

# MACEDONIANS IN AMERICA



THEIR LIVES AND STRUGGLES  
DURING THE 20TH CENTURY

VICTOR  
SINADINOSKI

## 1. Macedonians on a Mission

When the notorious Macedonian rebel leader Jane (Yah-ne) Sandanski, along with his band of Macedonian freedom fighters, whisked away the American missionary Ellen Stone into the rugged Macedonian mountains to ransom her release for U.S. dollars, the affair instantly generated an American frenzy and passionate curiosity. The 19<sup>th</sup> century had just given way to the 20<sup>th</sup> century and America was evolving at an unprecedented pace. Workers' wages had nearly doubled since the Civil War ended; railroad tracks connected towns across the country and automobiles began replacing horses on roads; millions of immigrants were pouring in from all corners of Europe; telephones and telegraphs were allowing

people to communicate instantaneously over great distances; women and minorities were steadily gaining a wide range of rights and freedoms; and American foreign relations was transitioning from an era of isolationism into a new era of interventionism.

While America was frantically weaving through different social, cultural and technological phases, the Macedonian scene was quite different. Revolutionary fervor had taken the land by storm and the Macedonians were relentlessly resisting the hold of their Ottoman masters, who had been playing puppeteer with them for five centuries. The Macedonian Christian peasants had been little more than serfs and slaves in their own country, merely existing with ancient technologies and ideas, virtually unaffected by the Renaissance and Industrial ages that had consumed the West.

The most significant Macedonian rebel group in these years was the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (IMRO), a large and domineering underground revolutionary force. Its network extended over nearly every Christian village in Macedonia, and in many respects, it was a peoples' movement inspired by socialist ideals. Most Macedonians grew to support the IMRO not simply because of its political leanings, but because it promised freedom from the cruelty of the Turks. Yet, internal divisions and Bulgarian interference at the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century stranded the IMRO rebels

with no operating funds. Thus, they resorted to kidnapping foreigners for ransom in hopes of securing financial resources for their ambitious endeavors.

Ellen Stone was very knowledgeable with the situation in Macedonia by the time of her capture in 1901 because she had been living there since 1878, working as a missionary for the American Board of Foreign Missions.<sup>1</sup> Born in Roxbury, Massachusetts<sup>2</sup> in the late 1840s,<sup>3</sup> spreading the message of Christ and Protestantism to Macedonia became her life's work. However, in early September of 1901, as she was travelling in a region familiar to her and other missionaries just outside of Bansko, Stone was abducted by a band of men dressed in the costumes of Bashibazouks, the cruelest and most despicable of Turkish irregular soldiers. It was not long before Stone (and the American government, for that matter) realized that her kidnappers were not the typical Balkan bandits, but rather Macedonian "men of influence and education"<sup>4</sup> who were looking to finance their revolution against the Turks.

The Macedonians wanted to be rid of Stone within a few weeks of capturing her, if possible. But failed negotiations and logistical matters severely hampered those efforts. The affair – being the first international kidnapping scandal for the Americans – became a spectacle that included nonstop press coverage of Stone and the general situation in Macedonia, along with months of diplomatic maneuvering, which even

included the interjections of President Theodore Roosevelt. The whole scandal, from that point forward, guaranteed American attention on the Macedonian plight for freedom and independence. Modern Macedonia had finally secured a position on the US strategic geopolitical map; and whether reacting positively or negatively to the Macedonian situation, the American public was becoming acquainted with the Macedonians.

Our story, however, is not about the Macedonian rebels or the Macedonian political situation, and it is not about the American missionary who eventually went on to be a defender of the Macedonian quest for freedom and independence. When Sandanski's band of Macedonians kidnapped Stone, the strong-willed missionary was not the only captive. With Stone, the rebels grabbed a pregnant Macedonian woman by the name of Katerina Tsilka.

Before Katerina was Mrs. Tsilka, she was Miss Stephanova. Born in Bansko around 1869,<sup>5</sup> at the age of 13<sup>6</sup> she refused to marry the man her parents had chosen for her. Eventually, she trekked to the United States in 1892,<sup>7</sup> as did all three of her brothers within the following decade. Her initial exposure to America, however, was not pleasant. In her memoirs, she detailed her experience with the cruel woman who had promised her a job in New York City:

*"I traveled with the money I had saved during my work as a teacher, which was just sufficient to bring me to New York. I*

*was punctual for the appointment, white kerchief and all, but nobody came to meet me. For more than an hour I waited there, embarrassed by the crowd, painfully conscious of the few dollars I had in my pocket. Finally I went to a cab, showed the cab driver the address of the boarding school and asked him whether he could take me to it for a dollar. So I was taken to the place, rang the bell, and when the so-called principal appeared I attempted to embrace and kiss her but she drew back and blushed as if annoyed. I swallowed my disappointment and tried to be pleasant but she remained cold and distant.*

*“The address she had given me was a kind of office. After the preliminary exchange of questions and answers she took me to her home and to what was to be my room. It was a pleasant room, nicely furnished, and very soon I forgot all the unpleasantness of the day and went to bed. The next morning I woke up early, put on a nice dress in which I thought I looked suitable for my future functions (I thought I was going to teach). But the stern old lady said it wouldn’t do and gave me to put on an old dress in which I looked positively ridiculous. Some girls look well in anything they put on, but this was not my case. Then she told me that for the moment I was to tend to the house, to clean, wash and cook. In brief, I realized that she had taken me not to teach, but to be an ordinary servant. The place was not a boarding school at all; she had three or four girls to whom she gave private lessons, that was all.*

*“For three months that lady treated me like a slave; she spoke to me harshly, fed me poorly, and besides the housework, she gave me to do piles of drawings, when she found I was rather good at it. Later I learned that she sold the drawings.*

*“One day, as I was going to a nearby shop, a pleasant-looking lady stopped me and asked me whether I wouldn’t like to go to her house right by the corner and have a nice chat together. ‘I have been watching you for some time,’ she said. ‘You are a stranger and you do not look well; you do not seem to have any friends, either. Would you like me to be your friend? Could I do anything to help you?’ Her manner was so frank and open, her face so gentle that at once I felt I could confide in her unreservedly.*

*“She introduced herself as Miss Austin, asked what my name was, and asked me to tell her everything about myself. ‘We know the woman with whom you are staying,’ she said. ‘She has had other victims like you. Some of them ran away, we do not know where, some we succeeded in rescuing. She always takes girls who come from abroad, who know nothing about this country, and have no friends and uses them as servants without paying them anything. Won’t you stay with us for a while until we find something more decent for you?’*

*“I told her that I had come to America to improve my education, but at the same time I had to find some kind of work for my living. She told me to go to them as soon as I could manage; that same day or the next.*

*“That evening I went back to the old lady, cleaned the house, prepared the table for supper, packed my trunk and waited for her to come home. When I told her that I was leaving, she got very angry, said that I was mean and ungrateful, that I had been left in her charge and she wouldn’t let me go. I only smiled. I felt triumphant, but also a little sorry for leaving her alone to her*

*life without joy. But just the same, the following morning, I took my things and went to the Austins.*<sup>8</sup>

Free and happy in her new home, the Austins kept good on their promise and arranged for Katerina to further her education. Dwight L. Moody, founder of the Northfield Seminary for Young Ladies (a school in Massachusetts established in 1879 to educate girls with limited financial resources<sup>9</sup>), invited her to study at Northfield on a scholarship.<sup>10</sup> Upon graduating, Katerina worked as a nurse at the Presbyterian Hospital training school<sup>11</sup> in New York City and then moved to the Adirondack Mountain region of New York. While there, she met another American-educated Macedonian who just happened to also be preparing for a missionary abroad. This Macedonian's name was Gregory Tsilka,<sup>12</sup> a preacher and "a big brawny fellow" who spoke "excellent English."<sup>13</sup> The two soon married and traveled together to the Balkans performing missionary work as the new century rang in.<sup>14</sup>

Unfortunately, Katerina Tsilka's missionary work rather quickly gave way to the mission of the Macedonian rebels: to capture somebody of importance in hopes to secure a lofty reward. The rebels never thought that Tsilka would be worth anything in addition to Stone. But they carried Tsilka along so that Stone had a companion with whom she would be comfortable and who could provide efficient translation between Macedonian and



English. Sandanski and his band did not know, however, that Tsilka was nearly six months pregnant.<sup>15</sup>

Stone initially feared for her life. While the Macedonians treated her kindly, she knew that brigands were not afraid to kill their hostages if ransoms were not paid. Her ransom was quite high (originally \$112,000<sup>16</sup>) and after several months of captivity, she felt that it would never be paid. But as hard as Stone had it, Tsilka certainly had it harder for the very fact that she was pregnant and gave birth while in the rebels' custody. For seven weeks, she had to nurse her daughter while the rebels moved them from one hut to the next, up one mountain and down to the next. Being that they were isolated from the villages and society below, Tsilka did not have the proper amenities and clothing for her newborn daughter, so she used the "rough material" meant for a mountaineer's leggings to wrap her baby in.<sup>17</sup>

Marching around pregnant and giving birth without proper food, clothing and medical supplies was certainly not a pleasant ordeal for Tsilka, especially after having been acclimated to the relatively easy life in America. But at least upon being freed after six months of captivity, she had found some fame and a temporary occupation when returning to America. Newspapers would often report of her presence, such as when she passed through Hannibal, Missouri in 1903,<sup>18</sup> or when she delivered lectures to a variety of organizations, such as her addresses to the Ladies'

Foreign Missionary Society in Grand Rapids, Michigan in 1904,<sup>19</sup> the first Chautauqua assembly in Silver Lake, Ohio in 1905,<sup>20</sup> and the South Church in St. Johnsbury, Vermont in the same year, where tickets to her last lecture before returning to the Balkans sold for 25 cents.<sup>21</sup> From New Jersey to the Wild West, observers of her speeches noted that Tsilka had a good command of the English language and only spoke with a “slight foreign accent”,<sup>22</sup> which in addition to her prettiness, “added to the charm” of her lecture.<sup>23</sup>

For Tsilka’s younger brother, Constantine Stephanove, the outlook was different – perhaps his life story did not generate as much of a spectacle as his sister’s six months with brigands, but it was certainly interesting. Around the same time that Sandanski’s rebels were bartering Tsilka and her baby for money, holding them in caves or shacks in the mountains far from the sight of Turkish soldiers, Stephanove was basking with pride, having just recently secured his Master’s degree from Yale University in New Haven. He came to America as a teenager and in those initial years he worked at a dairy farm in Canterbury, Connecticut, where in addition to working 16-hour days, he learned the English language. He then enrolled into the Monson Academy in Massachusetts and after graduating in 1895, Yale accepted him as an undergraduate student. He completed his Bachelor’s degree in 1899 and then

received his graduate degree in the summer of 1901, just a couple of months before his sister was kidnapped in Macedonia.<sup>24</sup>

Stephanove had experienced his own hardships, even if they did not compare in severity and uneasiness as his sister's hardships as a pregnant hostage. Graduating from the nation's top university was no walk in the park and Stephanove did so with a persistent work ethic. He would attend classes and study from 7:30 a.m. until the late afternoon, sleep from six in the evening to midnight, and then work the graveyard shift as a trolley car conductor (a job he begged to be given)<sup>25</sup> to pay for his schooling.<sup>26</sup> According to Stephanove, however, working his way through school was easy compared to his early farming days in Connecticut, where he started work at four in the morning and only finished his day when the sun would set.<sup>27</sup>

But his hardships were soon to rival his sister's. After Yale, he trekked to Germany and enrolled in Berlin University to pursue doctoral studies in philosophy. In early 1903, he decided to visit his family in Macedonia, who he had not seen for nearly a decade. While there, Stephanove served as a guide and interpreter for John MacDonald, a news correspondent with the London News, showing him the devastated and rebellious regions of Macedonia. The Turkish authorities then used that activity as pretense to throw Stephanove into prison for

collaborating with the Macedonian rebels. The authorities refused to set a trial date and for six months he rotted in a Turkish prison.<sup>28</sup> The English and American consuls eventually helped secure his release in the summer,<sup>29</sup> but not before he adopted a version of the Yale fight song of his 1899 graduating class as a national song of freedom for the Macedonians.<sup>30</sup>

After the failure of the Macedonian uprising, he returned to America in October 1903 as a Macedonian delegate for the Macedonian revolutionary organization. His aim was to convince President Roosevelt and Secretary of State Hay “to intervene in the Balkans, or at least to remonstrate with the sultan.”<sup>31</sup> “We want this government to cooperate with the other powers,” said Stephanove. “We want all the powers to demand the appointments of a Christian governor [in Macedonia], who shall be responsible to the powers and not to Turkey.”<sup>32</sup> To American officials and the press, he insisted that the Macedonian rebellion would continue until their goals were achieved. “We could easily put 100,000 men in the field if we had the arms and ammunition.”<sup>33</sup> But the Assistant Secretary of the State Department, Francis Loomis, told Stephanove that the U.S. would favorably support only peaceful movements to relieve the Macedonians’ suffering.<sup>34</sup>

Stephanove had more success with religious and charitable organizations after demonstrating how

Turkish brutalities resulted in a great need of aid for the 100,000 homeless Macedonian women, children and elderly.<sup>35</sup> Miss Clara Barton, head of the American Red Cross, responded to Stephanove's appeal by saying "it would be a humane and noble thing for the American people to undertake to relieve the suffering in Macedonia" and that "the situation would seem to require a systematic, substantial and immediate effort on the part of the people generally."<sup>36</sup> Stephanove additionally traveled to all of the major East Coast cities, managing to gather the support of several Americans for the Macedonian Cause, such as Reverend Joseph H. Twitchell and Bishop Brewster in Hartford,<sup>37</sup> as well as Seth Low, a former mayor of New York City, and John S. Kennedy, a well-known and respected millionaire in New York.<sup>38</sup> Partly because of Stephanove's relentless efforts, humanitarian aid did indeed find its way into Macedonia as the harsh winter stormed down on the Macedonian refugees.

