kolokotronis, the infamous klepht (bandit) leader, was a Major in an English General's Albanian regiment (18) and performed an Albanian dance with other 'Greek' Revolutionaries for the Bavarian queen of Greece (19). Yet these problematic facts for the Greek nationalist narrative

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An Interview with Greek Human Rights Activist: Panayote Dimitras



Dr Panayote Dimitras is the founding member and Spokesperson of Greek Helsinki Monitor. In 1992 he was also a founding member of Minority Rights Group - Greece. He received his Ph.D. in 1979 in Political Economy and Government from Harvard University. In addition to several publications on political issues, he has been a vocal advocate and activist for the rights of the Macedonian minority in Greece.

Q: There have been some reports that Greece intends to take some positive steps in regard to the reinstatement of Greek citizenship and property rights for Macedonian refugees from the Greek Civil War. Our committee's reaction was very skeptical, though we would also like our readers to know what you think about these claims.

The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) and UN Independent Expert on Minorities Gay McDougall have urged Greece to abolish the discriminatory provisions in the legislation on reconciliation related to the consequences of the civil war (1946 – 1949). Provisions that denied ethnic Macedonians the rights to restoration of citizenship and property (or granting compensation for the latter) granted to ethnic Greeks who had fled Greece along with ethnic Macedonians in the 1940s. Greece will not make any move in that direction unless it is obliged by judicial decisions. Even refugees or their children who are entitled to citizenship according to Greek law are expected to be denied it until Greek or probably European courts impose a decision on the authorities to grant citizenship. This is why all those with

plausible claims should use effective procedures through experienced and independent litigators to raise such claims in order for them to be arguable before the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) if necessary. If they try to claim citizenship or property or even simply seek a birth certificate on

their own, related refusals will be probably considered as final decisions that if not swiftly contested before competent courts will become final and irrevocable.

Q: In its third report, the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) encouraged the Greek authorities to implement practical measures for the creation of conditions conducive to freedom of association and expression etc. for members of the Macedonian and Turkish communities living in Greece. Have any such steps been taken?

No. Many people did not notice that Greece appended to the ECRI report its disagreement with these recommendations and has refused to implement related ECtHR judgments that compel Greece to register Macedonian and Turkish associations. In fact recently the competent Minister of Justice has stated before parliament that he agrees with the Greek courts' rejection of such registration based on the argument that the ECtHR judgments were mistaken!

Q: How would you describe the finding of the Greek courts in relation to the issue of the registration of the cultural association: Home of Macedonian Civilisation?

The Supreme Court one year ago with a very nationalistic rather than legal judgment rejected the registration of the Home of Macedonian Civilization. The latter through Greek Helsinki

Monitor filed an application to the ECtHR in December 2009.

Q: Could we say that any attempts, initiated by elements from civil society for dialogue between Macedonians and the Greek authorities, have been productive?

As ECRI reports, all attempts to have such dialogue have failed as the authorities do not want to do anything that will implicitly signify an acknowledgment of the existence of a minority.

Q: By most accounts, Greece is going through a catastrophic financial crisis. Has this been utilized by the relatively new PASOK government as a means for avoiding human rights responsibilities?

It is used as an excuse for the continuing violation of human rights and the refusal to take remedial action that the socialist PASOK had promised when in opposition.

Q: Considering this, is there a danger that the current economic crisis might benefit groups located on the extreme right?

We have such a party (LAOS) that is treated by all other parties as a legitimate interlocutor, while in the other EU countries such parties are practically marginalized by the mainstream. On the other hand, ethnic minority parties, organizations and minority rights NGOs are marginalized in Greece while in the other EU countries they are interlocutors of the mainstream parties and other political or social actors.

This interview was conducted on 24/8/2010 by the AMHRC's International Coordinator David Vitkov.

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„Македонско малцинство во Бугарија нема и не може да има“ – ова изјава го стави

почетокот на официјалното негирање на македонското малцинство во Бугарија во 1963 г. по две децении на делумно признавање. Зборови на диктаторот Тодор Живков. Во прикверчерите на примањето на Бугарија во Европскиот сојуз – во ноември 2006 г. истите зборови буквално ги повторува бугарски европарламентарци. Повод беше барањето на пратничката група на ЕФА признавањето на македонското малцинство и регистрацијата на ОМО „Илинден“-ПИРИН да се вклучат во последниот извештај за земјата. „Македонско малцинство во Бугарија нема и не може да има“ е девизата на политиката со која се судираат Македонците во Бугарија. За 28 години тоталитарно вадеење и 16 години демократија бугарската позиција спрема македонското малцинство не направи нито чекор во позитивна насока. Напротив – во некои аспекти стана само уште покрајна и категорична.

Колку е слична оваа позиција со онаа на Грција?!

Македонците во Бугарија и Грција имаат пред себе многу тешка борба бидејќи го имаат целиот систем против себе. Бугарија и Грција се демократски земји повеќе формално, театрално зашто модата на времето бара носењето на таква државна носија – нивната темелна идеологија не е демократијата туку етнонационализмот. Македонските малцинства во овие две земји ја имаат

несреќата со самото свое постоење да го уриваат темелниот мит, вистинската државна идеологија; затоа на Македонците се гледа исто како што инквизицијата гледала на еретиците или како што во една демократска земја би гледале на терористите. Во вие две земји многу малку се осетливи на антидемократски испади, на корупцијата, на организираниот криминал, на злоупотребите со власта – но се бескрајно осетливи на македонските демократски пројави и барања. Со самото тоа македонските движења за права се предодредени да бидат на страната на демократијата и како спротивстваени на деструктивните етнонационализми на земјите во кои живеат тие се осудени да бидат максимално демократски, позитивни и прогресивни.

Негирањето на македонскиот идентитет и како производ од тоа негирањето на македонските малцинства – тоа е генералниот проблем, од кој излегуваат сите други.

Негирањето на самото постоење на македонското малцинство во изминатите две децении демек-демократија во Бугарија се има вршено од најофицијално ниво – парламент (со официјална декларација), влада (во лицето на надворешен министер), двајца претседатели, уставен суд, главниот суд во престолнината, бугарски европарламентарци... Оваа позиција е недемократска и неодбранлива на меѓународно поле. Затоа пред притисокот на европски правозаштитни фактори официјалната бугарска позиција достигнува

највисоки нивоа на превртливост и дволичност за да декларира дека малцинства не се признавале, дека посебно признавање не било неопходно, дека доволно било и тоа што во пописите било регистрирано постоење на Македонци. Балансирајќи меѓу позициите на негирање и непотребност од признавање бугарските позиции имаат само за цел да го отклонат вниманието на европјаните, да престанат да прашуваат и да се интересираат, од положбата на Македонците во Бугарија, да ја препуштат оваа должност на Бугарија. Во таквите инсистирања бугарските власти доаѓаат до најчудни пресврти и софизми. Од една страна тврдат дека нема потреба од признавање, а од друга негираат самото постоење; од една страна тврдат дека објавените резултати на пописот се доволни наместо признавање, од друга страна тврдат дека фактот што илјадници бугарски државјани се самоопределиле како Македонци не значи дека тие сочинуваат некакво малцинство. Се признава правото на самоопределување само доколку е во согласност со историската вистина – се разбира бугарската. Се признава правото на самоопределба, само доколку е базирана на објективни критериуми – се разбира на бугарски објективни критериуми. Се признава правото на самоопределба, но не и на самоопределба како Македонец. Се признава дека постојат луѓе што се самоопределуваат како

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Македонци, но не се признава нивното право да ги уживаат правата предвидени во Рамковната конвенција за националните малцинства. Според потребата и случајот позицијата с еменува само не с еменува решеноста на никоја начин да не се признае малцинството и да не му се дадат правата. А пак на внатрешен план Македонците и нивната самоопределба се третирали како акт на предавство, непријателство и немање знаења и култура. На моменти дури и не ни се оспорува директно правото да тврдиме дека сме Македонци, но само далеку од општетството, без да се бориме за своите права и без да претендираме дека нашата волја е нешто повеќе од глупост и каприц. Затоа во Бугарија македонски организации не се регистрираат – за да бидат изолирани Македонците далеку од општетството, политиката и власта. За таа цел свесно се подржува и една нездрава атмосфера на страв, преку медиумите, преку закани од политичари, преку викање на членовите на ОМО „Илинден“-ПИРИН во полиција, преку ширење секакви гласови и закани.

Во Бугарија постои силен одпор против правата на малцинствата воопшто. Под силна принуда и како услов за евроинтеграција Бугарија ја потпиша и ратификува Рамковната конвенција, но никогаш не ја примени на практика. Од времето кога беше потпишана до влегувањето во Европа во Бугарија се водеше остар спор дали во Бугарија постојните малцинства се национални малцинства. Одкако влезе во Европа во

Бугарија веќе се дебатира (или по скоро се постулира) дека нема малцинства воопшто. Која е суштината на овие ирационални спорови во Бугарија, кои на надворешен човек му изгледаат како споровите на средновековните схоластици, колку ѓаволи можат да се соберат на врвот на една игла? Суштината е во тоа како да се прими формално европската директива, а да не се дадат права на малцинствата. како д ане се примени Рамковната конвенција за националните малцинства „Не постои дефиниција што е тоа национално малцинство“ – еве каде го најдоа спасот бугарските политичари и еве зарад што се водеше тој спор што е тоа национално малцинство и дали постои кај нас. Од има малцинства, но не се национални, до нема малцинства а само граѓани ова е не точно еволуцијата на бугарскиот став, колку враќањето кон изворните позиции на бугарската политика која се карактеризира со силно недемократскиот однос спрема малцинствата. Краткото попуштање за време на кандидатурата за европски член е надминато. Европската членка Бугарија сега може да си дозволи да го следи грчкиот пример и да прави што сака – таа е веќе внатре. Ова е во мало израз на целата бугарска политика спрема Европа – привидно прифаќање на критериумите и формално исполнување на условите и тоа само кога нема на каде. Како да стане европска членка без да ги исполни условите – ова како да беше девизата на целата бугарска политика во последната деценија.

Најважната, но и најтешка задача е и си останува признавањето на македонското малцинство. Сите останати се подредени на неа. Официјално признавање кое да ги сбрише официјалните негирања. Признавање кое да не биде празна декларација, туку да им ја даде можноста на Македонците да се користат со правата на Рамковната конвенција за заштита на националните малцинства, која во Бугарија е мртва хартија. Оваа борба е од значење и за сите малцинства во Бугарија.