His exemplary academic pursuits, his tenacious work effort, and his dedication to his Macedonian homeland was an example set for all Macedonians coming to America. In a time when Turks were slaughtering Macedonians, and when Bulgarians, Greeks and Serbians were struggling to conquest Macedonia, confusion and ignorance flourished among Western writers, who were bombarded with propaganda suggesting that the Macedonians were

really Bulgarians, Greeks or Serbians. Stephanove refuted this in the only way a modest but intelligent and proud Macedonian could: “I am proud to be known as a Greek, but in truth I am not one. I am a Macedonian.”<sup>39</sup>

Stephanove eventually temporarily settled in Macedonia, but upon Macedonia’s division in 1913, he became a Professor of English at the University of Sofia in Bulgaria,<sup>40</sup> where he slowly became incorporated into the Bulgarian propaganda machine, serving as an international news correspondent in the Balkans during the 1920s.<sup>41</sup> During this era of his life, he would often switch between pro-Macedonian and pro-Bulgarian views on the Macedonia situation, such as with publications like “We, the Macedonians”, “The Bulgarians and Anglo-Saxondom”, and “The Question of Thrace.” He even published the first Bulgarian-English dictionary.<sup>42</sup> However, this was a period when Macedonia had been divided into three pieces, and most Macedonians felt they had no choice but to choose a side that they thought could offer the most protection for the Macedonians’ interests.

Unlike most Macedonians, Stephanove was not an Orthodox Christian. His family had converted to Protestantism by the American missionaries (such as Ellen Stone) who had been in Macedonia for several decades. Not many Macedonians left their Orthodox faith and identity. For Stephanove’s family, however, it was not a radical step – his great-grandfather had

been a priest and the American Missionary had a station in his town.<sup>43</sup> Their devotion to Christ and the Bible made missionary work seem a suitable endeavor for them.

Another Macedonian-American who left Orthodoxy for Protestantism was Demetrius Elias Constantinstinzcias Vishanoff. Vishanoff was from Solun, Macedonia (present day Thessalonica, Greece) and claimed to be the first Macedonian to have converted from Orthodoxy to Protestantism. He furthermore claimed to be descended from a noble family,<sup>44</sup> stating that he was the second born son in the noble House of Vishanoff.<sup>45</sup> While none of this can be confirmed, he did indeed have an interesting career in America upon arriving here in 1885 after his father disinherited him from their fortunes for converting from Orthodoxy<sup>46</sup> to Protestantism.<sup>47</sup>

In the 1890s and the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, he traveled around Pennsylvania and other states preaching the Gospel to the Macedonian immigrants and others. Perhaps no other Macedonian-American of that era gave as many sermons as he did or toured America preaching about Macedonia as often as he did. In Sterling, Illinois in 1891, he gave a lecture on “religious, social and political customs in Macedonia,” delivered in an accent that was “peculiar and yet sufficiently Americanized”;<sup>48</sup> and in Germantown, Philadelphia in 1898, he gave a lecture entitled “The Manners and Customs of Macedonia”.<sup>49</sup> He mostly

concentrated his efforts in Pennsylvania, New York, Delaware and New Jersey because in the mid-1890s he was attending Drew Theological Seminary, located in New Jersey.<sup>50</sup>

When Vishanoff announced and advertised his speeches, he declared he would be delivering his sermon in the “Macedonian language.” When the crowd would likely contain Bulgarians in addition to Macedonians, he would preach in both the “Macedonian and Bulgarian languages.” When the crowd would also likely have plenty of Americans, he would dress in his nobleman costume and sing songs in Macedonian and Bulgarian.<sup>51</sup> Announcements for his lecture often read like this one from 1908: “He will appear in his nobleman’s costume, will sing in Macedonian and Bulgarian languages, and will also exhibit some Macedonian and Bulgarian curiosities after his address.”<sup>52</sup>

Vishanoff mostly performed at churches<sup>53</sup> and would never charge admission for his lectures, but he would always accept donations afterwards in order to pay his way through school.<sup>54</sup> It worked because he graduated from Northwestern University, the Drew Theological Seminary, and medical school in Philadelphia with earnings from his lectures.<sup>55</sup> Finding that he could spread the word of Macedonia and make money, he continued giving lectures for many years.

In 1902, Vishanoff thought that promoting Macedonia and earning money while doing it would



be easier if he had a magic lantern. A magic lantern was a rudimentary type of projection device, generally called a stereopticon, which storytellers often used during their lectures. Vishanoff had seen Reverend Dr. Evans use a magic lantern at a lecture in Sayre, Pennsylvania and asked Evans if he could have it. Evans thought that the \$400 device had become too bulky for him, so he sold it to Vishanoff for \$106. The magic lantern was missing one small piece and Evans thus sent word to England (where it was manufactured) to ship over the missing part. In his correspondences with Vishanoff throughout the following year, Vishanoff never complained to him about the machine.

The next year, Vishanoff attended a lecture given by Evans and then met up with him at a friend's house. Evans showed the missing piece to Vishanoff, who said he would pick it up the following day when Evans came to Sayre to give another lecture. When Evans arrived in Sayre, however, it was not Vishanoff but the police chief who was waiting for him. The chief charged Evans with defrauding Vishanoff for selling him a worthless lantern and presenting it as new.<sup>56</sup> Evans then initiated counter proceedings against Vishanoff, and the suits were finally dropped after they settled the matter out of court.<sup>57</sup>

Whether Vishanoff indeed felt cheated or simply wanted to squeeze money out of Evans has never been made clear. The incident, however, did not hold

him back. Like Stephanove, he was an early Macedonian immigrant in America who not only was living the American dream, but was also holding on to his Macedonian identity. Vishanoff was still giving speeches on his native Macedonia through the late 1930s and it is impossible to know how or if his speeches changed over his 45 years of lecturing.<sup>58</sup> Still, his dedication to missionary work and Protestantism must have been quite sincere, as the urge trickled down to his grandson, Paul Stephen Vishanoff, who performed missionary work in Tunisia during the 1960s with his wife and children.<sup>59</sup>

There is no evidence that Vishanoff and Stephanove crossed paths. But Stephanove did team up with another Ivy League educated Macedonian – Demetrius Furnajieff. Furnajieff, born in Bansko in 1866,<sup>60</sup> came to the United States in the late 1880s and by 1891 he was enrolled in Princeton, where his classmates nicknamed him ‘Furney’.<sup>61</sup> In those early years, he gave several lectures throughout the Northeast on Macedonia, such as one on ‘Turkish oppression in Macedonia at a church in New York,’<sup>62</sup> one on “The Young Men of Macedonia” at the YMCA building in Scranton, Pennsylvania,<sup>63</sup> and one on “The Present Social, Political and Religious Conditions of Macedonia” in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania in 1894.<sup>64</sup> Described as “an eloquent and scholarly speaker,”<sup>65</sup> he graduated from Princeton University in 1895 and the Theological Seminary at

Princeton in 1898,<sup>66</sup> and then became an ordained minister of the Presbyterian Church.<sup>67</sup>

He married Zorica Karaivanova, another Macedonian in New Jersey, in 1898 and together they performed missionary work in the Balkans. For several years, they were stationed in Kyustendil, Bulgaria, just outside of Macedonia. However, he returned to New York after the failure of the Ilinden Uprising along with another Macedonian by the name of Marco N. Popoff,<sup>68</sup> who was also a missionary and who had graduated from Hamilton College in New York<sup>69</sup> in 1890.<sup>70</sup> Popoff came to America around 1883 and became a candidate for the ministry in the Presbytery of Buffalo, New York.<sup>71</sup> In 1892, at a Presbyterian church in New York, he married a young Macedonian woman by the name of Marika Terzieva.<sup>72</sup>

Together, in the fall of 1903, Furnajieff and Popoff spoke to audiences in the U.S. about the conditions of Macedonia and the need to raise funds for their relief. “It is a very hard thing for Americans to understand and appreciate,” said Popoff, “the terrible state of Macedonia. I was witness but two weeks or so ago, to some of the conditions and they are almost indescribable. I saw at the monastery in Rilo,” he continued, “hundreds upon hundreds of refugees being cared for by the priests there, while outside in the open country were thousands of others who could not be taken care of for want of room. They will perish

by hundreds if something is not done for them.”<sup>73</sup> At another speech, he declared that “the Turk’s genius lay only in devising new means of torture,” such as by rolling hot eggs down a man’s bare chest until a certain ailment would develop.<sup>74</sup>

In 1904, Furnajieff joined Stephanove on speaking tours occasionally across America, and together they insisted “that unless speedy aid were forthcoming, the Macedonians, Servians, Bulgarians, and Greeks, now Christianized and fighting for Macedonia, would be wiped out and the country would go back 500 years.”<sup>75</sup> Other times, Furnajieff would team up with American pastors, such as Reverend Charles Wood and Reverend Floyd Tomkins in Philadelphia, where they acknowledged that “all the Macedonians need today is public sentiment of the Christian peoples of the world” and that “if we sent a gunboat to Beirut to rescue a consul, we can send one on this errand that shall fire a broadside that will make Turkey quite ready to carry out our desires.”<sup>76</sup> Most times, however, like Vishanoff, Furnajieff would go at it alone, such as in one of his lectures entitled “The Conflict Between the Cross and the Crescent in Macedonia,” where he explained to crowds of both Americans and Macedonian-Americans the “reason why Christian missions are not successful in Macedonia,” ascribing their failure to Macedonians’ “fear of the Turk” and “the great Christian powers doing their utmost to keep the land in a state of insurrection and encourage

friction between the Turkish Government and the Christians.”<sup>77</sup>

By 1905, Furnajieff was back in Kyustendil. Writing to his fellow Princeton classmates on the celebration of their ten-year reunion, he wrote: “No one of you fellows can imagine with what sadness I sit down to write these few lines, and the reason is that I am not able to come for the decennial celebration at dear old Princeton...I envy you fellows that are better situated than I am, and can get together to celebrate and renew old loves and fellowships. Please then remember Furney, and he’ll do the same.” He proceeded to talk about how he was thankful to be in the ministry, and that there was “no work like God’s work, and no hope like the Gospel hope.” He stressed that he wanted to do ministry work in his native Macedonia, but knew it was impossible to enter Macedonia under its present conditions as something other than a revolutionist. Furnajieff made clear that his previous visit to the United States in 1903 and 1904 was dampened by knowledge of “the famine among thousands of Macedonians, who were brought to starvation by the Sultan.”<sup>78</sup>

Eventually, Furnajieff’s wife Zorica came to America in 1913 and went on her own speaking tour to give Macedonian and Bulgarian perspectives on the Balkan Wars that had just taken place. She had been the head of Bulgaria’s Red Cross Nurses,<sup>79</sup> and she had come to appeal for aid to Bulgarians and