Исправени пред масовно негирање, сатанизирање и изолирање Македонците во Бугарија сепак немаат намера да запрат да се борат за своите права. Во последните пет години тие преку ОМО „Илинден“-ПИРИН се изборија за своето право на мирни собирања, кое со децении го немаа. Ќе се изборат и за своето право на организирање, регистрирање на друштва и партии, учество во политичкиот живот на земјата.



Stojko Stojkov



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Познато е дека ОМО „Илинден“-ПИРИН беше регистрирана во февруари 1999 г. и забрането во февруари 2000 г. Датумите чудно совпаднаа со кандидатирањето на Бугарија за датум за почеток на преговори за влез во Европската унија – февруари 1999 г. и добивањето на бараниот датум во февруари 2000 г. Одтогаш ПИРИН не може да добие регистрација во Бугарија. За тоа не помогна ниту пресудата на Судот за човекови права во Страсбург во 2005 г. во нејзина корист., ниту 4 обиди за регистрација, ниту собирањето на 6 000 членови. Бугарските власти одговорија со поромени во законите, зголемување бројките неопходни за регистрација, членови и на крај анвикање на сите 6 000 членови на партијата и нивно заплашување и манипулирање во полицијата. Некои од нив ги викаа и по 3 пати во периодот 2006 – 2008 г. И до ден

денес бугарските власти одбиваат да ја покажат како заповедта со која беше извршен овој срамен акт, така и да ги внесат резултатите од истрагата во судот. Една постојана практика на бугарското обвинителство и суд – да започнуваат истраги против македонските организации, да го објавуваат тоа во медиумите за да слушнат сите и потоа ... ништо. Никаква истрага никаков суд, затоа што и нема за што да бидат судени Македонците, но доста е да се слушне дека се под истрага... Бугарија одби да ја регистрира ПИРИН, но во резултат уште нолку дела се во Страсбург и се пред донесување одлука. Бугарија повторно ќе биде осудена и овој пат за разлика од претходниот ќе има механизам преку кој да се бара промена, зашто одлуката сега не е од Уставниот суд на кој граѓани не можат да му се обраќаат, туку од Врховниот суд. И се надевам сега да има јасна одредба на судот за човекови права како

да се спорведе пресудата.

Во едни такви услови борбата на Македонците во Бугарија придобива во значење – не само за нив, туку и за демократизацијата на Бугарија и евроинтеграцијата на Македонија. А таа борба тие не ја водат сами, туку во тесна соработка со македонските правозащитни друштва во светот во прв ред Австрало-македонскиот комитет за човекови права, македонското меѓународно движење за човекови права и други важни организации. Особено важна е соработката со организации на македонските малцинства, при што најважна е блиската соработка воспоставена со „Виножито“. Тесната поврзаност на Македонците во Бугарија и Македонците во Грција е условена од многу причина. На прво место тука е многу сличната политика на негирање и репресија спрема македонските малцинства во овие држави, репресија која како што се гледа прераснува и во обиди за репресија спрема македонската држава и идентитет генерално. Потоа тука е заедничката етничка

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припадност и самосвест. Потеклото на голем дел од Македонците во Бугарија од Егејска Македонија е уште една причина за засилување на овие врски, кои гледаме како се материализираат во тесната соработка меѓу ОМО „Илинден“-ПИРИН и „Виножито“ на скоро сите полиња.

Оваа соработка вроди плод со зачленувањето на ОМО „Илинден“-ПИРИН во европската парламентарна коалиција ЕФА, преку која прашањето за македонското малцинство во Бугарија се постави и во Европскиот парламент, во силната работа што беше извршена во Советот на Европа, каде проблемите на македонското малцинство во Бугарија се веќе добро познати, во соработката со бројни меѓународни институции за правата на човекот, која даде плод со вклучувањето на проблемите на македонското малцинство во низа на авторитетни извештаи, во принудувањето на бугарските власти да дозволат мирни собирања на Македонците во Бугарија и сл. Продолжува борбата против недопуштањето на регистарција на македонски организации во Бугарија и се разбира финалната и најголема цел – признавањето на македонското малцинство (а преку него и на македонската нација) нешто што многу ќе допринесе за стабилизација на регионот и исчезнување на основната причина за непријателство меѓу Македонија и Бугарија.

Најактуелната задача во сегашниот момент е претстојниот попис во

бугарија во почетокот на 2011 г.

По паѓането на комунизмот во Бугарија во 1990 г. беа спроведени два пописи и во двата беа извршени масовни манипулации спрема луѓето со макеоднска самосвест. Отсуство на графа Македонец во пописните тефтери, антимакедонска клима во општеството, засилена пропаганда и закани во медиумите против оние што може да се изјаснат како Македонци за време на пописите, започнување на јавно рекламирани истражни дејствија против македонските активисти, автоматско запишување на луѓето како Бугари по „п о д р а з б и р а њ е“, непрашување на луѓето за анивната етничка припадност, убедување на луѓето што инсистираат да се запишат Македонци дека тоа не треба или не може, политички притисоци против луѓе од администарцијата да го променат своето изјаснување ако не сакаат да ја изгубат работата, запишување со молив и на крај манипулација со така добиените резултати врз кои нема никаква вистинска контрола. Преку овие и други методи (како административно запишување без допрашување до луѓето) се добиени резултатите од пописите во 1992 и 2001 г. во кои според официјалните резултати како Македонци се изјасниле соодветно 10 803 во првиот и 5 071 души во вториот попис.

Редко кој се сомнева дека државава ќе проба да ги елиминира Македонците како бројка. Веќе има насобрано големо искуство во тој правец. Од толку поголемо значење е

на овој попис да не се дозволи манипулацијата да продолжи.

Многу би можело да се зборува за антимакедонската политика на Бугарија спрема макеоднското малцинство, за нејзинот сближување со Грција на натмакедонска основа, за соработката на бугарските и грчки тајни служби против партиите застапници за правата на македонските малцинства во Бугарија и Грција, за начинот на кој бугарската држава го обработува јавното мислење да прифати валкана политика против „неблагодарна“ Македонија, која наводно „жестоко ги прогонува“ Бугарите во Македонија и сл. Но местото не го дозволува. Доволно е да кажеме дека во Бугарија постојат моќни и влијателни сили кои се решени да водат грчка политика спрема Македонија и кои не ги бираат сретствата за да ги постигнат своите цели. Зад Грција на прагот на Европа е застаната и Бугарија, решена, ако првата остапи - таа да ја замени. На таков начин Бугарија ќе се отплати на Македонија што во 1999 г. ја пушти да се кандидира за во Европа декларирајќи дека сите спорови се решени меѓу двете земји. Всушност – ништо не беше решено, но сега Бугарија ќе проба (нешто што Македонија не го стори) да ги реши во „своја“ корист спорните моменти спротивно со секоја реалност, правда и демократски принципи. А спорниот момент е всушност само еден – макеоднскиот идентитет. Зашто на Бугарија македонскиот идентитет за жал и пречи исто толку, а дури и повеќе одколку на Грција.

-Stojko Stojkov

DECLARATION

16 September 2010

Regarding the action carried out during the past week against the right to self-determination in Bulgaria in relation to the inclusion of columns for all minorities in Bulgaria on the census form:

1. Having regard to the strong campaign waged by ultranationalist and extremist groups and organizations against the inclusion of columns for all minorities in the trial census which found support in much of the media;
2. Having regard to the fact that the government has not reacted against this anti-democratic wave of uncivilised thinking and primitivism which brings shame on the country;
3. Having regard to the fact that a cabinet minister openly agitated against the freedom of citizens to determine their own ethnicity and appealed for that right to be limited in various ways;
4. Having regard to the fact that the cabinet did not distance itself from the statements made by the minister;
5. Having regard to the fact that the Premier ordered a thorough investigation in order to find those considered guilty, not from the ranks of those who agitated against the right to self-determination, but rather amongst those persons working at the National Statistics Institute (NSI);
6. Having regard to the fact that two deputy heads of the NSI were dismissed by the government for having conscientiously carried out their duties and observed European principles by including in the "others" column all objectively existing ethnic groups who identified as such at previous censuses;

We are compelled to state the following:

The upcoming census and its results have already been compromised!

The NSI is also compromised!

Democracy in Bulgaria is compromised!

Premier Borissov's extremely inappropriate actions send a clear message:

- That those employed in the NSI should be careful regarding "non-existent ethnic groups" at the next census if they want to keep their jobs;
- That future census-takers should note that certain ethnic groups should not exist and that their registration is against state policy and may lead to corresponding punishment;
- That the right of self-determination of the Macedonians, as well as other ethnic groups who are denied in Bulgaria, does not exist, and that their self-determination as such is considered to be an anti-state act which will be punished.

There is no doubt that the government, with the assistance of the security agencies is preparing to further manipulate the right of minorities to self-determination in Bulgaria. The creation of an atmosphere of fear and intolerance of the Macedonians in Bulgaria existed prior to and at the time of the carrying out of the two previous censuses. This scenario is obviously being repeated for a third time.

While in the neighbouring Republic of Macedonia there will be a column for "Bulgarian" at the upcoming census, in Bulgaria a column for "Macedonian" is prohibited, despite the fact that at all censuses thousands of Bulgarian citizens have self-identified as Macedonians.

However, that which has occurred is recognition in itself!

The harsh reactions of the nationalists – the offspring of the totalitarian security agencies-are a clear indication of their fear of the truth, the truth that a Macedonian minority exists in Bulgaria and that the number of people with a Macedonian consciousness is exceedingly large, a truth that such circles cannot stomach.

Given this abnormal situation, in the name of the Macedonian minority in Bulgaria and in the name of our organisations, we declare that if urgent measures are not taken for the inclusion of the column "Macedonian", as well as a column for the remaining minorities, and if the government does not take measures to safeguard the internationally guaranteed right to self-identification equally for all Bulgarian citizens and does not rectify the current abnormal situation of intolerance and witch hunts,

We will not be able to recognize the results of the upcoming census

OMO "Ilinden"-PIRIN Association of Repressed Macedonians in Bulgaria

TMO VMRO (Independent)

KPD "Nikola Vaptsarov"

(Thanks to Dr. Chris Popov for translating this announcement to English from the original Bulgarian.)

"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 честитаеме 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 'Демократска', 'Вардарска' или 'Северна' пред името 'Република Македонија'. На пример со една таква промена ние би биле основувани 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 *Горџија*) 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?