Macedonians, many who had found refuge in Bulgaria. She said that there were at least 12,000 Macedonian refugees in Sofia and that every Bulgarian city had Macedonian refugees,<sup>80</sup> with a total of 150,000 Macedonian refugees being in the country.<sup>81</sup> She often made some exaggerated claims, saying that the Balkan Wars were caused simply because the Macedonians in the Serbian occupied portion of Macedonia in 1913 were being forced to change their surnames to sound Serbian.<sup>82</sup> The Macedonians, she would continue, “appealed to their cousins” in Bulgaria for aid, which resulted in the Second Balkan War.<sup>83</sup> (In reality, the Second Balkan War took place because all Balkan countries, especially Bulgaria, were dissatisfied with how much Macedonian land they had ended up with after the First Balkan War.) Being that she was acting also as a representative of Bulgaria, and not just the Macedonians, many Americans eyed her claims with skepticism and were hesitant to help. One of New York’s wealthiest men refused to donate, saying: “Shall I help patch up wounded men so they can go back to their killing again?” But some were convinced to send aid, reasoning that women and children should not be forced to suffer because men were mad fools.<sup>84</sup>

Her husband returned to the U.S. again in 1914, shortly after the outbreak of World War I, and gave lectures on Macedonia, Bulgaria and the Balkans, as well as religious sermons. In just the month of

November in 1914, he delivered 45 speeches in churches and universities to a total of 10,000 eager listeners. Mr. Furnajieff was more successful in his tours than his wife after the Balkan Wars because he rarely focused on the issues between Greece, Bulgaria, Serbia and Macedonia, and he phrased the conflicts in the Balkans in the context of centuries of Muslim rule over Christians in the Balkans. “The Turks destroyed every school and church,” he would say, “for it was through education of the masses that the Balkans secured their freedom. Despite the accusations that the Balkans acted like savages in their war, one thing to their credit is that the Christian nations destroyed not a single church.”<sup>85</sup>

An even earlier American-educated missionary who spread the word of Christ and the situation of his native Macedonia was Trico Constantine (Teslitchkoff)<sup>86</sup> from Shtip, Macedonia. He was born in 1848 and came to the United States in the late 1870s (he was listed in the 1880 U.S. Census),<sup>87</sup> graduating from the Drew Theological Seminary in 1884. From that point forward he traveled often between the Balkans and the United States, mainly performing missionary work in Bulgaria and Macedonia.<sup>88</sup> But like many Macedonians of his period, he also employed efforts in support of the Macedonian Cause for liberation and freedom. In the *Christian Advocate*, a New York magazine, he penned an article that was published on August 20<sup>th</sup> in 1903, just a few weeks

after the start of the Macedonian Uprising, calling for autonomy for Macedonia. “The Macedonian question,” he said, “is not merely a question of political import and national aspirations, it has become a question of economics. Fully one-third of the officers in the Bulgarian army are Macedonians. The same is true with all the civil departments of the principality. The result is a competition with and crowding out the people of the principality by these undesirable desirables. If autonomy be given to Macedonia,” he continued, “many of the people who have been forced by oppression to take refuge in Bulgaria will gladly return to their native land.”<sup>89</sup>

These early Macedonians to the United States were not individuals looking simply to earn a quick dollar. They came for education, they came for religion, and most importantly, they came for an opportunity to better conditions for their fellow Macedonians suffering in the homeland. While most of these late 19<sup>th</sup> century arrivals did not permanently settle in America, they exposed the American people to a Macedonia that was just starting to wake up, and America exposed them to the future – a future that they carried over with them to their Macedonian brethren in the Balkans.



## 2. Coming to America

The failed Macedonian rebellion in 1903 resulted not only in a resounding defeat for Macedonian revolutionary aspirations, but also a devastating and demoralizing aftermath for ordinary Macedonian peasants. The Ottoman troops were murdering peasants and destroying villages that displayed even the slightest support for the revolution. Thousands were killed and several thousand more were thrown into prisons; tens of thousands moped around homeless within their own villages, and tens of thousands more fled into neighboring countries; and most crops had been ransacked or destroyed, leaving many Macedonians starving, desperate and unprepared to confront the approaching winter.

Five young men were in the same position as their fellow Macedonians – they were peasants from a

village that had witnessed much revolutionary activity and they had suffered the brutal consequences. The Turkish authorities destroyed their crops and then threw the five men in jail for suspicion of being involved in IMRO's rebellious activities. Together, these Macedonians devised a plan to escape – and they succeeded. Gathering whatever money and belongings they could, they fled Macedonia with the Sultan's troops behind them. Once in the safety of Bulgaria, they found that opportunities to better their lives were quite limited. They then decided to go as far away as possible, to a free land where they had heard of limitless opportunity and wealth. These five Macedonians used all their money to purchase one-way tickets to America; and in late October of 1903, they arrived in New York City without a penny between them. Through the kind help of others, they made it to Hazleton, Pennsylvania where they had planned to meet friends from the old country who had been living and working there and who had promised to help the men secure employment. However, upon arriving, their friends were absent – they had several weeks earlier moved on to other cities.<sup>90</sup>

The five Macedonian men, hungry and tired, were not entirely hopeless. They had other addresses of Macedonians. One resided in Galveston, Texas and the other in Denver, Colorado. One problem, of course, was that they could not afford the fare to either of those cities. And although having no money

was a problem that they had overcome several times before, they suddenly encountered a daunting realization: the sheer size of America was incomprehensible to them. “The refugees were under the impression that the United States was not much larger than Macedonia and had no idea that they would have to travel thousands of miles to reach Texas.”<sup>91</sup> How could a country so big exist? How could they survive in such a country, with no grasp of the English language, no money, and no understanding of a culture and society that was so different from their peasant and war-torn lifestyle in Macedonia? Where would they work? How would they live? When would they see their families again? When would they see Macedonia again? And not least of all, what would become of Macedonia, their motherland? Those were the questions that these five men, as well as all Macedonian immigrants, faced upon setting foot in America.

Most Macedonians arrived here not to obtain higher education or to become missionaries. Rather, Macedonians primarily came for two other reasons: to escape war, anarchy and persecution in the Balkans; or for economic opportunities. Often, they came for a combination of the two. Being enslaved by the dominant Ottoman Empire, Macedonians were agitating for social and political reforms, as well as autonomy; meanwhile, the Ottoman Empire was on the verge of disintegration and neighboring countries

vied for control of Macedonia by sending in armed bands; and the Macedonians were subjected to drastically worsening living conditions. Endless war, indefinite imprisonment and astronomical taxation all added up to a miserable life for most Macedonians, who were mostly peasant farmers subsisting on very little but the necessities.

At the same time, America was reveling in several social and economic transformations and had opened its doors to immigrant workers. There was a strong demand for cheap labor to fill the thousands of mining and manufacturing and industrial job openings, whether in the mines of Colorado, at the steel plants of Pennsylvania, or on the railroad tracks throughout the Midwest. As more immigrants discovered the opportunity to gain wealth in America, word quickly spread to poor and isolated villages in Europe. Once villagers would receive a letter from a friend or relative describing the riches and pleasures of America, they would then do all they could to secure a ticket to America. Macedonian-Americans who intended on remaining in America would often send such letters to relatives and friends in Macedonia with their Macedonian comrades who were returning to Macedonia. The letters would almost always advise them to immigrate to America.<sup>92</sup>

So, Macedonians poured into America. Two months after the Ilinden Uprising in 1903 (around the same time as the five Macedonian refugees were

evading Turkish troops), the passengers of the Haverford train, travelling from Philadelphia to North Dakota, listened intently as ten different Macedonian refugees recounted stories about the brutality of the Turks. Murdered children, tortured friends, burned homes – all these happenings scared them into coming to America. But the ten refugees did not feel safe in Philadelphia. To the passengers on the train, they expressed fear that Turks living and working in Philadelphia would target them for what had transpired in Macedonia. They hoped that North Dakota would be overflowing with jobs and empty of Turks.<sup>93</sup>

Their trips were not often easy. First, they had to flee Macedonia – usually on foot, through mountains, with troops or brigands lurking in the background. Second, they had to gather money and secure the necessary documents to board a ship at one of the several European ports. Sometimes those ports were nearby in the Balkans or Italy; sometimes they trekked to France, Spain or other European countries. Third, the boat ride could be several weeks long, often with cramped and unsanitary conditions, especially for second-class and third-class passengers, which Macedonians usually were. Finally, upon setting ashore in America, they had to find their way to the right city and then get a job.

Many other Macedonians, after arriving into Canada, tried to enter the U.S. illegally. Some were

successful; others were not. In one instance, in the late winter of 1929, two Canadian smugglers snuck five Macedonians across the border at the Niagara Falls crossing into New York. All were apprehended in Erie by Pennsylvania police on their way to Cleveland. The two Canadians were acquitted of smuggling charges after the Macedonians failed to appear as witnesses in the trial – the Macedonians had been released on bond and had made it into Cleveland. The judge then issued warrants for their arrests.<sup>94</sup> In another case, in 1942, Pennsylvania police caught six Macedonians who entered the country illegally. The Macedonians didn't go down without putting up a “merry chase.”<sup>95</sup>

Somehow, though, getting caught by U.S. officials was comforting compared to the horrors they experienced in the Balkans. The failed 1903 uprising and its aftermath was not the only conflict that sent Macedonians fleeing to America. Other conflicts – like the Balkan Wars of 1912 and 1913 (where Macedonia was divided amongst her neighbors), both World Wars, and the civil war in Greece (where many Macedonians constituted the bulk of the left-wing army fighting against fascist Greek rule) – all resulted in tens of thousands of Macedonian refugees. Carl Deloff, for example, fled Macedonia after the Greek liberators turned into Greek persecutors. After the Turks were defeated in 1912, the young Deloff married his 18-year old bride, Katrina, and lived happily with her for three months. The Greek army,

however, did not leave Deloff's village (in Aegean Macedonia), and the Greeks soon began persecuting the Macedonians. Deloff was one of several Macedonians who then publicly objected to the Greeks' terrible treatment of Macedonians. For his public opposition to Greek rule, he was arrested by the Greek authorities.<sup>96</sup>

On his way to face questioning in a nearby town (where many Macedonians had died from police torture), Deloff decided that pain and death would not be his fate. He managed to break free of his chains and eventually found himself in America, a place he had temporarily lived in 1908 before he returned in 1912 to marry Katrina and live peacefully in what he thought would be a free and safe Macedonia. Once back in America, he vowed to never return to Macedonia while it was still under Greek rule. There was one unfortunate problem, however: his wife was still in Macedonia.<sup>97</sup>

After a few weeks in the U.S., Deloff settled down in Indianapolis and wrote to his wife, pleading with her to join him. But Katrina's mother refused to let her go, imploring that it was inappropriate for a woman to make the journey across the ocean by herself. Eventually, though, her mother succumbed to her daughter's desire to be with her husband as news spread to their village from other Macedonian women who had been to America about the new land's wealth and comforts. But as soon as Katrina's family gave her

permission to leave, Deloff had hit some snags with his citizenship papers. Once those papers were finally secured, he sent money for his wife to join him. Yet, immigration problems persisted, and it was not until twenty years after Deloff fled Macedonia that he was finally reunited with his wife. In the summer of 1932, he met Katrina at the Indianapolis Union train station. “We were so young when we saw each other last,” Katrina said. “We are so old now.” But Deloff told her, “we will try to make up for it.”<sup>98</sup>

In addition to peasant refugees, many revolutionary fighters found their way to America. Dine Popcheff had fought in the 1903 uprising against Turkey as an IMRO member, and his future wife was a part of that organization as well, serving as a scout and spy. Shortly after the insurrection’s failure, Popcheff and several other Macedonians were arrested for the murder of a Turkish sympathizer. The murderer eventually confessed and Popcheff was set free. But Popcheff continued his revolutionary activities – quite successfully – which made him a targeted man. Macedonian spies for the Sultan and Turkish police would pursue him wherever he went. No longer safe in Macedonia, he came to Indiana and opened a bakery, which he owned and operated for over three decades. Speaking about his life in America, Popcheff declared that he was happy he could live comfortably in America. At the same time, he was very torn and depressed because Macedonia was “no longer even on



the map” and had been “swallowed up in the warfare among the Bulgarians, the Turks, the Greeks, and the Serbians.”<sup>99</sup>

While fleeing war was one of the most pressing reasons to leave Macedonia, especially in the first half of the century, the desire to escape poverty was certainly the most persuasive factor. In 1909, Ivan Dosheff, a graduate of University of Chicago, surveyed 100 Macedonian and Bulgarian men from Macedonia in Chicago and found that 75% of them had been farmers before moving to America and almost just as many had been living on less than \$60 annually.<sup>100</sup> Thus, the money they earned from labor in the United States was like striking gold – many Macedonians were easily making five to ten times the amount they were earning in Macedonia. Working a few years in America could mean decades of comfort and security in Macedonia. In his book, *This is My Country*, Stoyan Christowe wrote about how a peasant from his village sent a letter home to his wife that included “a slip of blue paper with instructions to his wife to take it to the money-changers in the market town and not to surrender it for...less than forty gold Napoleons.” For village peasants, this was an extraordinary amount of money. After the fellow peasants saw that the piece of paper was indeed exchanged for that many gold coins, there was a chain-reaction in the village “that started the exodus to America.”<sup>101</sup>