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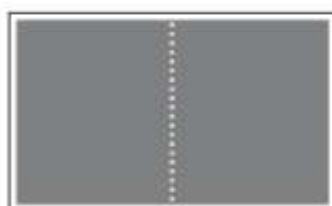
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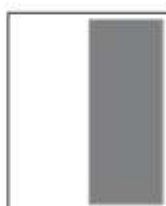
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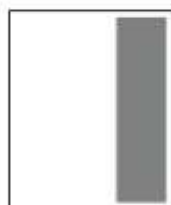
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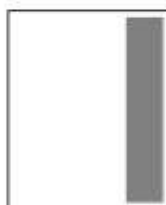
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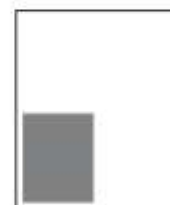
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Reflections on *Mr Balkan*: or raising the voices of the violated and the vanquished

By Jim Thomev

One-off performance on Saturday 24th July 2010 at the Yan Yean Theatre, South Morang, Melbourne.

As we walked into the theatre for the performance of *Mr Balkan*, we were confronted by a stark stage with a solitary wheelchair on one side and a bench on the other. Before any human character appeared, we knew that a man or a woman, their body certainly, and most likely their mind, had been broken by the passing of time and the common mortality that awaits all.

What happens in the next 80 plus minutes on the stage is a remarkable journey: a journey through time, language, political, social and family experience. We witness a *tour de force*, a first-rate work of art directed by Stefo Nantsou with the able assistance of co-author and

actor Dushan Ristevski, and the highly talented Australian-Macedonian Drama Group of Sydney. It surpasses the promises on its brochure to make us "laugh, cry, sing and remember"—how many reading this can remember when they last experienced a book or saw a film that was proclaimed a "masterpiece" by its publishers or promoters that did actually live up to expectations? It is a thing as rare as the phoenix.

So what made *Mr Balkan* particularly unusual and special? For one, all the actors performed their roles (in the case of the director co-writer and actor, Stefo Nantsou-four roles) with authority, authenticity and magic. That in itself was achievement enough. But there were deep resonances with the themes—not just the journey of the central character, Mr Balkan (or Everyman), as he is assailed in his wheelchair in the nursing

home by heart-wrenching memories. Destiny had singled him out together with over 28,000 other innocent Macedonian children, for the role of a child refugee from the Greek Civil War (1946-49).

Mr Balkan's drama did not end with the evacuation from the war-torn area of his native land in 1948; his life was marked by further struggle, as the Greek authorities, would discriminate against him for the rest of his life if he asserted his right to call himself a Macedonian. A child refugee is a remarkable destiny, just as the destiny of the Macedonian people, and Macedonia itself, is extraordinary even by Balkan standards. Macedonia and the Macedonian people have been and still are the focus of hostility from four groups, distinguished only by the varying degrees of their virulent nationalistic ambitions. For Macedonians to survive and maintain the struggle for self-affirmation surely is testi-



mony to resilience and courage that even an honourable enemy would respect.

Mr Balkan's traumatic life events torture his dreams and reminiscences as he waits for God in his wheelchair. A mere child dragged away from his native land with other children, separated from mother and dearest and nearest, he leaves behind the conflagration of civil war. A civil war anywhere is the nastiest of all wars because it pits human beings against their own kindred; it embitters the future for it has destroyed the generations. *Mr Balkan*, a helpless child, had been bundled off to another land to continue his fateful journey through life afresh. Then, after growing up in the Eastern Bloc in a people's democracy,

(*vo demokratska drzhava*, as he was raised to believe) he comes to Australia as a young man at the height of the Cold War, where on opening his suitcase at customs, he reveals an axe to his new hosts. It was with this tool as his chief arsenal against the hostile world, that he crosses the seas, anticipating in the great *pechalbar* tradition of his immediate forebears that he would earn his keep in the vast strange new land of Australia, as he had heard that its coasts were heavily forested.

Those who may have thought that the "culture clash" jokes of migrants arriving in a new land had been done to death, will be surprised by the comic episodes generated by the Macedonian refugees going through customs in this drama.

There is not only *Mr Balkan* who came with his axe; there is the dear old *baba* with her spindle loaded with pure white wool, threatening the nation that is riding "on the sheep's back" for its wealth, to judge from the roars of protest from the customs officer. There are many such witty conceits and images and especially clever puns; but this crackling pace and sparkling variety is best experienced when witnessed on the stage. (In my opinion, while the DVD is an indispensable record of the performance and should be owned by all Macedonians, the real live performance is the best way to savour the rapture and artistic enchantment.)

The rich themes are embodied in the movements, sounds, songs, rhythms,

(Continued on page 26)

AMHRC RECOMMENDS ATTENDING THE RETURN MELBOURNE PERFORM- ANCE OF MR BALKAN

А в с т р а л и с к о
македонскиот театар од
Сиднеј по барање на
Македонците од
Мелбурн и Викторија по
втор пат ќе ја
презентира театарската
престава

МР БАЛКАН

Од Стефо Нанцу и
Душан Ристевски
во режија на Стефо
Нанцу

Мр Балкан е нова
психолошка драма,
траги-комедија
исполнета со
емоционални набои за
траумата и трагедијата
на македонската
нација. Истата дава
слика за периодот на
македонската историја
кога невини деца беа
присилно иселувани од
домовите на своите
родители во Егејскиот
дел на Македонија и
испраќани по домовите
на источно-европските
држави.

Ова е драма за
македонската Голгота.
Ова е драма за
траумата на
располутените
семејства, за траумата
на над 30 илјади деца
која ги следи се до
крајот на нивниот
живот: стравот од
минатото од
откорувањето е
присутен и во
постарите години,
посебно од фактот што
не им е дозволено да
си ги посетат своите
огништа поради тоа
што се Македонци.

The award winning Aus-
tralian Macedonian
Theatre of Sydney visits
Melbourne again with its
latest production

MR BALKAN

Mr Balkan, a tragic-
comedy traces the emo-
tional trauma and tragedy
of the Macedonian Nation.
It sheds light on a little
known period of Macedo-
nian and European history
where Macedonian chil-
dren were removed from
their native homes during
the Greek Civil war and re-
settled in Eastern Euro-

pean countries. Most
were not allowed to return
to their homes because of
their Macedonian ethnic-
ity. Some who agreed to
adopt Greek names were
allowed to return and
those who refused reser-
tled in the Republic of
Macedonia, Australia,
USA and Canada or
stayed in their adoptive
Eastern European coun-
tries.

At times hilarious, sad,
joyous and bittersweet,
"Mr. Balkan" is a celebra-
tion of the spirit of family,
culture and a yearning to

return to one's homeland.
At its heart, this play
shows how identity is both
political and personal:
while Mr Bal-
kan's separation from his
homeland continues to
torment him in his adult
life, in seeking solace
in his identity and in the
memories of a stolen
childhood, he has the will
to go on.

*Come Laugh Cry and
Sing as we remember the
struggles of the Macedo-
nian Refugees-Detsa
Begaltsi.*

Australian Macedonian Theatre of Sydney in association With Macedonia Foundation.

Present

MR. BALKAN

МР. БАЛКАН



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by Australian-Macedonian
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THE MACEDONIAN REFUGEES,
DETSA BEGALTSI**



Refugee
Week



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A modern Macedonian master storyteller

By Dr. Michael Seraphinoff

The Macedonian writer Zhivko Chingo (1935-1987) created several literary works that are enduring classics of Macedonian literature. These include his collections of short stories entitled *Paskvelija* (1962) and *Nova Paskvelija* (1965) and the novel *Golemata Voda*. (1971). The enduring value of his works certainly owes much to his masterful storytelling and compelling characters. At the same time, most Macedonians also appreciated his brave exploration of themes that had been more or less taboo in Communist Party run Yugoslavia up until that time.

Macedonians have often had to resist unjust authority during a history that included a number of harsh foreign occupations. This was particularly true during the long Ottoman Turkish occupation and in more recent times when the neighboring Serbian, Bulgarian and Greek states partitioned Macedonia among themselves following the Balkan Wars, and again during World War Two when the Axis Powers occupied the Balkans. The liberation of Vardar Macedonia during World War Two under Yugoslav Communist Partisan leadership led to the creation of the first autonomous Macedonian

state there since medieval times, a state that has since become the fully independent Republic of Macedonia. However, even in post-war Socialist Yugoslavia Macedonians had to face hard choices when unjust or arbitrary authorities demanded almost absolute obedience. Particularly during the early years of communist rule most people would simply silently obey those in authority.

They had learned the wisdom of such behavior during long centuries when outside imposed authority had sometimes been nearly impossible for Macedonians to resist. During most of the five hundred years of the Ottoman Turkish occupation, as Krste P. Misirkov wrote in his treatise,

On Macedonian Matters, (1903): "The Turks took our land and divided it among themselves: we had to reconcile ourselves to this loss. They then began to take our children and bring them up as Turks. ... Even then we kept silent." Macedonians learned a certain patient endurance from centuries of life with little hope of successful rebellion against the occupiers. However, when they did see some hope of successful rebellion they traded the saying: "The bowed head is never cut off," for: "Freedom or death."

Zhivko Chingo's powerful stories of resistance to unjust authority were eagerly received by a Macedonian public that had lived in silent fear of such authority for far too long by the 1960's. Chingo struck a particularly responsive chord in his Macedonian readers when in 1971 he created the

the hands of and his resistance to unjust authority certainly echoes that of other Macedonians through the centuries in Ottoman prisons, Greek prison camps, or the Yugoslav gulag on the prison island of Goli Otok. Sometimes a masterfully told fiction offers a far more compelling picture of something that is true in human life than the most carefully documented factual account. Chingo's work nourishes the spirit in ways that only a mythic tale can. Here is an excerpt from Chingo's novel as translated by Kolupacev, just to give you a taste of what I mean:

Olivera Srezoska paid him special attention, if another child did something wrong, she would shout at him, "Why do you sway when you walk?" or "Don't wave your arms about, walk properly," or again "Why have you raised your

head so high? Why are you laughing? What are you laughing about, you ragged good for nothing? Look at yourself; lower your head. Stop laughing."

Then, for the first time, our eyes met. He looked at me warmly, with a cheerful smile, as though he were saying "Little fool, you are afraid. This barking, old hag has scared you! I am here, don't worry!" Curse me, he acted as though he was the one who had

Dr Michael Seraphinoff

been made responsible for me rather than me for him. Distrustful, I gave him a sideways glance. At once, he understood my glance and now, without hesitation he said, "You are mad, friend. You thought that about me but you are the one who is mad!" He said the truth, curse me, as though he was inside my head. "Come on, little fellow," he said then, friendly, with that same crooked smile. "Don't be a child. I know about little puppies like you, they just yap." And in the same moment, he burst into a fit of uncontrollable laughter. Curse me, nothing could stop him. He's going to laugh for a few centuries, I thought to myself, he'll laugh until the very last drop. I swear, he was a terrible giggler.