Most Macedonians came to America to flee poverty and war, and some Macedonians even came to become Protestant missionaries or to earn an education. Certainly, many Macedonian immigrants hoped that their children would eventually attend university and attain a greater education, especially when the significance of schooling rose as the types of jobs changed. But there were others who came with the intention of being life-long learners and teachers. B. Kiosseff immigrated to Michigan in the 1910s to study at the University of Michigan, and upon completion of school, he settled in Battle Creek.<sup>102</sup> Mary Jimperieff taught Sunday school and night classes to Macedonians. There were, for example, over a dozen Macedonians in her class in Rochester, New York in 1912. Being that Jimperieff had been educated in America, there was much she could offer them.<sup>103</sup> Jimperieff eventually went on to write a first-year language book for foreigners in 1915 called *Progressive Lessons in English for Foreigners*.<sup>104</sup>

Basil Stephanoff was another well-educated Macedonian from this early era of Macedonian immigrants who sought an education. He was born in Macedonia in 1859<sup>105</sup> and when he was just a boy, Turkish soldiers murdered his father. They then burned his home and he and his mother were forced to flee. When he became of fighting age, he joined the 1878 revolution against the Turks<sup>106</sup> but was eventually banished from the Ottoman Empire.<sup>107</sup> He

came to the U.S. in 1892, and settled in Grand Rapids, Michigan until 1906<sup>108</sup> working as a shoe merchant.<sup>109</sup> He later moved to Indianapolis and opened a business polishing shoes while he studied law on his spare time. He was likely the first Macedonian-American lawyer and began representing people around 1907.<sup>110</sup> Throughout his law career he mostly practiced in Indiana and worked on a variety of cases, mostly representing Balkan peoples in America. For example, in the spring of 1909, he represented a group of Balkan immigrants against a steamship agency that had been swindling money out of the immigrants by promising to deliver money to their families overseas, but never actually delivering the money and pocketing it instead.<sup>111</sup> In 1914, Stephanoff was appointed the administrator of the estate of a Serbian who had been killed while working as a laborer;<sup>112</sup> and he also defended a Macedonian accused of attempting to kill a Bulgarian in a feud over Balkan politics.<sup>113</sup>

Stephanoff was also a Democrat and often found himself engaged in American politics. He was featured as a speaker at several Democratic meetings and helped local Democrats in their political efforts.<sup>114</sup> In 1916, Stephanoff gave a speech to St. Stephen's Macedono-Bulgarian Orthodox Church in Indianapolis in a service remembering the killed American soldiers of World War I. In part, he said: "This is a day for you and me of greater importance than to many Americans...My brethren, you and I are

not born Americans; but listen, we are Americans by choice.”<sup>115</sup> The next month he donated to the Red Cross for World War I war relief efforts. In his donation letter, he echoed his previous sentiments: “As I am an American, not by birth, but by choice, I realize that my duty is greater to my adopted country and may God preserve the Union and the liberty of our beloved country from inward as well as outward foes.”<sup>116</sup>

He also often shared his views on the issues facing Macedonia and the Macedonian Question. For example, while he sometimes followed the reasoning that Macedonians included members of different nationalities – such as Bulgarians, Greeks and Albanians – he insisted that they were all descended from “the Macedonians [that] had occupied the country centuries before Christ” and that the entire “Balkan Peninsula was known as the Macedonian Empire under the Rule of Alexander the Great.”<sup>117</sup> In 1903, he stated that the Macedonian Revolutionary Organization included “2,500,000 members of Bulgarian, Macedonian Serbian and Roumanian nationalities.”<sup>118</sup>

On the eve of the 1903 Macedonian Uprising, he released a statement on the coming revolution: “*Macedonia wants nothing but freedom. We, her people, want nothing but to put an end to all the atrocities, cruelties and barbarities of the Turk. We want nothing but peace and harmony. We want nothing but the laws to be equal for all and*

*justice administered to all...We want nothing but what is right and honorable for any country or nation to have. WE DEMAND IT AND ALWAYS WE SHALL DEMAND IT. We must have it. Even if it costs us our lives the coming generation will appreciate and enjoy the liberty that we bought with our blood.*"<sup>119</sup>

An even earlier Macedonian immigrant, Svetozar Ivanoff Tonjoroff, who was born in Bansko during the summer of 1870,<sup>120</sup> came to the United States in 1888,<sup>121</sup> and attended high school in Exeter, New Hampshire during the early 1890s. From there he enrolled in college at Harvard and then became a writer and a newspaperman, eventually settling down in New York with his wife, Grace. He wrote a broad array of materials, including fiction stories, plays and political articles.<sup>122</sup> During his career he worked as an editor for *Boston Advertiser*, *Providence Journal*, *New York Press*, *Munsey Magazine*, and the *New York Evening Mail*, among other publications.<sup>123</sup>

His political articles in *Munsey Magazine* covered a range of topics. But he often wrote about the Balkans, where he perceived Bulgaria to be a victimized party in the Balkan Wars.<sup>124</sup> Aside from politics, he arranged, translated and edited Bulgarian and Macedonian songs for the well-known musical publication, *Folk Songs of Many Peoples*. One of these songs was entitled 'Macedonia', and even though the lyrics described Bulgarians as a nation who could help

save Macedonia, it clearly indicated that Macedonians and Bulgarians were separate but equal peoples:

*Macedonian, Macedonian  
Sings a song of age-long sadness:  
'Where, oh where, has gone my freedom,  
Where, oh where, the years of happiness,  
Where have all my hopes been buried,  
When shall come the resurrection?'*

*Macedonia strains at shackles,  
Calls and prays in her long grieving:  
'Oh, Bulgar, cross the border,  
Cross the line that separates us,  
Lift the yoke from wearied shoulders,  
Help me, Bulgar, oh my brother.'*<sup>125</sup>

Unfortunately, while 'brother Bulgar' did indeed cross the border into Macedonia several times, he came as a persecutor and not as a liberator.

(Like Tonjoroff, several early Macedonian immigrants had affinities either toward the Bulgarian, Greek or Serbian nations. These affinities arose in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century when Bulgarian, Greek and Serbian propaganda infiltrated Macedonia by means of their respective churches and schools and vied with each other to conquer the Macedonians' minds. Bulgarian schools taught Macedonian children that they were Bulgarians; Serbian schools taught them that they

were Serbs; and Greek schools taught them that they were Greeks. Even though many Macedonians strived for a distinct Macedonian church and separate Macedonian schools, Turkish policy intended on keeping the Macedonians divided in order to limit the extent of the Macedonian liberation movement. Hence, without having a Macedonian church to provide them with schools or to advance their interests, it was not uncommon for members of the same nuclear family to attend different schools and thus have different allegiances – one brother to the Bulgars and another to the Greeks, for example.<sup>126</sup> These attachments were reflected in many Macedonian immigrants' religious, social, political and cultural activities and associations; and being that the Turkish Sultan wanted to balance the power of the Greek Church in Macedonia, and also being that most Macedonians spoke the Macedonian language, which is grammatically closer to Bulgarian than to Serbian, most Macedonians gravitated to the Bulgarian church and nation during these early years. But as Macedonians began a more intensified campaign for independence, and as Bulgaria became viewed as an oppressor equal to that of Greece and Serbia, and when Macedonia won independence for their country and autonomy for their church, most Macedonians who held onto Bulgarian, Serbian and Greek sentiments shook off those previous biases and united

around their common Macedonian heritage and interests.)

While Tonjoroff, Kiosseff, Stephanoff and Jimperieff came here and pursued educational and academic endeavors, a clear majority of Macedonians throughout the decades came here for economic opportunities. In the first two decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, wars and conflicts kept economic and social progress away from Macedonia. While things slightly improved between the two world wars, there was still much conflict, and Macedonia remained one of the poorest regions in the Balkans – partly because Macedonia was the last in the region to be freed from the Turks, and partly because Macedonians were still struggling against the Bulgarian, Greek and Serbian governments for basic rights. During the first two decades after World War II, although Communist Yugoslavia significantly improved conditions for some Macedonians, there was still a general lack of opportunity for peasants and only a limited number of non-farming jobs that could provide something more than a mere existence. Further, after the Greek Civil War and the subsequent crackdown against ethnic Macedonians, Greece provided a bleak future for Macedonians. And even after Macedonia gained independence from Yugoslavia, its economy in the 1990s was devastated by embargoes placed on one of its biggest trading partners to the north, as well as due to a Greek embargo on Macedonia over Macedonia's



name. Hence, America became the economic promised land that Macedonia never became.

While the reasons for coming here were few, Macedonians from all regions managed to make it to America. By the end of the First World War, immigrants from the villages of Tetovo, Skopje, Debar, Ohrid, Kostur, Lerin, Voden, Bitola, Prilep, Veles, Gevgelija, Dojran, Kukush, Radovich, Shtip, Maleshevo, Kochani, Kratovo, Kumanovo, Palanka, Demir-Hisar, Serres, Drama, Solun, Resen, Tikvesh, and Enije-Vardar were sprinkled throughout America.<sup>127</sup> Undoubtedly, however, most Macedonian immigrants to the U.S. in the first two decades came from the southwestern portions of Macedonia, particularly from the Prespa and Bitola regions of today's Republic of Macedonia onward south to the Lerin and Kostur areas of western Aegean Macedonia in Greece.

The essential reason why most immigrants came from these areas was related to the activities of the Macedonian revolutionary movement. The IMRO decided to stage the bulk of its 1903 uprising in southwest Macedonia; thus, southwestern Macedonians faced the most destruction and devastation after the rebellion failed. Many men from this region began trekking abroad in order to make money and send it back home to their families. And for most, at first, their labor efforts in America were only for that reason – a means to support their families

back in Macedonia with the basics, which were unattainable due to the lack of resources. These Macedonian immigrants, however, became rather prosperous and eventually would either return to Macedonia to live comfortably, or would invite their families to join them in America. Successive wars and conflicts through the middle of the century spoiled many Macedonians' ambitions to remain in Macedonia and immigrants continued streaming into America. It is estimated that in the first two decades of Macedonian immigration to the U.S., about 60% of immigrants came from Aegean Macedonia, with most of those being from the western portion; 30% from Vardar Macedonia (today's Republic of Macedonia), with most of those being from the Bitola and Prespa areas; and 10% from the Pirin region (in today's Bulgaria).<sup>128</sup>

From Kostur, for example, Stose Stefanoff came over in 1914 and again in 1915 and headed to New York City. Even though Greece was listed as his nationality, his race was listed as Macedonian.<sup>129</sup> At 18 years old, Grigor Anastasoff traveled from Kostur to England and finally into Vermont in 1906, declaring Turkey his birthplace and Macedonian his race.<sup>130</sup> In 1918, 30-year-old Nako Nakovsky from Kostur was residing and working in Granite City, Illinois.<sup>131</sup> At the same time, Paul Phillips from Kostur was living in Detroit and employed at the Cadillac Motor Company.<sup>132</sup>

North of Kostur in Aegean Macedonia is Lerin, now called Florina, and thousands of Macedonians flocked to America from its surroundings. John Raikoff lived and worked in Detroit in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, dying there at the age of 80 in 1949.<sup>133</sup> George Asproff landed in New York City in 1909 after a long journey from Lerin, and made his way back to Portland, Oregon, where he had first started work as a laborer in 1906.<sup>134</sup> In the 1920s, Mito Petkoff from Lerin was living in Bucyrus, Ohio and working as a laborer for the Rikell Company;<sup>135</sup> and 20-year-old Ylie Vasil was employed at the Penn Railroad Company outside of Cleveland in 1917.<sup>136</sup>

The villages around Bitola and in Prespa saw thousands of Macedonians leave for America as well. In 1940, Joseph Dimeoff and his 29-year-old son, Boris, both born in Bitola, were living in Lovell, Wyoming. Joseph was a manager of a hotel while Boris owned his own café.<sup>137</sup> In 1948, Spasija Filipova joined her husband, Alex, in East Detroit after her journey from Bitola to New York City, with stops in Prague and Ireland in between.<sup>138</sup> Para Taleff Eloff came to the U.S. from Bitola in 1921 and spent her entire American life in Montana, marrying her husband, Blage, in Lewistown, working as a dishwasher in Butte, and retiring in Great Falls after Blage's death.<sup>139</sup> And in 1906, Petro Dimitroff, declaring his race as Macedonian, headed to Detroit

from Bitola to work as a laborer in the growing auto industry there.<sup>140</sup>