(Continued on page 35)



dreamy, idealistic character Kejten in the novel *Golemata Voda* (*The Big Water*). Kejten is abused and tortured by the authorities in the children's home where he lives simply because he cannot cringe and obey. Those in power demand an almost absolute obedience that he cannot live with. His body may be under their power to torture and confine, but his spirit will not be subdued.

It is significant that the publisher of the excellent English language translation by Elizabeth Kolupacev Stewart of Chingo's novel chose this work. Politecon Publications normally chooses books that focus on the culture, history and struggle for human rights of Macedonians in Greece. Lem's suffering at

(Continued from page 11)

have still likely been lodged in the collective unconscious and this creates an insecurity that seems to make itself abhorrently evident via the often vicious manner in which Greek bigotry attempts to deny another nation's right to an identity.

Some have estimated that during the 15th century when the Ottomans conquered the whole of what became modern Greece in 1830, some 45% of it was populated by Albanians (20). Their descendants played a leading role in the war for independence which helped win freedom from the Turks in 1821(21). The Vlachs were recorded in medieval times as having settled in what became modern Greece in very significant numbers (22). The Vlach intelligentsia paved the way for revolution in Greece during Ottoman times and, according to one Greek historian, "... contributed enormously to the development of a cultural network across national cultures and its members had acted as carriers of Greek language and culture due to their continuous migrations"(23). The Vlachs not only contributed to building up the new Hellenism which they imported from Western Europe, they also contributed to fighting the Turks as well being prominent *Armatoles* (police under Ottoman authority who betrayed the Sultan) and *Klephts* (bandit rebels). Yet their obvious Latin cultural origins are often ignored (24). However, during the early 19th century, the average person in what became Greece, according to the Historian William St. Claire, possessed feelings that were out of step with prominent philhellenes like Lord Byron:

"Most Greeks did not share Byron's views and would not have understood his allusions. They did not think of themselves as Greeks at all - and certainly not as Hellenes (a word incidentally which always makes me uncomfortable) but as Christians or Orthodox. They had little sense of nationality in the Western European sense of a nation state like England or France with distinct geographical boundaries, a single language, and uniform culture. They thought of themselves rather as Orthodox Christian inhabitants of a large multi-racial empire. They were not, for the most part, in the least interested in their ancient ancestors, and they knew very little about them. When travelers found the locals at Marathon or Salamis with stories about ancient times, they were delighted, for they thought they had found a genuine tradition from ancient times. But the locals were usually repeating stories they had heard from earlier travelers."(25)

When philhellenic infiltration took place

after the formation of the modern Greek state, the multi-cultural inhabitants of Greece were to become very forcefully 'Hellenized' (26). Moreover, this state began to spread the new doctrine outward into neighbouring lands. In particular, racist Hellenistic notions were directed towards all the Macedonians, Vlachs, Albanians and Turks in Macedonia and the Megali Idea, which reverberates even today, would attempt to forcefully impose itself on them via the use of terror. Serious practical cultural (especially linguistic) gaps between the Macedonians and modern Greeks, in part explain the use of terror and as one scholar has noted, "...the Greeks, who could not compete on this terrain, compensated by stressing an imaginary ethnicity". (27)

The Greek myths in regard to Macedonia are significantly connected to the intolerant seeds contained in the origins of modern Hellenism and the Megali Idea (a 19th and 20th century expansionist plan for a Greater Greece). During the 19th century, Greek as a language was a mercantile, ecclesiastical lingua franca among the bilingual (sometimes tri-lingual) inhabitants of the Balkans, including Macedonia. One scholar estimated "The Greek - speaking population in the three provinces that made up Ottoman Macedonia was approximately 10% of the total population". (28)

Undaunted by this practical cultural divide Greeks attempted to "Hellenize" all and any in their path. Ironically a segment of the Vlachs formed the "backbone of Hellenism" in Macedonia during the early years of the 20th century. (29) Numerous foreign observers like the Englishman Brailsford, noted that "The average Greek or Hellenised Vlach in Macedonia, who professes to believe that the whole population is Greek, is doubtless to a great extent the victim of his daily impressions. He lives in a town which is for the most part Hellenised. He never goes into the country. He does not know the villages or the village folk. But even the more educated and moderate Greek ... will add a claim on behalf of Greece to more territory than her sons inhabit, "in recognition of the civilising mission of Hellenism." I confess to some difficulty in deciding what Hellenism means in this connection. What is the specific attitude of mind which it denotes?"(30)

The observations of foreigners not only demonstrate the claim that Hellenism has a dominant cultural continuity in Macedonia extending back "4000 years", to be an absurd myth; they also make it clear that it is ridiculous to try to claim this for the lands upon which the modern Greek state itself was first

formed. The contradictions between the available evidence and the myth are simply insurmountable. They do however; assist in illustrating something else about the modern Greeks and their attempts to deny the existence of Macedonians: "all that these contradictions really prove is that after nearly two centuries of independence, Greek nationalists remain insecure and self-doubting behind their boastful and touchy facades" (31). Extreme nationalists, on the surface always seem to find a way to ignore the realities of the more recent past in order to maintain the rather childish "logic according to which all the country's modern claims must be evaluated by the yardstick of ancient history" (32). When Anastasia Karakasidou wrote her book *Fields of wheat, hills of blood*, about the forced Hellenization of Macedonia that was annexed by Greece, it set off a fire storm that reveals the difficulties below the surface of ultra-nationalist rhetoric and "exhibits both the nervousness of the Greek establishment and the persistence of stereotypes of Greeks as irrational, hysterical Balkan lunatics among supposedly sober commentators in the West. It also demonstrates the neuralgia that anthropology can induce in those who are committed to unitary myths of national origin, as it also does the sometimes unavoidable entailment of anthropology in its object study".(33)

This myth of Hellenism, which has significant racist traditions, is a denier of human rights to the Macedonian minority in Greece. Loring Danforth, an Anthropologist, describes an ultranationalist weekly newspaper that is distributed throughout Greece and its Diaspora, that "is testament to the evils of militarism, irredentism, xenophobia, and racism which are often fostered by extreme nationalism" and that "Calls for the reclamation of Asia Minor, Northern Macedonia (the Republic of Macedonia), and Northern Ipiros (Southern Albania) are standard themes of most issues, as are attacks on ethnic minorities in Greece such as the Jews, the 'Mongols of Thrace'(the Turks), and the 'Gypsy-Skopians' (the Macedonians)" and this newspaper "even offered large sums of money and free trips to Greece as rewards for the 'elimination' of Macedonian activists who are regarded as particularly dangerous enemies of Hellenism"(34). This is but a more virulent example of what Macedonians in Greece are generally up against. How else is one to explain the fact that Greece refuses to recognise their existence!? Moreover, the Republic of Macedonia's name, identity and culture are being challenged by this neighbourhood bully

(Continued on page 24)

that is neurotically bent on maintaining an untenable national narrative. Goce Delchev, an early 20th century Macedonian liberation leader, once wrote "The moral revolution - the revolution of the mind, heart and soul of an enslaved people, is our greatest task". He said this for the Macedonians under Ottoman rule, however Delchev's dictum may also be applied to those Greeks who have been enslaved by the intolerant traditions within modern Hellenism and we need to remind them of their past, their diverse cultural origins and aid them to construct a history that does not encourage them to deny the rights and existence of other ethnic groups.

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2 The Nation and its ruins: Antiquity, Archaeology, and National Imagination in Greece, Yannis Hamilakis (2007; 117-118)
3 Ibid (2007; 117)
4 Greek Albanians' woes fester, BBC News/Europe <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/4101469.stm> (Thursday, 16 December 2004)
5 Blood and oranges: European markets and immigrant labor in rural Greece, Christopher M. Lawrence (2007; 79)
6 Anthropology; Theoretical Practice in Culture and Society, Michael Herzfeld (2001; 67)
7 Dream Nation: Enlightenment, Colonization and the Institution of Modern Greece, Stathis Gourgouris (1996; 86). Gourgouris further states; "the recourse to the new image of Hellas (both as cultural construct and as social system) began immediately upon the brief rule of Governor Kapodistrias and became efficiently implemented with the takeover of the Bavarian monarchy and its explicit desire for centralization and Hellenization. In fact, the cultural image of a modern Greece was put into production with much greater urgency than was a political-economic infrastructure, despite the obvious importance of the latter in a newly constituted State." (1996; 87)
8 Greece is an Unworthy EU Member, Gunnar Nissen Danish newspaper Morgaenavisen Jyllands-Posten 2/26/1999. Nissen condemns Greece and the EU by stating "National oppression is taking place in many countries outside the EU. But Greece is an EU member and is thus a "part of the family". But do we intervene, we, the closest people? No, we shut up. Of ignorance or misunderstood solidarity with the Greek leaders, who as the Serbs, consider themselves "superbalkanian". Other people know more about the oppression than I, but I know a great many and every year more ignored and oppressed Slavic Macedo-

nians in the Greek part of Macedonia. Can we justify our silence? I'm sure that Greece's unwillingness to accept the Republic of Macedonia is due to their black conscience over the oppression of Macedonians in Greece. Greece is (yet another) unworthy member of the EU." We need to here point out that while we admire the essence of Nissen's statement, that Nissen was probably unaware that Macedonians do reject the term "Slavic Macedonians" as offensive.

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13 National Identity in Modern Greece, Peter Mackridge (2008; 305) Hellenisms: culture, identity, and ethnicity from antiquity to modernity edited by Katerina Zacharia.

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19 Sketches of Modern Greece: Athens in 1837, Anon. (1838; 476) Blackwoods Edinburgh Magazine Vol. XLIII (January-June 1838)

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21 Migrations and Invasions in Greece and Adjacent Areas, NGL Hammond (1976; 63)

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conflict in the Balkans (2001; 57) where he illustrates the "Greek Orthodox Balkan intelligentsia was a stratum crossing ethnic frontiers".

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25 Byron and Greece, William St. Clair (1983;161-162) Greece Old and New edited by Tom Winniffrith and Penelope Murray

26 Hellenism and the making of Modern Greece, Antonis Liakos (2008; 229) Hellenisms: culture, identity, and ethnicity from antiquity to modernity edited by Katerina Zacharia.

27 Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality, Eric Hobsbawm (1992; 107). Hobsbawm describes the Macedonians after the Balkan Wars as one of a few "nationalities without states" (1992; 139).

28 Collective Memory, National Identity, and Ethnic Conflict: Greece, Bulgaria, and the Macedonian Question, Victor Roudometof (2002; 111)

29 Culture, Civilization, And Demarcation at the Northwest Borders of Greece, Laurie Kain Hart (1999; 202) American Ethnologist 26, No. 1

30 Macedonia; its races and their future, Henry Noel Brailsford (1906; 201)

31 The Balkans: Of what is past, or Passing, or to Come, Brian Sullivan (1999; 18) The Emerging Strategic Environment; Challenges of the twenty first century Edited by Williamson Murray. Sullivan disputes the claims that the ancient Macedonians were ever Greek and the theory of their language being Greek, as many Greeks claim, as "the undisputed fact that Philip and Alexander admired Greek culture and that Greek was spoken at their court hardly made their subjects Greek, any more than the fact that the court of Catherine the Great and Alexander I spoke French made the Russian serfs of the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century part of French culture" (1999; 17).

32 Anthropology; Theoretical Practice in Culture and Society, Michael Herzfeld (2001; 68)

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By Ivan Hristovski:





Australian Macedonian Human Rights Committee (AMHRC)

Membership Application Form

Formed in 1984 the Australian Macedonian Human Rights Committee (AMHRC) is an Australian based non-government organisation that informs and advocates to governments, international institutions and broader communities about combating discrimination and promoting basic human rights. The aspiration is to ensure that Macedonian communities in Australia and throughout the world are recognised, respected and afforded equitable treatment.

The AMHRC has been involved in the struggle for human rights of the Macedonian people both in Australia and internationally for over 25 years, either directly or through our partner organisations. In addition to taking various politicians to task over their comments and actions concerning the Macedonian people, challenging government policy, defending and promoting the community's interests, the AMHRC has also continued to support our Macedonian minorities in Greece, Bulgaria and Albania through direct funding and other means.

With the issue over the right of the Republic of Macedonia to use its real name reaching a critical phase, there has never been a better time to be engaged or re-engage with the struggle of the Macedonian community for equality and respect. Show your support and become a member of the AMHRC.

APPLICANT DETAILS

Full Name:				Gender:	<input type="checkbox"/> Male	<input type="checkbox"/> Female
Address:						
Suburb:		State:		Postcode:		
Phone:		Mobile:				
Email:				Date of Birth:		
Occupation:						

PAYMENT DETAILS

Membership Fee:	\$500 <input type="checkbox"/> Advocate	\$120 <input type="checkbox"/> Full Member	\$60 <input type="checkbox"/> Student/Pensioner
Payment Method: (please tick)	<input type="checkbox"/> Cash		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Cheque / Money Order (payable to the 'Macedonian Human Rights Committee of Melbourne and Victoria')		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) - I have deposited my membership fee into the following Westpac bank account on this date ____/____/20____ Account Name: Macedonian Human Rights Committee of Melbourne and Victoria BSB: 033365 Account No: 189484		
Credit Card details: (please tick if applicable)	<input type="checkbox"/> Visa <input type="checkbox"/> Mastercard		
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Please send completed membership application form with payment details to:

Australian Macedonian Human Rights Committee Inc
Suite 106, Level 1
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NORTH MELBOURNE, VIC 3051

and words in the two main languages (Macedonian and English) with bonuses from other cross-linguistic pyrotechnics. Irresistible is the tall, loud, redoubtable customs officer barking at the wretched refugees: "*Sprechen die Deutsch? Hablas Español? Serish Ellinika?*" played by the towering Stefo Nantsou. In this latter question we have a pun of sheer genius: the Greek *Xeris Elinika?* – "Do you speak Greek?" by a slip of the tongue from a struggling learner becomes the Macedonian *Serish Ellinika* ("Do you shit Greek?"). For those like me who grew up in Australia among Macedonians who knew the Greek language but rarely if ever spoke anything other than Macedonian or English among themselves, such puns were very common. Whenever any of our elders told the stories about the years when the Greek authorities attempted cultural genocide with terror and intimidation, such word play and linguistic jokes abounded in their narratives, even though they would not have been a laughing matter at the time. These policies of the authoritarian Greek regimes to change family names, place names, village names, and to destroy gravestones bearing Cyrillic inscriptions etc was a ruthless strategy to destroy both the identity and the historical memory of the Macedonians.

One of my favourite anecdotes about the punishing of the Macedonians for speaking their own language instead of Greek was told to me by a *chichko* who copped a heavy fine as well as a dose of castor oil from the vigilant Greek ruffians from the local police. His crime was to use the standard Macedonian imperative sounds when he was directing his donkey loaded with produce bound for market to stop: *chuksh!* and to get it going: *shchi!* [often followed by an angry *V'ko da te isturi...!* If the donkey was big on *inaet-stubbornness*]. I believe this digression is in order as those who are not familiar with this dimension of 20th century Macedonian history might puzzle over the nuances of *Serish Ellinika?*

which might appear to be merely a lame and vulgar pun. It is more than just a cheap crack at the language of the Greek oppressors. It is an expression of contempt and a sense of outrage from the downtrodden, from those whose ancestral graves have been spat upon by arrogant intruders. It is a reminder that the Greek military regime of General Metaxas in the late thirties had jailed and tortured Macedonians for speaking their own language and had forced illiterate *babi* (old grannies) to attend night classes in order to learn Greek, a language in which most of whom could not even say hello.

Let us come back to the year 2010 with *Mr Balkan*, on stage in a northern suburb of Melbourne.

The Australian customs officer, not long after giving a migrating *stara baba* from a preliterate culture a dictation test in English, gradually transforms before our eyes into a humane Australian doctor caring for the wheelchair bound Mr Balkan who wakes from the chiaroscuro of dreams of personal history and trauma.

The actor Vasko Srbnovski reaches some great peaks in the lead role. Heart-rending are his wails for the lost baby Fana that was entrusted to his care by his mother; these memories are eerie, ghost-like, heart-breaking, too deep for tears; there are other poignant recollections that haunt and stir the depths of one's own memories. And then, there is the permanent pain, the unresolved inner conflict, the deep longing of his generation of Macedonians who had drunk to the dregs the bitterness of their heritage. More than anything else, Mr Balkan wants to see "*Makedonija oslobođena*" (Macedonia liberated)...this doomed hope, has become a transformed and transforming metaphor that seethes (*vrie!*) in his consciousness and which he will carry to his grave. Vasko captures this state, its essential misery, and craziness, and its terrible power to move others.

This forlorn longing characterises Mr Balkan and like-minded compatriots; and I have witnessed it on many occasions from our elderly people and still hear it.

This unattainable dream that has wounded yet energized them is something that fills their daily lives as they listen through the media about the latest in the absurd charade called the "name dispute" where an intransigent Greece, whose own national self-abasement has taken the form of bankruptcy, continues in her attempt to humiliate and destabilise the Republic of Macedonia. The Macedonian modern drama is actually a continuous epic; an Iliad where battles may be won or lost, but where the war itself, never comes to a stop.

This yearning is there before us in Mr Balkan. He, the Macedonian, who wants to go to his final rest, free from the struggles and tensions of this world with an end to his restless sojourn, an end to the sense of having been violated as one of the "rejects of life" and carrying the burden of the tragedy of his people. He is not just a Macedonian from a part of Macedonia oppressed by a military usurper. He is all Macedonians from all parts of Macedonia and from anywhere. He is all Balkan people who have been, and still are, sent to the bottom of the pile as the bottom dogs by political regimes for which minority rights are dirty words. Is this not what all human beings are, those who struggle for a dream, or more accurately perhaps, who strive to escape their nightmares? No matter what pathos such yearnings may carry, whatever illusions they may harbour, it gives a people their unique identity, the particular colouring of their life-experiences, or personal history, not to say the very passions that define them and give their dramas its poignancy. The least one could say is that a dramatic life is an interesting life. After all, Mr Balkan is a member of that vast mass of humanity whom Frantz Fanon designated as "the wretched of the earth", in the book he addressed to the colonised peoples, the phrase used for the title of the English translation. (Incidentally, Frantz Fanon taught the oppressed a big lesson: "stop talking to the enemy cap in hand, talk to each other...").

The audience on the night that I witnessed this extraordinary piece of drama, a Macedonian contribution to Refugee

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Week, invariably greeted with spontaneous bursts of patriotic applause all moments that recalled or suggested the historical traumas – the very word “Macedonia” elicited the deepest emotional responses. This was authentic people’s theatre, it appealed to the heart by addressing the deepest terrors and aspirations in its audience. The spectacle concluded with a traditional Macedonian dance, and one felt a sense of liberation, one breathed a clean, fresh air in spite of the bleakness; at any rate, it was a far cry from the audience being left in a state of gloom and depression. It was not in any way a weakly sentimental ending tacked on as a balm for the scars that had accrued, because the sombre tone had often been punctuated by

strong life-affirming upward impulses.

What had the drama enacted that made this ultimately an uplifting and liberating performance? My explanation is a simple one: any person’s life, especially if it is of some duration, cannot be represented as a mere black picture – a black picture is no picture. So the event before us, through all the tears and angst, was sprinkled with refreshing showers, with shafts of sunlight (humour, song, kindness, love) – both laughter and song can in themselves be ambiguous – sad as well as joyous, bitter-sweet. The drama at its best is that which plays with life’s complexities, its contradictions, its infinite variety. Hence the vitality that the action on stage exhibits, the lived and felt life it presents. The essential sanity and humanity of the performance, its very serious realism, or truth to life is undeniable.

One of the greatest moments in *Mr Balkan* is the way a crucial trauma at the

level of identity is captured with amazing vividness and profound wit and humour: Stefo Nantsou as the redoubtable deformed Greek invalid in the aged care centre yells in Greek at Mr Balkan telling the wheelchair-bound man that he is an “Ellinas!” (a Greek!) while Mr Balkan hurls back his defiance for all his powerlessness with “Makedonets!” (a Macedonian!) in their respective languages. This mad verbal duel continues with just these two words repeated with a rising crescendo. This insane challenge from the Greeks has been a definitive experience for the Macedonians since Greece usurped the lion’s share of the territory of Macedonia under Ottoman rule for over 500 years in the aftermath of the two Balkan Wars (1912-13). Today this challenge with its attack on the dignity of the Macedonians is still going on with the denial of basic human rights to Macedonians within Greece; and at the international level, it has taken the form of the Hellenic Republic persisting with its insulting demand



that the Republic of Macedonia change its constitutional name.