From Resen, in the Prespa region, Elo Eftimoff, was working on the railroad tracks in Pennsylvania in 1917.<sup>141</sup> Pando Pavloff, from Bolno, was also working in Pennsylvania that same year, but as a baker instead of a laborer.<sup>142</sup> Before the end of World War I, 27-year-old Tasco Mihail from Resen was working on-and-off both in Gary, Indiana and Mapleton, North Dakota;<sup>143</sup> and Kosta Philipoff was a 24-year old laborer in Chicago.<sup>144</sup>

Yet, even though most Macedonian immigrants came from the southwest portions of Macedonia, the other regions still saw many Macedonians leave. For example, Skopje, now being Macedonia's largest city, had hundreds of Macedonians trek to America for a better life in the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Mark Vogas was born there in 1907 and eventually came to New York City. After serving in the U.S. Air Force he became a furrier in New York and then retired in Grand Haven, Michigan.<sup>145</sup> George Atanos Thomas was born in Skopje in 1887 and in the early 1940s he was living in St. Paul, Minnesota.<sup>146</sup> Nick Dennis, born in 1888 in Skopje, was living in Ensley, Alabama (a neighborhood of Birmingham) during the First World War.<sup>147</sup> Draga Feodoroff crossed into Vermont on the last day of 1920 at the age of 18, and her race was listed as Macedonian. She had journeyed from Macedonia to France, and then from there to

New Brunswick, Canada, from where she hiked through Quebec and into Vermont.<sup>148</sup>

Some 30 miles west of Skopje is the town of Tetovo. Macedonians from its environs also settled in many different parts of America, with most in the Michigan area. Today, it is estimated that at least 15,000 Macedonian immigrants from the Tetovo region and their descendants live in metro-Detroit. However, Oregon was an early home to many immigrants from the Tetovo region. In 1917, Tetovo-born Gabriel Christy was working as a baker in Portland<sup>149</sup> and 18-year-old Kuzman Todoroff of the same town was employed at the Northern Pacific Terminal.<sup>150</sup> Andrew Hadji Karsteff was born in 1885 in Tetovo and in 1942 he was living in Portland,<sup>151</sup> along with fellow Tetovo emigrant, Moicey Panoff, a 60-year-old self-employed Macedonian living by himself at the time.<sup>152</sup> Jordan George Pop Davidoff, a 56-year-old Tetovo native, also inhabited Portland during this time, and worked as a shipbuilder for the Oregon Shipbuilding Corporation.<sup>153</sup> Richard Sykes, born in Tetovo in 1888, was retired and living in Portland during World War II.<sup>154</sup> Other Tetovo Macedonians living in Portland during this time were: Sam Bozenoff, with his wife Kohi;<sup>155</sup> and Simon and Mencha Spassoff, with the 61-year old Simon employed at White Palace Bakery.<sup>156</sup>

Macedonian immigrants came to America from central and eastern Macedonia, as well. Most of the

Macedonians who came in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century were from Bansko located in the Pirin region, present-day Bulgaria. However, Christ Ilieff and Katza Seculanova from Prilep, in central Macedonia, migrated to Chicago in the early 1900s, where Katza gave birth to their daughter, Mary, in 1909.<sup>157</sup> Dimitar Diamantieff came to America from Veles, also in central Macedonia, in 1907 at the age of 26. He declared his race as Macedonian and headed to Illinois to join his father.<sup>158</sup> Vain Koramzoff was a 30-year-old Macedonian from Voden (Edessa in Aegean Macedonia) living in Miamisburg, Ohio in 1917 and working as a laborer for the West Carrollton Parchment Company.<sup>159</sup>

### **3. Coming to America: Part II**

Despite where they came from, Macedonians settled all around America. The Harvard Encyclopedia in 1980 estimated that between 1903 and 1906, 50,000 Macedonians came here,<sup>160</sup> while in 1907 a U.S. Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization inspector claimed that 59,000 Macedonians and Bulgarians had come to America by that time,<sup>161</sup> with most of those Bulgarians likely having come from Macedonia. By 1918, a memo to President Wilson put together by a convention of 200 Macedonians in Chicago claimed there were 40,000 Macedonians in the United States at the time.<sup>162</sup> But many Macedonians would return to their homeland and by the mid-1920s there were only 20,000 Macedonians left in America.<sup>163</sup>

Immigration eventually slowed due to restrictive American immigration laws.<sup>164</sup> However, after World War II, those laws loosened and between 1960 and

1977, over 40,000 Macedonians emigrated from Macedonia,<sup>165</sup> with about 25,000 of these Macedonians coming to the United States. Although they were not political refugees, most entered the U.S. under the Refugee Relief Act.<sup>166</sup> By 1981, it was estimated that 200,000 Americans had some Macedonian heritage.<sup>167</sup> The 1990 U.S. Census found that 20,365 people declared their ethnicity to be Macedonian,<sup>168</sup> and more recent estimates state over 60,000 Americans claim Macedonian ancestry;<sup>169</sup> but by the close of the century, it reliable estimates suggest that at least 150,000 people with Macedonian ancestry were living in the United States.<sup>170</sup>

A lot of the fluctuation in numbers in the early years came from Macedonians moving back and forth between America and Macedonia. In the later years, it has been harder to count all Macedonians, as surveys ask different questions, which produce different results. Some ask for ethnicity (for which many later generations may declare to be American or something else if they are of mixed ancestry); some base their statistics on mother tongue (of which many later generations speak primarily English); and others only consider people who were born in Macedonia. Further, Macedonians are more spread out than they were before, which makes it more difficult to rely on church membership statistics to approximate total Macedonian population.



While Macedonians went where there were jobs available in the early years of immigration, they primarily settled in six states: Ohio, Illinois, Michigan, Indiana, Pennsylvania and New York. By the late 1910s, these six states already contained the building blocks for long-lasting Macedonian colonies. A sample of World War I Draft Registration cards of men whose birthplaces and nationalities were respectively listed as Macedonia and Macedonian showed that about 80% of Macedonians were in those six states. By 1918, Ohio had the most Macedonians, with approximately one-third residing there.<sup>171</sup> By the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, all those states, except for Pennsylvania, still had very large Macedonian colonies and were among the top six states with Macedonians. New Jersey replaced Pennsylvania in that list and Michigan overcame Ohio for the greatest number of Macedonians.

It is not surprising that a state like New York would have a sizeable Macedonian community. On one hand, it was the landing place for most Macedonian immigrants, whether arriving on Ellis Island or crossing into upstate New York near Buffalo. On the other hand, as with most Great Lake States, western and northern New York was booming with manufacturing and industrial businesses. Thus, by 1912, there were 2,000 Macedonians and Bulgarians (mostly from Macedonia) in New York.<sup>172</sup> New York City, Buffalo-Niagara, and Syracuse each had roughly

one-fourth of New York's entire Macedonian population, while Rochester had about one-eighth and the other one-eighth were scattered throughout the state.<sup>173</sup>

By the 1920s, New York's Macedonian population doubled, but the concentration of Macedonians generally stayed in the same areas as during the prior decades. However, there were noticeable changes in the ratios of those concentrations. While Syracuse still had roughly one-fourth of the state's Macedonians, the Buffalo-Niagara region had over one-third and the New York City population shrunk below one-fifth. Rochester stayed the same, with about one-eighth of New York's Macedonians.<sup>174</sup>

In the Buffalo-Niagara region, there was an especially large increase of Macedonians living in Lackawanna, which is just a few miles south of Buffalo. The reason was because Lackawanna came to have one of the largest steel manufacturing plants in the country. The Lackawanna Steel Company opened in Lackawanna in 1902, and eventually was taken over by the Bethlehem Steel Company. During its most productive years, it employed over 20,000 employees and was the world's largest manufacturer of steel.<sup>175</sup> Macedonian immigrants were a cheap and steady source of labor for a powerful company like this one.

As the 1930s approached, it became harder to keep track of how many Macedonians were in the US. Macedonia was divided between Greece, Bulgaria and

Serbia (Yugoslavia), and many immigration officials and census takers would often put those other countries as their birthplaces. There were at least a couple thousand Macedonians in New York by 1930, but a different settlement pattern began to emerge. Those Macedonians who remained in America eventually brought their families, and they began concentrating in other parts where there was a diversity of work. About half of New York's Macedonians were living in Syracuse now, while just under one-fourth were in Rochester, under one-sixth in Buffalo-Niagara, and one-eighth in New York City.<sup>176</sup> In 1940, Syracuse was still the largest hub for New York's Macedonians, with 40% living there; but the Buffalo-Niagara region took over Rochester for second place, with just over one-fifth of Macedonians. Rochester and New York City both had about 15% of the state's Macedonians.

Macedonian immigration to New York (as with the rest of the United States) drastically slowed down from the late 1930s through the mid-1960s. By the 1980s, with the new influx of Macedonians, each of those four primary centers had between 1,000 and 3,000 Macedonians.<sup>177</sup> At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, surveys in New York of people declaring ethnicity showed that 6,000 Americans in New York declared Macedonian ancestry. It can be estimated that there are almost 15,000 Macedonians in the state who have at least partial Macedonian ancestry.<sup>178</sup>

In New York's largest neighboring state to the south, Pennsylvania, Staiman and Dena Kof were a Serbian couple living in Philadelphia in 1900. In their house, they were hosting boarders who had come to work in the city. Five of the borders with them were Macedonians: Naum Ilia, 33; Ivan Nasteck, 33; Illia Demitii, 32; and Georda and Stoyan Wassil, 22 and 18. Nearby to them, a Macedonian by the name of Stephen Demitry was the head of the house with a handful of Macedonians living with him, including Laza Illon, 36; Maus Lemeroka, 36; and two men by the name of Sparsa Nestor, 35 and 31 years of age. Down the street from them were two other Macedonian boarders, also in their 30s: Kosta Illia and Petro Demetry.<sup>179</sup>

These were among Pennsylvania's earliest Macedonians. Although Philadelphia never became a large hub for Macedonians (cities west of Philadelphia, such as Harrisburg and Steelton in central Pennsylvania and the areas surrounding Pittsburgh in the western portion of the state, would eventually see many more Macedonians), it made sense that Macedonians would be there, as it was close to New York City and new immigrant arrivals would certainly find work in a big American city like Philadelphia.

By 1910, though, over 80% of Macedonians in Pennsylvania were in the Harrisburg-Steelton area, with just a handful in Philadelphia, Pittsburgh and Johnstown.<sup>180</sup> At that time, there were just under

fifteen hundred Macedonians in Pennsylvania, most of them having listed Turkey as their birthplace, with a few hundred listing either Macedonia or Bulgaria as their birthplaces.<sup>181</sup> Steelton would remain Pennsylvania's largest colony with most Macedonians arriving there from Prilep.<sup>182</sup> By 1920, there were well over two thousand Macedonians in Pennsylvania, and Steelton had about 25% of them. Other cities such as Ellwood, Midland, Johnstown, Ford, and Mt. Union were beginning to see small Macedonian colonies develop, but Steelton's was the most defined.<sup>183</sup> One street alone in 1920 had nearly 230 Macedonians on it, and one-third of Steelton's Main Street residents were Macedonians, with Macedonian listed as their mother tongue. Additionally, some of these Macedonians began to permanently settle, with many having brought their families and others having children born in America. As a matter of fact, one can find dozens of gravestones in the Macedonian section of Steelton cemetery that list Macedonia as the person's birthplace, including that of Stoyan Petroff, who died in Steelton in 1906. These headstones appear throughout the decades and "Macedonia" is engraved on them even though Macedonia was divided between its neighbors.<sup>184</sup>

But while Steelton may have had the most Macedonians in Pennsylvania during this time, other cities were experience influxes, mostly of mine and steel laborers. Most Macedonians in those cities lived

within a 70-mile radius of Pittsburgh, and many of those lived near the border with Ohio, such as in Ellwood or Midland. In these towns at the time, the clear majority of Macedonians were single men, simply there to work in the steel plants and coal mines of Ellwood or the glass factory of Ford City, for example. In one Ford house, six Macedonians were rooming together as boarders, including George and Thomas Christ and Mike and Thomas Metro;<sup>185</sup> in Ellwood City, John Ivanoff, Ivan Naumoff and Alex Petroff were living in an Italian household;<sup>186</sup> and in Johnstown, six Macedonians were living with Kwitoff Traichoff and his wife.<sup>187</sup>

By the 1930s and 1940s, Macedonian immigration to Pennsylvania slowed down and many Macedonian men returned to the old country. Throughout Pennsylvania, though, we still see families establishing themselves. In 1930, Lewis and Stoianka Stianoff had settled in Mount Union with their four children, the eldest having been born in Macedonia, the middle two in New York, and the youngest – 13-year-old Lena – in Pennsylvania.<sup>188</sup> In 1940, Phillip and Karsta Stephanoff, who were both born in Macedonia, were living in Brownsville with all four of their Pennsylvanian-born daughters.<sup>189</sup> And in the 1940s as well, after recently moving from Maryland, Anton and Nora Vasco were living with their four American-born children in Steelton.<sup>190</sup> The single-male Macedonian migrant had given way to Macedonian

families scattered throughout the state. Pennsylvania never exploded into a permanent establishment of large Macedonians, and by the 21<sup>st</sup> century there were just under 2,000 people with Macedonian ancestry scattered throughout the state.<sup>191</sup>

Ohio, on the other hand, maintained a large population of Macedonians throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Like Pennsylvania, many of the Macedonians there started out as single men working in mining, steel and other industrial sectors. But the Macedonians in Ohio managed to create a few large and long-lasting colonies.

In 1910, there were nearly 2,000 Macedonians in Ohio.<sup>192</sup> About half were concentrated in Springfield, with Columbus, Cincinnati and Cleveland each having about 10% of Ohio's Macedonians. The others were scattered in smaller Ohio towns, such as Bucyrus.<sup>193</sup> By 1920, however, the Macedonian population in Ohio more than doubled – and possibly tripled – and there were several areas with sizeable Macedonian neighborhoods.<sup>194</sup> Unlike Pennsylvania, there was not only one or two cities or metropolises that hosted most of the state's Macedonians. For example, Cleveland, Akron, Cincinnati and Mansfield each had roughly 10% of Ohio's Macedonians. Other cities were just a few percentage points behind those cities, including Toledo, Springfield, and Perry, while Canton, Lorain and Dayton also had several Macedonians.<sup>195</sup> The Macedonians gravitated to all

these areas for several different types of opportunities. Most Macedonians in this period were still single men, but patterns were beginning to emerge.

In 1930, Macedonians were still in several cities throughout Ohio and still spread out across many different cities. However, the Akron-Massillon-Canton area had over one-third of Ohio's Macedonians while coastal cities on Lake Erie – such as Cleveland, Lorain and Toledo – each had about 10% of the population.<sup>196</sup> There were still smaller pockets in Columbus, Cincinnati, Madison and Dayton,<sup>197</sup> and by the 1940s, the Akron area was developing into a center for Ohio's Macedonians.<sup>198</sup> Before World War II, well over 500 Macedonians had immigrated to the Akron area,<sup>199</sup> with most of them having come from the surroundings of Lerin, Bitola and Prilep, but with many villages and towns represented, from Tetovo to Struga and from Vodena to Solun.<sup>200</sup> However, the new wave of Macedonian immigrants after World War II and through the 1990s sought homes in other big centers, such as in Columbus and Cincinnati. While Akron and Lorain still have Macedonian populations, Columbus now has the largest and most active Macedonian colony. At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, approximately fifteen thousand Ohioans had Macedonian ancestry.<sup>201</sup>

Michigan, to Ohio's north, has America's largest Macedonian population today, with most



Macedonians in metro-Detroit. Macedonians, however, did not just settle in the Detroit area. For example, Battle Creek had a sizeable Macedonian population before the post-World War II wave,<sup>202</sup> and so did Flint and Lansing. In 1910, Geo Tasco and Louis Dean were both Macedonians living together in Battle Creek. Dean had come over to Michigan in 1901, while Tasco came a few years later in 1904. Louis Dean owned a candy store and Tasco worked as a salesman for him.<sup>203</sup> There were a few hundred other Macedonians in Battle Creek at the time, with most of them having put Turkey as their birthplace. They were primarily there as railroad laborers, rooming in houses with between 20 and 40 other Macedonians.<sup>204</sup>

Macedonians, however, were then just beginning to populate Detroit. Their numbers were not yet as prevalent as in the west side of the state, but you could find Macedonians working in the auto industry there, or as printers like George and Unice Geogoff.<sup>205</sup> By 1920, though, Macedonians began flooding into Detroit. While it is estimated that up to 2,000 Macedonians were in Michigan at the time, just over half were living in Detroit. Battle Creek still had a couple hundred of Macedonians, but only one-fifth of Michigan's total Macedonian population. Flint also had a sizeable colony, with a total of 10% of Michigan's Macedonians. Other cities, like

Kalamazoo, Jackson, Lansing and Grand Rapids each had a few dozen Macedonians at the time.<sup>206</sup>

By the 1930s, Michigan's Macedonian population increased to several thousand – likely well over 5,000 – and Detroit and its environs continued to hold the lead for Michigan's most Macedonians. Macedonians had begun to sprawl into cities very close to Detroit, such as Hamtramck, Grosse Pointe, Dearborn and Pontiac. The metro-Detroit Macedonian population skyrocketed, hosting 70% of Michigan's Macedonians. Battle Creek still had a significant colony with about 15% of Michigan's Macedonians, while Flint, Kalamazoo and Lansing each had probably no more than a couple hundred.<sup>207</sup>

By 1940, the Michigan Macedonian population held steady. Macedonians were now settled with their families in major Michigan metro areas, and many Detroit Macedonians were starting to find homes outside Detroit proper. Vasil and Fanny Yaneff lived with their children in Dearborn, hosting boarders on occasion;<sup>208</sup> Nickola Paroshkevov had just moved from Dearborn to Westland (then Nankin Township);<sup>209</sup> and Lazar and Pandora Chkoreff were living in Grosse Pointe with their two Michigan-born daughters, Violet and Mary.<sup>210</sup>

The 1960s and 1970s saw a rejuvenation of Macedonians in metro-Detroit. Communist Yugoslavia had relaxed its rules on traveling, allowing its citizens freedom of movement in and out of the

country. Many Macedonians took advantage of this starting in the 1960s, and huge waves of Macedonians began to surge into Michigan.<sup>211</sup> Speaking to the influx of Macedonians here, by the 1980s in metro-Detroit, Warren Consolidated Schools began offering bilingual classes in Macedonian because state law required them to do so if there were more than 20 students in one language group at one school.<sup>212</sup> Estimates of the total number of Macedonians living in metro-Detroit by 1990 ranged up to 20,000.<sup>213</sup> As the 20<sup>th</sup> century gave way to the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Michigan had approximately 35,000 people of Macedonian ancestry, with about 30,000 living in metro-Detroit.<sup>214</sup>

To the south in Indianapolis, Indiana, U.S. officials discovered a “Macedonian colony” there as early as 1904. They had no idea there were even any Macedonians in Indiana. U.S. authorities were visiting Indianapolis because they needed a translator for a criminal case: Andon Giorgeoff had opened someone else’s mail and taken the money from the envelope. The court officers first tried using a Greek interpreter – because they thought Macedonian was related to Greek – but the Greeks proved useless. So, they went to Indianapolis after talking with people from the Balkans on where Macedonians could be found. On completing their investigations there, one officer noted that the Macedonians were living “on bread and garlic” and they had “found fifteen or twenty in one apartment.”<sup>215</sup>

In Gary, Indiana, in 1909, there were 500 “Macedonians and Bulgarians” from Macedonia<sup>216</sup> and likely up to 2,000 Macedonians in the state.<sup>217</sup> The 1910 U.S. Census shows hundreds of Macedonians putting Macedonia as their birthplace, with many hundreds more putting Turkey as their birthplace. Further, they were not just residing in today’s centers for Macedonians (Gary and Fort Wayne). For example, five Macedonians were boarding with George Nicoloff at his residence in Indianapolis,<sup>218</sup> and over 30 Macedonians were rooming together in a large boarding house in Aurora, Indiana just outside of Cincinnati, Ohio.<sup>219</sup> Other towns in Indiana with Macedonian establishments at the time include Warsaw, Muncie, Brooklyn and Greencastle.<sup>220</sup>

Of course, by the 1920s Macedonians were forming their major community centers in Indiana: Fort Wayne, Gary and Indianapolis. The Indiana Macedonian population was now several thousand strong. Nearly 90% of Indiana’s Macedonians by 1920 were in those three areas, with almost half living in Fort Wayne and about one-fourth living in the Gary area in the northwestern corner outside of Chicago.<sup>221</sup>

As of the late 1930s, there were at least 9,000 Macedonians in Indiana. About 300 families were in Indianapolis, with most of them coming from the Lerin region in Macedonia.<sup>222</sup> Some were even ex-IMRO rebels, like D.G. Popcheff, Gerge Deloff, and George Borshoff, who all participated in the 1903

Uprising.<sup>223</sup> Many of the Macedonians in Indianapolis migrated to there from northwestern states where they had previously been working in mines and on railroads. They settled down in Indianapolis and opened small businesses, like bakeries and shoe shops.<sup>224</sup>

Like the other states, there was a cooldown in Macedonian immigration from the 1930s through the 1950s. There were about 10,000 Macedonians in Indiana before the Second World War, and by the time we get to the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Indiana had about 15,000 Macedonians, with most of them residing in the Gary-Merrillville and Fort Wayne areas, though many were also in the environs of Indianapolis.<sup>225</sup>

Gary was a sensible place for Macedonians to live because it was essentially part of Greater Chicago: there was plenty of work and opportunity in this industrial part of Indiana. Thus, it would probably be assumed by some that Chicago would be host to Illinois' largest colony of Macedonians. However, in the early days of Macedonian immigration, that title goes to the Granite City-Madison-Venice region in southern Illinois. Granite City was a community along the border with St. Louis, Missouri. Several manufacturing and industrial opportunities here made it a convenient place for Macedonians to gather. As a general comparison between the populations of Granite City and Chicago, low estimates state that

there were 2,000 Macedonians in Granite City by the beginning of 1908<sup>226</sup> and up to 8,000 by the winter of 1908 in the tri-cities of Granite City, Madison and Venice.<sup>227</sup> But of 90,000 people living in South Chicago in 1907, only 200 identified as Macedonian, with most of them having arrived in 1905 and 1906,<sup>228</sup> and by the end of 1908, there were between 500 and 1,000 Macedonians in the entire Chicago area.<sup>229</sup> (However, it should be noted that there were several thousand people living in the Chicago area in 1910 that had listed Bulgarian Turkey, or Bulgaria, or Turkey as their birthplace. Some of these people were undoubtedly from Macedonia).<sup>230</sup>

The Macedonians of Granite City, however, started arriving a few years prior, immediately after the failed Ilinden insurrection. In 1904, a Macedonian from southwestern Macedonia arrived in St. Louis after saving up money by working throughout the United States. He had heard that scores of Macedonians had made it into Dayton, Ohio as refugees, and he went there to bring the men back to St. Louis – he brought 47 of them. He acted as their spokesman and found work for several of them. An agent of one of the steel plants told this Macedonian that he would employ all Macedonians he could bring. So, as more refugees came from Macedonia, and as this gentleman wrote home, eventually 900 came in just over a year and were gainfully employed. Saloons, bakeries and money exchanges were established in the area around Granite

City. Near the mills outside of town, Macedonians moved quickly to the cheaper houses, and the Americans did not like this, so they moved out. This area became known as Hungary Hollow, and over 1,500 Macedonians were there by the fall of 1905.