It is through its artistic power, its capacity to move us by the skilful deployment of its images, and its narrative that this remarkable drama rises above the political point scoring game. At the level of family, the pain of the separations of the past, and the setbacks in the new land and the problems with the new generation in the alien culture (*Sinmi samo parite mi gi saka!* – “My son only wants my money!”) are an integral part of Mr Balkan’s life career. And then, of course, with the inevitable decline of life whose imperfections are magnified by the passage of time for all human beings, we come back to the wheelchair and its deeply resonant symbolism for both past and present with the ultimate bad luck of life with its wars, poverty, natural disasters and diseases.

Freedom from fear was the slogan for Refugee Week, when *Mr Balkan* was offered to the public in July of this year. The Australian context in which

the play has been created and performed, is of great relevance to the asylum seeker question that the Australian Government has handled so badly and insensitively. The Australian Government policies vis-à-vis refugees are very confusing at present and hopefully the novel arrangement with the minority government will take a more humane and just approach.

In conclusion

Mr Balkan is an imaginative work of art that presents the unique experience of violation of a whole generation of Macedonians. It is also one of the most impassioned imaginative pleas I have witnessed against the victors who want to wipe out that history and want to keep walking over the corpses of the vanquished. The moral responsibility, the moral fierceness of this drama is a flash of light thrown against the darkness of fate. It defies the invariant and inexorable nationalistic propagandas in the Balkans with all their appalling ordure, and tragic waste. Its theme therefore is universal

and speaks with the moral authority of all oppressed and violated people in the world.

Post-Scriptum: A plea to the Macedonian people

The struggle against domination and oppression has to be multi-pronged. All Macedonian communities in the Diaspora have to be united and organised to support the cause for Macedonian human and civil rights at all times. I think massive support for the Arts that affirm this struggle, like the drama of *Mr Balkan* as one example among many, should be given the utmost financial and moral support. No one should need convincing that a performance of *Mr Balkan*, or a book that affirms Macedonian culture, history and our unique language, or any positive manifestation or celebration of our heritage, should be given other than total support and encouragement. Everyone of us can do it with a genuine appreciation of the worth of such creations and documentations, encouragement, and a few dollars.

The Rann Affair

By George Vlahov and Vasko Nastevski



The following article is divided into three parts.

The first part consists of the final submission made by our committee to the Australian Human Rights Commission, in relation to our complaint against the premier of South Australia Mike Rann. The second part is a reproduction of the Australian Human Rights Commission's final decision and the third part contains our summary of the matter as a whole.

PART I

Our Final Submission to the AHRC

4 May 2010

Ms Catherine Branson QC
President
Australian Human Rights Commission
GPO Box 5218
Sydney NSW 2001

Dear Ms Branson,

Re: Assessment of AMHRC complaint against Premier Mike Rann MP

Thank you for your letter of 20 April 2010.

We are writing this submission on the assumption that there still remains an opportunity for us to convince you to reconsider your assessment of our complaint. Our response is lengthy because we have attached some material with which we hope to convey our context and thereby increase your understanding of some related matters and because we have decided to also respond to some peripheral issues that emerged from Mr. Rann's response to our complaint.

In his response, Premier Rann claims that his criticisms were directed only at the "incumbent President" of the Republic of Macedonia. However, in our opinion, this is not borne out by a reading of the transcript of his comments that he himself provided.

His criticism of the President of the Republic of Macedonia was in reference to the utilisation of the symbol of Alexander the Great in a number of public projects. We do not agree with this as a valid criticism. The Premier must be aware that history and culture are selectively and abstractly constructed. Therefore he could not truly believe that the modern usage of Alexander the Great could in any way have constituted a "dangerous stirring up of trouble" as he asserted. Comments like these could not have been delivered "in good faith" as Premier Rann claimed in his response. Moreover, to place the naming of a highway, "Alexander the Great" in the same context as apartheid in South Africa as Mr. Rann does in his response, is ridiculous and extremely offensive – not just to the President or government of the Republic of Macedonia, but to all Macedonians whether they voted for the current administration or not.

Finally and most importantly, many Macedonians in Australia and elsewhere have a strong attachment to their original homeland and its historical and cultural richness. Many Macedonians are proud of the modern usage of the symbol of Alexander the Great by the Macedonian government. They consider the usage of such ancient symbols an important factor in the construction and maintenance of their ethno-cultural identity – in fact the Macedonian government embarked on the project, precisely because numerous Macedonians were in favour of it. Premier Rann must be aware of this (at any rate he implies in his response that he takes a keen interest in such matters). In this context, to refer to such usage of the symbol of Alexander the Great as 'historical and cultural thievery' is an attack against the ethno-cultural identity of Macedonians across the world.

CLARIFICATION OF SOME PERIPHERAL ISSUES

Mr. Rann claims in his response that he has long held an interest in international affairs, yet somehow he has always been strangely quiet when it comes to Greece's well documented human rights abuses against its Macedonian minority. Premier Rann claims that his views are "consistent with the criticisms also made by other European Union countries and the United Nations". They are not in fact consistent and he did not even offer any evidence to support his assertion. Moreover, he conveniently fails to mention that Greece has been a consistent violator of the rights of its Macedonian minority. For example, at the end of 2009, the European

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Part I

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Commission against Racism and Intolerance, a European independent human rights monitoring body that specialises in questions relating to racism and intolerance, after excoriating Greece on its abysmal record in relation to human rights recommended that:

“... the Greek authorities take measures to recognize the rights of the members of the different groups living in Greece [including Macedonians], including to freedom of association, in full compliance with the relevant judgements of the European Court of Human Rights ... [Moreover], ECRI also strongly recommends that the Greek authorities take steps to recognize the right to self identification of these groups [ie: Macedonians]”. (See European Commission against Racism and Intolerance, Fourth Report on Greece, Adopted on 2 April 2009, CRI (2009) 31, Strasbourg, 15 September 2009, para. 115 and 117.)

In connection with Premier Rann’s reference to the United Nations, it is apt to here cite from the UN independent expert on minority issues, Gay McDougall, who also reported on Greece’s aberrant human rights behaviour. For example, she states that:

“Successive governments have pursued a policy of denial of the ethnic Macedonian community and the Macedonian language ... 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. They consider it of crucial importance for their continued existence that their ethnic identity and distinctiveness is respected. The Macedonian language is not recognized, taught, or a language of tuition in schools”. (Promotion and Protection of all Human Rights, Civil, Political, Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, including the right to Development’, Report of the independent expert on minority issues, Gay McDougall, Addendum Mission to Greece, (8-16 September 2008), A/HRC/10/11/Add.3, 18 February 2009, para. 41.)

Somewhat ironically given the Premier’s comments, Ms McDougall even notes the symbolic ethnic cleansing of ethnic Macedonians by the Greek state in the early half of the 20th. Century: *“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 reinstate 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”. (See para. 42.)*

Indeed, Premier Rann would do well to read what the UN independent expert on minority rights recommends:

“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”. (See para. 90.)

We reiterate, it is strange that Premier Rann, the self-described champion of human rights and multiculturalism has never once mentioned the consistent human rights violations of Greece. In any case, the last time we checked, he is not the Foreign Minister of Australia.

Moreover, his comments against the President of the Republic of Macedonia, Georgi Ivanov, seem disingenuous, because the powers of the President of the Republic of Macedonia, in accordance with the Macedonian Constitution, are mainly ceremonial and he has very little influence on governmental decisions and the day-to day running of the country. He most certainly has no authority to change the names of airports or any other public institutions. Premier Rann’s assertions in this regard are just absurd. They are akin to somebody condemning the Governor General of Australia for decisions to rename Australian highways, or airports for that matter.

Crux of the Complaint

We recognise that some of the above is peripheral; though we felt it was important to clarify these issues. The crux of our complaint derives from comments the Premier made in the second half of his speech before the Greek community. Here, he made the following remarks (as his own transcript reveals): *“People sometimes say to me, but why is this important? It is important because no one is entitled to steal another nation’s history or culture; that’s why it’s important”.*



UN Expert on Minority Issues Gay McDougall
photo sourced from: <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=33767>

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“Somewhat ironically given the Premier’s comments, Ms McDougall even notes the symbolic ethnic cleansing of ethnic Macedonians by the Greek state in the early half of the 20th. Century”

In the lead up to this offensive assertion, Premier Rann, implicitly though nevertheless clearly, explained that he was aiming those remarks at Macedonians in general; an ethnic group that does not consider itself Greek and again we quote:

“Some people you know interestingly just a few months ago in May, a whole group of very distinguished Greek scholars came out and had written to the new President of the United States, President Barack Obama and have said to him, told him the real history of Macedonia. Told him about the fact that the Greek Macedonians were there centuries and centuries before, the history of Phillip of Macedon, the history of Alexander the Great & Hellenism. And that’s why this centre is so important. It’s important for you but it’s also important for the rest of us. To have a centre that celebrates the great Hellenic tradition, the Greek tradition of Makethonia. And so I promise you that we will remain firm and unswerving in our support for your cause. People sometimes say to me ‘but why is this important?’ It is important because no one is entitled to steal another nation’s history or culture. That is why it’s important.”

What is the “Greek cause” that Mr. Rann is referring to? It is the desire to force Macedonians to change their identity name and the name of their state. This is a cause that aims to subvert the human right to self-identify. The whole paragraph makes it clear that if anyone, not just the current President of the Republic of Macedonia, regards him or herself as a Macedonian in a distinct non-Greek ethnic sense; or if they support the right of the Republic of Macedonia to maintain its national name/identity; or if they do not consider Alexander the Great to have been an ethnic Greek, then they are “Slavs” (an offensive to Macedonians, generic racial label used in reference to the Republic of Macedonia earlier by the Premier in his speech; a label that ignores national specificity - see the earlier part of the transcript) who are trying to “steal another nation’s history or culture”.

How do we know that this “Greek Cause” is the one supported by Mr. Rann? Because he states it in his speech to his Greek audience (“we will remain firm and unswerving in our support for your cause”). Though how do we know the exact nature of this “Greek cause” that Mr. Rann supports? It is contained in the letter Mr. Rann refers to in his speech as containing the “real history of Macedonia”. We shall now quote from this letter:

“This brings us back to the geographic area known in antiquity as Paionia [this is what the authors of the letter believe to be the rightful name of the land upon which the Republic of Macedonia today exists]. Why would the people who live there now call themselves Macedonians and their land Macedonia? Why would they abduct a completely Greek figure and make him a national hero?

The ancient Paionians may or may not have been Greek, but they certainly became Greekish, and they were never Slavs. They were also not Macedonians. Ancient Paionia was a part of the Macedonian empire. ... They may thus have become “Macedonian” temporarily, but none was ever “Macedonia”. The theft of Phillip and Alexander by a land that was never Macedonia cannot be justified.