The Macedonian who brought them to the area eventually opened a general store and a building that lodged many Macedonians in the upper two floors and had a bakery, butcher shop, saloon and bank on the lower level. Then another commercial company backed by another Macedonian bought and built ten cottages to host Macedonians, in addition to opening a store and a saloon. As mentioned, by 1908 there were 8,000 Macedonians and Bulgarians (mostly Macedonian followers of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church) in the area. The number of Macedonians was overwhelming. For example, at a May 25<sup>th</sup> celebration of Cyril and Methodius day in 1908, more than 2,000 Macedonians and Bulgarians attended.<sup>231</sup> However, by 1913, there was only over 1,000 remaining in Hungary Hollow.<sup>232</sup> Evidence of this decline was reflected in the changes in the amount of bread being sold: from 15,000 loaves of bread daily in 1906 to 500 by the summer of 1910.<sup>233</sup>

Practically all Macedonians in the Granite City area were from southwest Macedonia, with three-fourths of them being from Kostur.<sup>234</sup> Three of the six most common destinations for all immigrants coming to Granite City, as listed on ship manifests, were listed as

Macedonian places – Boxes 37, 72, and 351 were all Macedonian mercantile houses that the immigrants were headed to.<sup>235</sup> Most Macedonians came as laborers, though some worked as millwrights and in other fields to serve their community.<sup>236</sup>

By 1941, the Granite City-Madison-Venice region had about 3,000 Macedonians, with a total of about 5,000 in the general St. Louis area.<sup>237</sup> The entire Chicago area by this time (excluding Gary) had a small but growing Macedonian population. The population fluctuated throughout the decades, never getting above a few thousand until after the second big Macedonian wave of immigrants in the 1960s and 1970s. As of the new millennium, there were upwards of 10,000 Macedonians in Illinois, with most of them being concentrated in Chicagoland and the Granite City area.<sup>238</sup>

As mentioned previously, the six states described had the largest Macedonian populations in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. But New Jersey's Macedonian population – almost negligible in the first couple of decades – exploded after 1965. Many came to work in New York City and a sizeable community was established in northern New Jersey. The population reached about 15,000 by the start of the millennium.<sup>239</sup>

While Macedonians were mostly in the states around the Great Lakes and in the mid-Atlantic region during the early 1900s, they also went out West because of the unexplored territory and potential for



great wealth, especially in mining and railroad construction. As a matter of fact, it is estimated that several thousand Macedonians had labored on the tracks and in the mines of North and South Dakota, Minnesota and Montana by 1910.<sup>240</sup> For example, in the 1905 South Dakota Census, there were over 50 Macedonians living there who put Macedonian as their nationality, most having been there less than five years. From as young as 16 to as old as 42, the names of these South Dakotan Macedonians included Geo Bosco, David Wasse, Petro George, Petro Luka and Daniel Boshka.<sup>241</sup> Hundreds were in South Dakota by 1910 working on the railroads, with between 30 and 40 Macedonians and Bulgarians boarding together.<sup>242</sup> Scores were working in the Standing Rock Reservation Territory in northern South Dakota;<sup>243</sup> others were in Canning, near Pierre, in the center of the state.<sup>244</sup> By 1915, there were still scores of Macedonians in South Dakota, many declaring their ancestry<sup>245</sup> as Macedonian and their religious affiliation as Orthodox. Some of these Macedonians included Lazare Mitroff,<sup>246</sup> Steve Stoien,<sup>247</sup> Geo Ivanoff,<sup>248</sup> and Chris Popoff, who reported that he was not affiliated with any Church.<sup>249</sup> However, by the time 1925 rolled around, there were only a few dozen Macedonian laborers left in South Dakota. Some of them declared their ethnicity to be Bulgarian; others, like James Janoff<sup>250</sup> and Carl Nishoff<sup>251</sup> declared their ethnicity to be Macedonian.

North Dakota saw a similar number of Macedonians doing similar work, especially before 1910. In one household in Coulee, in the northern fringes of the state, eight Macedonians were rooming with three Greeks.<sup>252</sup> In another house in the same town, three Macedonians were rooming with several Scandinavians and Greeks.<sup>253</sup> Forty miles west, in Rugby, over 30 Macedonians and Greeks were living together in tight arrangements, with all the Macedonians having Macedonian listed as their mother tongue.<sup>254</sup> By the 1940s, Macedonians were all but practically extinct in North Dakota. No single laborers were left and only a few families sprinkled the map. Vane George, for example, lived in Bismarck with his wife, Fan, and two American-born children.<sup>255</sup>

Montana, however, had an exceptionally large number of Macedonians, with probably a few thousand Macedonians having worked there in the first two decades of the twentieth century.<sup>256</sup> In Lombard, which is just south of Helena, there were 70 Macedonians working and living there. Some had common American appellations of Macedonian surnames (such as Christoff and Petkoff), while others had the less common (for the time) -sky or -ski at the end of their names, such as Lajo Popovsky and Paul Adgiorsky.<sup>257</sup> Other groups of Macedonians were found in Havre to the north and Big Porcupine to the east.<sup>258</sup> By 1920, other single Macedonian men had found their way into Montana, working and living in

different parts, such as the dozens of Macedonians in Deer Lodge<sup>259</sup> or the scores in Rosebud, where we find the Pirovsky brothers and Vasil Reskovsky living with many Macedonians who had common names for the time, such as Lambroff, Demetroff, Pandoff, Lazaroff, Naumoff, Popoff and Stankoff.<sup>260</sup> By the 1930s, there were still a few hundred Macedonian laborers in Montana, but by the middle of the century there were only a few families, such as James Evanoff of Missoula, who was living with his Nebraskan wife and Montana-born children.<sup>261</sup>

The early 1900s witnessed hundreds of Macedonians pass through and settle in Minnesota. In and near Minneapolis, there were scores of Macedonians in 1910. Some listed Bulgarian as their native language; but dozens of others, such as Filip Mitrosheff, Pando Lamboff and Hristo Stoinonoff, were recorded as speaking 'Macedonian'.<sup>262</sup> Several hundred Macedonians had spread throughout southern Minnesota by the 1920s and hundreds of Macedonians remained there in the 1940s with their growing families. By the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century there were at least one to two thousand Macedonians throughout Minnesota.<sup>263</sup>

But Macedonians also settled other places out West. In 1903, there were half a dozen Macedonians in San Francisco. One was Evan Kurpacheff, a shoemaker of Berkeley.<sup>264</sup> By the 1920s, scores of Macedonians were calling the San Francisco Bay Area home. Koche and

Anica Kostandine had started their family there,<sup>265</sup> while there were several single Macedonian laborers. But by the 1940s, the central congregation of Macedonians in California shifted to southern California. Two-thirds of California's Macedonians were in the southern part while less than a third were in and around San Francisco.<sup>266</sup> The Macedonian population grew steadily throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and by the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, there were several thousand Macedonians in California. High estimates even suggest that by 1970 there were 10,000 Macedonians in southern California.<sup>267</sup>

Arizona had virtually no Macedonians in the very early years, but it soon became a destination for some daring Macedonians. In the 1960s, Tempe and Skopje even became sister cities when the U.S. State Department started the Sister City program. In 1970, a delegation of Tempe officials visited Skopje, which eventually paved the way to have Tempe high school students live in Skopje in exchange programs, partially funded by Macedonian cultural programs taking part in Tempe's Sister City International Festival.<sup>268</sup> By the late 1990s, there were many Macedonians who had migrated to Arizona from other states; and they decided to begin work for the construction of a Macedonian church in the Phoenix area.<sup>269</sup>

Other western states had small groups of Macedonians working and living there. For example, in 1913, more than 20 people declared themselves as

Macedonians working in Colorado mines.<sup>270</sup> There were also Macedonians in Oregon, Washington and Wyoming.

Marriage records show that Macedonians were scattered in several other places throughout the United States. On October 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1908, in Middlebury, Vermont, Basil George Kodjbanoff, from Bitola, married Florence Hammond Chapman.<sup>271</sup> In Utah, mid-summer of 1919, Peter Evanoff of Salt Lake City married Mary Canneia.<sup>272</sup>

Even the South had small colonies of Macedonians, such as in Birmingham, Alabama during the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. They were all located in the Ensley district of town, and they were all single men, most having arrived in 1908 or 1909.<sup>273</sup> About one-fifth of them were working as farm laborers and the rest were in iron and steel.<sup>274</sup> The Macedonians here, on average, earned about \$232 per year, much less than other peoples<sup>275</sup> and none of the Macedonians were affiliated with trade unions.<sup>276</sup> There were less than a hundred Macedonians there by the start of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.<sup>277</sup> Meanwhile, in Louisiana, there were a few hundred Macedonians by the new century; and in Georgia there were over 500, mostly in and around Atlanta.<sup>278</sup> And in the 1980s and 1990s, Macedonians started heading down to Florida in droves, where there are at least two sizeable communities with church congregations in Miami and outside of

Clearwater, and about 5,000 Macedonians total in the state.<sup>279</sup>

No parts of America were spared from Macedonian immigrants. A Macedonian by the name of Simon D. Vozuff, was recorded as living in Alaska (then a territory of the U.S.) during the 1900 Census. Having immigrated to the United States in 1893 at age 16, he found himself with regimental and noncommissioned staff of the 7<sup>th</sup> U.S. Infantry in Nome, which is on the far western tip of Alaska, almost a stone's throw from Russia.<sup>280</sup> A few other Macedonians ended up in Fairbanks by 1910,<sup>281</sup> and by the end of the century there were about 500 Macedonians throughout Alaska.<sup>282</sup>

Not many Macedonians in the early years stayed put – employment circumstances caused them to move around a lot. Sometimes they had only been temporarily employed, or their company began cutting laborers, or their language served as a communication barrier, or they just wanted more money or better working conditions. Cazmo Nicholoff, for example, traveled around a lot – even becoming a naturalized U.S. citizen in Texas – before settling down in Fort Wayne in 1918 to work as a motorman.<sup>283</sup> Blagoje Dine Mitsareff came to the U.S. in 1907, living one year in Indiana, one year in South Dakota and finally settling down as a mechanic in Wolf Point, Montana.<sup>284</sup>

Then there was J. Taseff, who wrote to Wilmington, Delaware officials in 1908 to see if he could relocate there to do business. He was living in Missouri at the time and he wanted to know if he would be able to get a license in Wilmington to sell peanuts and popcorn on the streets. Taseff stressed that he was in needy circumstances. He had emigrated from Macedonia to avoid persecution by the Turks and to earn some money for his family who were still living in Macedonia, and he was having trouble finding permanent or tolerable work in Missouri.<sup>285</sup>

Of course, other people came and stayed in the same place. Jovan Petre Ognenovic was born in Bitola and came to the United States in 1901, where he immediately settled in Pennsylvania and worked as a merchant for several decades.<sup>286</sup> Christ Popoff, born in Resen, arrived in America in 1907 at 19 years old and found a home in Millbank, South Dakota where he eventually became a railroad foreman.<sup>287</sup> Vasil Konstantine Litchin, born in Blatsa (Vlatsi), arrived in 1912 and remained in Fort Wayne, working as a machine operator.<sup>288</sup>

One of the most difficult aspects of gathering data on Macedonian immigrants deals with the political situation of the Balkans. Until 1913, Macedonia was a part of Turkey; and until 1991, Macedonia was separated under the rule of different countries (Bulgaria, Greece, Serbia, and Yugoslavia). A Macedonian nationality and language were not

officially recognized, and many Macedonians were haphazardly recorded as being something other than what they declared or knew they were. There have also been very few studies that highlight the cultural heritage of the Macedonian people as an ethnicity in the United States, making it even more difficult.<sup>289</sup>

For example, in the early 1900s, U.S. census officials were told to not write Macedonian even if the individual said he spoke Macedonian. Rather, they were to inquire whether the individual meant Bulgarian, Serbian, Greek, Romanian, Turkish or Albanian. It was not until 1920 that Macedonian was more consistently recorded as a separate spoken language.<sup>290</sup> One individual who had an impact on this policy was Albert Sonnichsen, who had traveled to Macedonia and Bulgaria after the revolution in 1903. He insisted that there should be no distinction between Macedonians and Bulgarians: “I hope you’re not making any racial distinctions between Bulgarians and Macedonians. I believe the Bulgarians who have come from Macedonia are registered on Ellis Island as Macedonians, which is confusing and inaccurate...The distinction between Bulgars from Bulgaria and those from Macedonia is purely political.”<sup>291</sup> Having spent much time with the Bulgarian propagandists in Sofia (as well as with Bulgarian-backed revolutionaries), it was not surprising that Sonnichsen advocated for the Bulgarian Cause and perspective.