The traditions of ancient Paionia could be adopted by the current residents of that geographical area with considerable justification. But the extension of the geographic term “Macedonia” to cover southern Yugoslavia [again a reference to the Republic of Macedonia] cannot. ...

(Continued on page 31)



Part I

Continued

We call upon you, Mr. President, to help – in whatever ways you deem appropriate – the government in Skopje [Skopje is the capital today of the Republic of Macedonia] to understand that it cannot build a national identity at the expense of historic truth. Our international society cannot survive when history is ignored, much less when history is fabricated.”

So let us be clear here. This letter is an attack against the national and ethno-cultural identity of Macedonians in general. They are a race of “Slavs”, connected to or inhabiting a “Slavic state” (which is how Mr. Rann referred to the Republic of Macedonia earlier in his speech) who have “fabricated” history and ‘stolen’ (“theft”) cultural symbols (both the symbol of Alexander the Great and the symbol by which they mark their ethnic and national identity, the word “Macedonia”) and do not have a right to self identify as Macedonians or to refer to their nation state as Macedonia. They are ‘thieving’ race of “Slavs”. This letter is referred to by Mr. Rann in his speech and he, with crystal clarity, makes it clear that he agrees with its contents in his speech.

In other words, the Premier’s comments were both implicitly and explicitly, based on race, ethnicity and on the national identity/name of the Republic of Macedonia, and indeed he utilised the offensive in this context, generic racial label “Slavic” in reference to the Republic of Macedonia (if it is a “Slavic state”; of course then, so also are the people who maintain its existence) – as does the letter he publically supported the content of. Moreover, the Premier appears to be claiming that his comments, which are aimed at denying the national identity/name of the Republic of Macedonia (in the context of his citation of and support for the letter and his reference to the “Slavic state”), are his “genuine beliefs”. This is an extraordinary attack against all Macedonians. However, not content with that, he goes on to claim that these views “represent fair comment on a matter of very real international public interest”. It is not “fair comment” to attempt to deny a people of their national name, and the very real international public interest lies in the protection and promotion of human rights, such as the right to self identification, not the other way around.

We repeat that we are not historical and cultural thieves; we are not a race of “slavs” who have “stolen” our ethno-cultural or National identity/ name. National societies/states and ethno-cultural identities are complex social constructions developed via selective valuing and relatively, over lengthy periods – they are not “stolen” superficial inventions; such group identities are of basic existential significance for many individuals and to attempt to undermine a whole people’s national and ethno-cultural identity (and on an essentialist racial premise, no less) is a very disturbing display, by the Premier of an Australian state, of racial discrimination.

The absurd and offensive nature of the material in the letter (which can be found at <http://macedonia-evidence.org/obama-letter.html>.) is beneath contempt. At the time this letter was released to the media, our committee wrote a full 14,000 word response to it and sent it to all those associated with it. We ask that you read our response (we have attached a copy along with a full copy of the letter Mr. Rann cites) because it makes even clearer just how offensive Mr. Rann’s comments were - including his usage of the term “Slav” in reference to the Republic of Macedonia and thereby, in reference to all the citizens inhabiting and connected to that country.

LEGAL QUESTIONS

We of course agree with your finding that the comments made by Mr Rann would satisfy the elements of section 18C(1)(a), in that they were reasonably likely, in all the circumstances, to offend, insult, humiliate or intimidate members of the Macedonian Community.

This complaint, the response by the Macedonian Community of Australia in their public expressions of outrage and condemnation of the comments made by Mr Rann is clearly evidence of that. The offensiveness, insult, humiliation and intimidation is perhaps even amplified in this case by the fact that Mr Rann was at the time (and still is) the Premier of South Australia. In fact, as the Premier, he effectively put the authority of his State (South Australia) behind his comments.

We feel it is important to note here that by section 18B of the *Racial Discrimination Act 1975* (Cth), if an act is done for one or more reasons, it is enough that one of the reasons is the race, colour or national or ethnic origin of a person or group of people, *whether or not it is the dominant reason or a substantial reason for doing the act*.

While some people might argue that Mr. Rann’s comments were not dominantly racially based, the evidence we have provided above, certainly demonstrates that they were an aspect of his speech.

An important question however, is whether Mr Rann was aware that in making his comments they would be offensive, insulting, humiliating or intimidating to Macedonian people or members of the Macedonian Community. There can be no question that Mr. Rann was aware of the contents of the letter he cites and that he wholeheartedly agrees with it. He makes that clear in his speech (“the real history of Macedonia”). It contains the “Greek cause” that the Premier supports – which is an attempt to deny the right of the Macedonian people to call

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themselves and their state, Macedonian. Moreover his premise for doing this, is that we are a race of “Slavs” attempting to “steal” historical and cultural symbols (the word “Macedonia” and images of Alexander the Great).

In *Hagan v Trustees of the Toowoomba Sports Ground Trust* [2000] FCA 1615, Drummond J effectively articulated the relevant test to satisfy the second element as requiring a *causal relationship between the reason for the doing of the act and the race of the “target” person or group* [at para 16]. The key words in the legislation being “because of”.

In *Creek v Cairns Post Pty Ltd* [2001] FCA 1007, Kiefel J described the test for satisfying “because of” in the context of that case as being “whether *anything* suggests race as a factor” [at para 28]. Subsequently in *Jones v Scully* [2002] FCA 1080 Hely J followed that formulation [see para 114]. It should be noted that both of those cases related to the publication of certain materials. In the present case the impugned act relates to certain comments made by Mr Rann.

Perhaps the most obvious and recent case to deal with these provisions is *Toben v Jones* [2003] FCAFC 137. Carr J elaborated on the test set out in *Hagan* at para 30. Both citing and borrowing from his words, the following can be said: As a general proposition, the words “because of” form the first part of a response to the question “why”? So, in the present context, the question being, why did Mr Rann make the comments that he did?; and was one reason for such comments being made the racial/ethnic origin of the Macedonian people/community or some of the people? The assessment of the reason/s therefore, being an objective one, but without excluding any evidence of the relevant intention or motive [para 31]. In other words, the context behind the impugned act is also important.

What was the context in which Mr Rann made his comments? He was making comments in support of the “Greek cause” as elaborated in the letter he cites. This is a cause that in essence is hoping to take away the national and ethno-cultural identity of Macedonians – Macedonians who do not consider themselves to be Greek; because they are a race of “Slavs”, who thereby, do not have the right to self identify as Macedonians or utilise the symbol of Alexander the Great, as this amounts to “stealing” on the part of this race of “Slavs”. This cause has been nurtured over many years by the continued denials of the Greek State (and members of the Greek Community in Australia) that ethnic Macedonians exist. It is a conviction that has been established through the progressive annihilation of anything ethno-distinctly Macedonian within Greece, such as the often violent assimilation and ‘Hellenisation’ programs undertaken by Greece (through laws enacted for the purpose) against its Macedonian minority. Greek laws have forced the re-naming of the names of the Macedonian people, of their cemeteries, their churches, the Macedonian names of various geographic landmarks, such as towns, villages, rivers, mountains etc... Essentially, anything considered distinctly Macedonian. It is a position that continues to be put into practice today by the Greek State through the consistent violation of the human rights of the Macedonian minority in Greece (all of this is documented in the attachment to our main submission). Therefore, what cannot be dismissed is the existential questions that surround the issue that Mr Rann was making his comments on. In this context, the comments made by Mr Rann were clearly concerned to challenge the existence of the *Macedonian people per se*. His comments were particularly concerned with historical interpretations that concern the *Macedonian people*. His comments concern events in history and cultural symbols that are of great significance to the *Macedonian people*. There is no doubt that Mr Rann would have been aware of this in making his comments.

In our view, the tenor of Mr Rann’s comments were to offend, insult, humiliate and/or intimidate *Macedonian people* or members of the Macedonian Community by perpetuating the desire to force ethnic Macedonians to relinquish their identity by propagating a position that deems anything to do with Macedonia and *Macedonians* as being Greek and borne of some Hellenic ideology; and by asserting that those Macedonians who claim a distinct ethnic Macedonian identity, are really a race of “Slavs” attempting to “steal” historical and cultural symbols. The comments made by Mr Rann, in the context in which he made them, were plainly calculated to convey a message about *Macedonian people*. Therefore it is sufficient to conclude that *at least* one reason the comments were made by Mr Rann was because of the race/ethnic origin of *Macedonian people*.

Whilst the questions of the satisfaction of sub-sections 18C(1)(a) and (b) are different and separate enquiries, as Allsop J also stated in *Toben v Jones* [at para 154], ‘the material relevant to one may be relevant [to] the other’. Indeed, if something is obviously offensive, that may, in the circumstances, assist a conclusion that the act was because of the race/ethnic origin of the other person or of some or all of the people in the group (ie: Macedonians or members of the Macedonian Community in Australia). In the present case, it is our view that Mr Rann’s comments were so calculated and so clearly offensive, insulting, humiliating and/or intimidating to *Macedonian people* that this in itself assists in demonstrating that his motives in making his comments were because of the race/ethnic origin of the *Macedonian people*.

With sincerity and on behalf of the Australian Macedonian Human Rights Committee,

George Vlahov
PRESIDENT

Vasko Nastevski.
SECRETARY

Part I

Continued

“In our view, the tenor of Mr Rann’s comments were to offend, insult, humiliate and/or intimidate Macedonian people or members of the Macedonian Community by perpetuating the desire to force ethnic Macedonians to relinquish their identity by propagating a position that deems anything to do with Macedonia and Macedonians as being Greek and borne of some Hellenic ideology”

Part II

Notice of Termination from the AHRC

"I am satisfied that it is arguable that the 'act' was reasonably likely, in all the circumstances, to offend or insult another person or a group of people. Those arguably likely, in all of the circumstances, to be offended or insulted are individuals and groups of people of Macedonian national or ethnic origin, including members of AMHRC."
- Catherine Branson Q.C.

On the 25th of August 2010 Commissioner Catherine Branson QC., President of the Australian Human Rights Commission issued a termination notice in response to our final submission. We shall now quote her decision from pages 3 to 4 of the Termination Notice:

My Decision

Under the Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986 (AHRCA), I may decide to terminate a complaint if I am satisfied that the complaint is lacking in substance.

I have carefully considered all the information that has been provided and I am satisfied that this complaint is lacking in substance within the meaning of the AHRCA. Therefore, I have terminated the complaint under section 46PH(1)(c) of the AHRCA.

Reasons for the Decision

I agree that it would be open to me to find that Mr Rann, otherwise than in private, did an 'act' that was reasonably likely, in all of the circumstances, to offend or insult another person or group of people. The relevant 'act' was the making by him, at a Greek community event in Adelaide, of a statement that could be understood to assert that the political leadership of the Republic of Macedonia, or alternatively the State of the Republic of Macedonia, has or is seeking to steal (in the sense of 'appropriate') the Greek nation's history or culture.

I am satisfied that it is arguable that the 'act' was reasonably likely, in all the circumstances, to offend or insult another person or a group of people. Those arguably likely, in all of the circumstances, to be offended or insulted are individuals and groups of people of Macedonian national or ethnic origin, including members of AMHRC.

Accordingly, I have given consideration to whether it is reasonably arguable that the 'act' was done because of the national or ethnic origin of some or all of the people in that group. The approach that I have adopted is to ask if there is anything to suggest that the national or ethnic origin of some or all of the people in the group was a factor in Mr Rann's decision to make the statement (i.e. to do the 'act').

For the following reasons I am not satisfied that it is reasonably arguable that the national or ethnic origin of some or all of the people in the group was a factor in Mr Rann's decision to make the statement. I do not consider it reasonably arguable that Mr Rann intended his statement to convey, nor do I consider it reasonably arguable that it does in fact convey, that, in whole or part because of who they are, people of Macedonian national or ethnic origin (as opposed to the political leadership or the State of the Republic of Macedonia) have appropriated, or have an inherent tendency to appropriate, the history or culture of other nations generally or of the Greek nation in particular. To the extent that it may be relevant, I conclude that nothing in the evidence before me suggests that Mr Rann intended to challenge the existence of the Macedonian people. In my view, nothing suggests that Mr Rann's statement was motivated by anything other than his willingness to share with the South Australian Greek community his views on the controversial issue of entitlement to use the symbol of Alexander the Great.

I am therefore satisfied that the complaint is lacking in substance. I have for this reason considered it appropriate to terminate the complaint.

Part III

Our final comments on the Rann Affair

A Very Questionable Decision

In our opinion this decision is not only a bad one, it does not really even attempt to address fundamental aspects of the issues we raised in our final submission to the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC). The essence of the matter can be reduced to simply this: it is our contention that the meaning of Rann's comments is that anyone who is not an *ethnic* Greek, cannot claim to be a real Macedonian or is not permitted to link their society to the Ancient Macedonians. Therefore, if they do make such a claim, by for example, erecting a statue of Alexander the Great, they are "stealing" – they are historical and cultural thieves. Now, let us remind ourselves again, what is the premise of the accusation? That we Macedonians are not *ethnic* Greeks and moreover, as we demonstrated in our submission, it is implied by Rann that we are "Slavs". In our view there can be no question that his comments were based, at the very least, in part (which is all that is required to satisfy the law), upon ethnicity, nationality and race.

Mediation

Never-the-less, it is extremely important to note that according to the Commissioner of the

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AHRC, our complaint did satisfy one of the two requirements necessary for it to have been upheld. We here quote the relevant passage from page three of the Commissioner's decision:

"I am satisfied that it is arguable that the 'act' was reasonably likely, to offend or insult another person or group of people. Those arguably likely, in all of the circumstances, to be offended or insulted are individuals and groups of people of Macedonian national or ethnic origin, including members of the AMHRC."

The AHRC complaints procedure is designed to operate through a conciliation process, where the parties involved in the complaint talk through the issues with the help of someone impartial and settle the matter on their own terms. According to advice received by our committee from a very experienced Senior Counsel (SC), considering that the Commissioner of the AHRC found that we satisfied part of the complaint, there should at least have been an attempt made by the AHRC to organise a conciliation meeting. To the best of our knowledge, the AHRC did not at any point make any such attempt.

Emasculation of the Australian Human Rights Commission

To an extent, while the AHRC's management of our case was very disappointing; it was also not entirely surprising. The Australian Human Rights Commission (formerly the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission), was originally established by the *Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act 1986* (Cth). This is a national independent statutory government body that has responsibility for inquiring into complaints made regarding alleged breaches of human rights under Australia's discrimination legislation. Its mandate suggests a responsibility for protecting and promoting the human rights of all Australians, as well as for promoting an understanding and acceptance of the responsibility of Australians to respect each others human rights.

However, severe limitations upon what was formerly the HREOC were dramatically set in the High Court case *Brandy v Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission* (1995). The Court held that lodgement of determinations made by the HREOC in the Federal Court and their enforcement as Federal Court Orders to be invalid. With reference to the separation of powers established under Chapter III of the *Constitution*, the Court concluded that only Federal Courts could exercise judicial power. The HREOC being an administrative body could not be vested with such authority. The Court stated that "... [the provisions] which combine to make a determination of the Commission binding, authoritative and enforceable, *invalidly purport to invest judicial power in the Commission.*" [Emphasis added]

Thus it is not surprising that the AHRC has become increasingly timid; never-the-less, it should at least have made an attempt to organise a conciliation session. We, in the AMHRC, do of course have the option of pursuing this matter further, through the Federal Court System. However, while we have been advised by Senior Counsel that we do indeed have a strong case, there are no guarantees. Moreover, the process would in all likelihood drag out for years and the costs involved, would amount to well over one hundred thousand dollars. Basically, the emasculation of the AHRC has made human rights justice, in our context, something that is ultimately available, only to the very wealthy. It is certainly not something that our organisation can afford to pursue at this time.

We recently wrote to Premier Rann, requesting that he meet with us so that we could at least present our side of the debate and attempt to resolve the matter privately. *To date, we have not even received an acknowledgement of receipt of our letter.*

False Media Reports

The following article appeared in an edition of *The Australian* online newspaper:

'Forthright' Rann cleared of racism

From: *The Australian*

June 29, 2010 12:00AM

SOUTH Australian Premier Mike Rann has been cleared of racially vilifying the people of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

The Human Rights Commission found Mr Rann had no case to answer for claiming the Macedonian state was stealing Greek history and culture, an accusation the Premier made in a speech at a Greek festival in Adelaide last year. In the speech, Mr Rann also accused Macedonian President Gjorge Ivanov of "stirring up trouble in a most dangerous way" with Greece.

The comments sparked a complaint to the HRC by South Australia's Macedonian community but judge Catherine Branson ruled it to be "lacking in substance".

Mr Rann said he abhorred racism and his criticisms were directed at the policies of the Ivanov govern-

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Part III

(Continued from page 34)

ment, not Macedonians.

Continued

"I stand on my record of racial and ethnic tolerance. I will not be intimidated by anyone from speaking forthrightly on behalf of historical truth," Mr Rann said.

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/nation/forthright-rann-cleared-of-racism/story-e6frg6nf-1225885416372>

It is important to note the date of the article, which is June 29 2010. As we indicated above, Commissioner Branson made her decision on August 25 2010. Who was the source of this false claim? Was it Rann? The article seems to suggest that it was. Maybe the author of the article is quoting Rann out of context?

However, on July 3 2010, still well before Commissioner Branson made her decision on August 25 2010, the Australian Greek newspaper, *Neos Kosmos*, published an online article containing the following sentence:

"This week Lachlan Parker, spokesman for Premier Mike Rann confirmed to Neos Kosmos that the complaint had been dismissed." <http://neoskosmos.com/news/en/Rann-cleared-by-commission>

That is, that our complaint against Rann at the AHRC had been dismissed around seven weeks prior to when it was *actually* dismissed. Was Rann's official representative, Mr. Lachlan Parker, misquoted? If he was accurately quoted, was he deliberately misinforming the media in an attempt to publically influence the AHRC? Or, if the quote is accurate, why was Mr. Parker so confident about a decision that had not yet been made?

Conclusion

The whole Rann affair has now raised a series of important questions. And certainly it is our committee's intention to present the false media reports to the Ombudsman's office, with a demand for a thorough investigation in to this disturbing and possibly very sinister aspect of the affair. We can add that we are in possession of more evidence in this regard, involving private correspondence – so we have decided not to publish it here, though we have every intention of also submitting it to the Ombudsman.

Whatever the result of such an investigation; one thing in our opinion is clear; the people of South Australia deserve to have someone much better than Rann, governing their state. In general, it is just as plain that human rights justice in Australia needs to be made more *affordable* and it really is necessary for the authorities to begin developing a Bill of Rights, in order to make human rights far more practical to pursue, than what they are at present.

By George Vlahov and Vasko Nastevski

A modern Macedonian master storyteller

Michael Seraphinoff

(Continued from page 22)

"Why are you laughing?" I asked him. I thought he hadn't heard me, but that wasn't true. As soon as we entered the gardens he suddenly stopped, pointing toward the setting sun and said, "There the water is there. The Big Water! There it is. Look! Why don't you believe me, comrade?" he asked affronted, and started giggling. "Okay, come on, you blind, little bird, open your eyes,

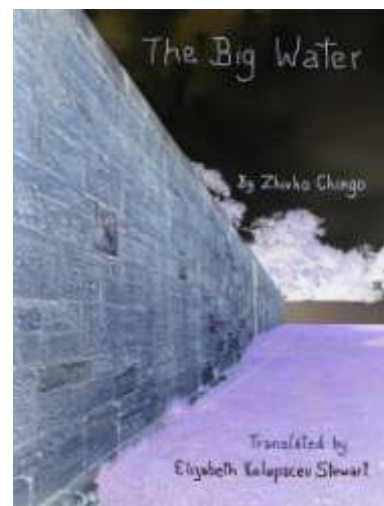
look, over there, there where it is shining like a flame, there..."

He spoke with such excitement, such joy that you just had to believe him. Curse me, he saw it, he already had it in his eyes. It was wicked, inhuman not to believe him. It was as though each word was a strong sapling. All at once he ignited in me a strong fire which my heart did not recognize until then. Curse me, I fell about a thousand

times and picked myself up again from that road.

I looked over to the side where the sun was setting. I was looking for the Big Water. "What can I do with you when you are blind?" he said, smiling, rushing, happily waving his arms around as though he was about to take flight.

(from *The Big Water*, Politecon Publications, Five Dock, NSW, Australia, 2004, pp. 14-15)



2010 Melbourne

MACEDONIAN FILM FESTIVAL



21st - 24th OCTOBER

**Hoyts Melbourne Central
& Hoyts Northland**

see website for session times and more details

www.macedonianfilmfestival.com.au

contact us on:

info@macedonianfilmfestival.com.au



About the AMHRC

Established in 1984 the Australian Macedonian Human Rights Committee is a nongovernmental organization that informs and advocates to governments, international institutions and broader communities about combating discrimination and promoting human rights. Our aspiration is to ensure that Macedonian communities and other excluded groups throughout the world are recognised, respected and afforded equitable treatment.

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Special Thanks to

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