However, many Macedonians felt very strongly about their Macedonian identity, language and homeland and insisted on being considered Macedonian, as we have already seen. But there are plenty of more examples. Govan Delkoff crossed over from Canada to Vermont in 1906, and although his immigration papers listed that his nationality was Turkish, as he was a Turkish citizen, he was listed as being born in Banica, Macedonia and his race was described Macedonian. He was headed to Granite City.<sup>292</sup>

Speaking of Granite City, the 1920 U.S. Census shows many people who were living there as being born in Macedonia. While some put Bulgarian as their mother tongue, many others indeed put Macedonian. For example, Tony Tanoff and Nick Jateff and his wife and their six children put they spoke Macedonian, while Dino Doucloff's family put they spoke Bulgarian.<sup>293</sup> World War One Draft Registration cards also show individuals declaring they were Macedonian, even though if they would have put 'Bulgarian' they could have avoided being called up for the draft because Bulgaria was an American enemy during the war. For example, Tale Metroff (Ohio) put that he was Macedonian, as did many others, such as Vany Echoff (Ohio),<sup>294</sup> Christ Bogaden Slavoff (Illinois),<sup>295</sup> and Thomas Slavoff (Michigan).<sup>296</sup>

Further, Macedonian-Americans understood they were from Macedonia and that their country was

divided between other countries. When applying for his passport in 1924, Spiro Postol Semo indicated that he was born in Korica, Macedonia, which he indicated had been transferred to Albanian rule.<sup>297</sup> Similarly, Nikola Spev, born in the Mala Prespa region in Macedonia, indicated on the 1925 Rhode Island Census that he and his family were from Macedonian Albania,<sup>298</sup> as did Christopher Adams of Connecticut in 1917.<sup>299</sup> Spaso Atseff, who was born in Skopje, indicated he was traveling to Serbia to visit family when applying for his passport, but he put Macedonia in parenthesis.<sup>300</sup> Kosto George, from Kichevo, put in his 1924 passport application that he was visiting Bulgaria, Serbia and Macedonia, despite Macedonia not being a political unit on the map.<sup>301</sup>

Even common United States citizens and local officials recognized that Macedonians were a separate people and that Macedonian was its own language. In 1914, Burgess Wigfield of Steelton decided to go on a ten-day cleaning spree of the town. He requested from the city council for the City to allow him to print and distribute hundreds of circulars in three languages. “In English, Slavish and Macedonian languages that fact will be proclaimed throughout Steelton today,” wrote the Harrisburg Telegraph.<sup>302</sup>

Macedonians loved their homeland and their villages and most never intended to stay in America permanently. They would return to Macedonia often after saving a lot of money. Some did come back to

America many years later with their families because conditions in Macedonia only slightly improved (or gotten worse for others). Sometimes, however, they returned to Macedonia simply for the purpose to fight for an independent and free Macedonia. For example, in the early 1910s, Jim Christ of Richmond, Indiana was working as a Balkan agent for the Bulgarian government to recruit Macedonians in the States to fight against the Turks. He would sign them up as reserves and organize their departure when they were needed. He would have even gone himself, but he did not want to jeopardize his application for American citizenship.<sup>303</sup>

But then something happened that forced Christ to withdraw his application for U.S. citizenship. In December of 1912, during the outbreak of the First Balkan War, he received a letter from Macedonia stating that Turks had sacked and pillaged his birth village, Mavrovo, and scores of women and children were murdered by irregular Turkish soldiers. He feared that his mother was one of the women killed. "If my mother was killed by Turkish cutthroats," he said, "I will forfeit my claims on American citizenship, and seek vengeance by enlisting in the Greek army." Mr. Christ worked as a Bulgarian army recruiter in the states and was willing to fight with the Greek army in order to gain freedom and security for his Macedonian homeland.<sup>304</sup>

While gaining freedom for Macedonia had been the most difficult endeavor for Macedonians during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, adjusting to life in America was also difficult and oftentimes dangerous. While freedom and opportunity were abundant, and while there weren't bands of Turks, Bulgars, Greeks, Albanians and Serbs chasing them around, it was an entirely different culture and society, with different attitudes, technologies, customs and surprises that kept life interesting and demanding for many Macedonians.

## 4. Adjusting to the New World

In May of 1908, Tanas Dimeff left Granite City “to work in a construction camp in Arkansas.” He had paid a Macedonian labor agent \$5 to find him the job, and then used the rest of his money to buy a railroad ticket to Arkansas. After working a month with the construction company, the company refused to pay him and said that Dimeff instead owed them money. Alone without any Macedonians in Arkansas, Dimeff knew he had been cheated. Moneyless and with three loaves of bread, he decided to walk back to Granite City, where he knew other Macedonians would be there to support him.<sup>305</sup>

The three loaves lasted him five days. Two days without food, and too weak to go much further, he plopped himself on the porch of a house, pointed to his mouth and said the only English word he knew:

bread. The homeowners told him to get on his way. For several hours, he dragged himself from one house to the next, until finally someone offered him a bite of food. He continued his journey and after a few days, he met some kind folks in a village in Missouri that collected a few days' worth of food for him. After another few days, he made it into Kansas City, where a Macedonian baker gave him four loaves of bread for his 250-mile journey to Granite City.<sup>306</sup>

Out of food, thin and exhausted, he reached St. Louis, just a few miles away from Granite City, and collapsed in the streets. A policeman noticed him and got him a free meal as well as five cents to pay the toll across the bridge into Illinois. With a final surge of energy, he made it across the bridge and passed out in front of a Macedonian saloon. Macedonians from inside saw him collapse outside and ran out, and one shouted, "it's Dimeff!" They huddled around him and asked him hundreds of questions, but he had only one response: bread. After he was fed and reenergized, he told his story, which riled the Macedonians against the labor agents and railroad construction contractors that were cheating and enslaving the Macedonians.<sup>307</sup>

As Dimeff's case illustrates, the most difficult part of life in the United States for Macedonian immigrants was not necessarily finding work, but rather the cultural barriers that allowed employers to take advantage of them and the intolerable working conditions. Most Macedonians who had come here

were peasant farmers who were used to working in spacious conditions outdoors. In America, they were sometimes working over 12-hour shifts, often inside stuffy and noisy factories and cities, or with dangerous equipment. They were also unfamiliar with employer-employee relations. The second most difficult part for Macedonians in America, especially during the early years, was what would happen after work. In Macedonia, they were used to returning to their homes where there would be meals cooked and where they could spend time with their families. While many Macedonians lived with extended families in their homes, it was different in the U.S.: dozens of single men could be sharing just a few rooms, and all responsibilities had to be shared between them. This type of living was different than what they had known in Macedonia.

In 1907, the United States Immigration Commission was formed by U.S. senators and representatives to investigate into the conditions of immigrants in America. The Dillingham Commission, as it is sometimes called because its chairman was Senator William P. Dillingham of Vermont, interviewed tens of thousands of people. Included in this large number of interviewees were 603 ethnic Macedonian employees in manufacturing and mining, of which only one was a woman. The Commission found that half of these Macedonians were working in iron or steel, while cotton, glass and wool workers

constituted the next largest groups of workers. Still, 44 Macedonians were working with leather, 19 were working as shoemakers, and over 50 were making cigars and tobacco, or involved in coal mining or construction. The one woman was employed making cigarettes<sup>308</sup> and had been in the United States since 1906.<sup>309</sup> Only one Macedonian had been in the U.S. since the late 1880s, and he was working in iron and steel.<sup>310</sup> The typical Macedonian was earning \$1.50 for a 12-hour shift.<sup>311</sup> While this was below the wages for other racial or ethnic groups, it was much better than they could dream of in Macedonia.

The Dillingham Commission conducted a smaller survey of 12,000 employees in blast furnaces and iron and steel establishments in Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, Michigan and Ohio. Within that industry they identified 173 Macedonians that took part in the survey (not including those Macedonians declared as being Bulgarian). The survey found that 95% of Macedonians had been in the U.S. for five years or less, with the rest having been in the U.S. for between five and ten years. Most of them had come between 1904 and 1908. On average, a Macedonian in these industries earned \$10.12 per week, which was below all other foreign-born peoples; and less than 1% of Macedonians earned more than \$15 per week. Over 80% of Macedonians could read and write in Macedonian, which was below the average of about 86% for other foreign-born people regarding their



mother tongues, and only 11% could speak or read English. Further, about 80% of the Macedonians were married, and only 3% of the married Macedonians had their wives or families in the United States with them. The Macedonians were pretty much evenly distributed in most age groups, but none were over 55 years old. And among foreign-born employees, Macedonians had the largest percentage of teenage workers: about 15%.<sup>312</sup>

In the glass-plate industry in the early 1900s, just under 2% of the foreign-born workers were described as Macedonian.<sup>313</sup> Many of the Macedonians employed in this industry were working in Ford City, Pennsylvania as unskilled laborers.<sup>314</sup> Some were also in Kane, Pennsylvania: “The last race to be employed as industrial workers in the locality were the Macedonians. These people have practically all come since the beginning of 1907, and are employed in the glass plants as unskilled laborers in the lowest occupations. Their total population is not greater than 250. They have not settled permanently, have no organizations, and but few families are found among them.”<sup>315</sup>

Macedonians could be found in all sorts of businesses throughout the country. Many had become cooks, bakers, tailors, shoemakers, and small business owners once they settled into a community. However, most of the early immigrants were laborers for manufacturing and industrial companies. The list of

employers is exhaustive, but examples of the types of companies at which you could find several Macedonians working during the first two decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century include: Babcock and Wilcox, Ohio Brass, Detroit Graphic, Carnegie Steel, American Foundry, Consumers Power, Columbia Axel, American Plate Glass, Western Steel Car and Foundry, Portland Cordage, Steel Car Forge, Prudden Wheel, Detroit Brass Steel, Platt Iron Works, Central Steel, Lackawanna Steel, and Illinois Steel.<sup>316</sup>

By the 1940s, most Macedonians were no longer new immigrants – many had been here several decades and many others were children (and grandchildren) of the first Macedonian immigrants. Further, the industry powerhouses were changing, with old industries giving way to new sectors. Thus, Macedonians were not employed in the same type of work to the same extent as in the 1900s and 1910s. On one hand, Macedonian business owners were still abundant – such as George Risto Acheff, who owned Winona Dry Cleaning Works in Minnesota;<sup>317</sup> or Tony Koloff, who owned a pool hall in Mason City Iowa;<sup>318</sup> and Nick Evans, who owned his own farm in Fruita, Colorado.<sup>319</sup> Other Macedonians – especially American-born Macedonians – branched off into different professional fields or were attending college. Nora Pelichoff, for example, was born in Granite City and was working as a teacher there in 1940;<sup>320</sup> and Virginia Zaimoff, who was born in Venice, Illinois in

1918, was working as an actress in local theaters at the time.<sup>321</sup> Other children of Macedonian immigrants took over their parents' businesses, such as James, Peter and Steve Stoianoff, who shared in operations at their dad's grocery store in Mount Union, Pennsylvania.<sup>322</sup> Of course, Macedonians were still employed in manufacturing and industry, like Zeso Vasaleff, who was employed at the Astoria Southern Railway Company in Portland, Oregon;<sup>323</sup> and James George Evanoff, who was living in Centralia, Washington and working for the Shaffer Logging Company.<sup>324</sup> But Macedonians were not occupying those positions in the same capacity as they did in the early part of the century.

The new wave of Macedonian immigrants in the 1960s and 1970s followed a similar pattern. In Detroit, for example, most of the Macedonian newcomers worked as laborers for the big auto companies (or for suppliers of those companies), and many eventually opened their own bakeries and restaurants. Their children – whether born in Macedonia or America – would often attend college in the 1980s and 1990s, with many penetrating professional fields by becoming designers, engineers, lawyers, nurses, teachers and doctors.

Of all the types of work that Macedonians did in America during the early years, however, they enjoyed working on the railroads the most. This was because they preferred working “under the open sky” as

opposed to the crowded conditions in cities and factories.<sup>325</sup> Plus, the jobs paid them decently (relative to what they earned in Macedonia), and there was more freedom in these small little towns than in cities. But while money, freedom and opportunity were abundant, it was not a safe time to be working the railroads or in the mines and other industries. The acceleration of new technologies and the development of large pieces of machinery, combined with a general lack of worker safety standards and ignorance on the part of recently arrived immigrants, created a very dangerous atmosphere for Macedonians.

Macedonians preferred working in railroads, but working on the tracks was probably the most dangerous job in America at the time. The hardships faced by Macedonians in this field can be found in several scattered reports and newspapers. For example, Glencoe Kostoff, a track builder, was accidentally run down by a caboose while working on the tracks in 1905. His left arm was severed instantly and his head sustained several bruises as well as gashes, and his screams were drowned out by the caboose running over his entire body. His Macedonian friends rushed him to the hospital and watched the operation that amputated the rest of his arm, but the doctors feared his head injuries were too severe and that he would die.<sup>326</sup> Six years later, while working for a Pennsylvania railroad company, section-hand Anthony Vassel was run down by a train at a

railroad crossing, severing both his legs, which were brought to the hospital by a friend.<sup>327</sup>

Near Sioux Falls in 1912, while working for the Milwaukee Company, George Tosheff was also badly hurt. Tosheff was pumping the hand car backwards when the handle broke, which caused him to fall in front of the car. The car ran over him but luckily his back didn't break and he was not permanently injured.<sup>328</sup> In Fort Wayne in 1908, "a Macedonian laborer...received an ugly gash in the head and the flesh was painfully bruised by being struck by the handle of a hoisting crane." His hand had slipped from the handle of a crank, with which he was living a heavy casting, and the casting swung around "with terrible force."<sup>329</sup>

Other Macedonians had it much worse. In Fort Wayne, 1917, Miteo Pop Vasiloff was crushed to death on the railroad tracks when another engine backed into him as he was climbing out of another car's engine pit. Death was instantaneous and every bone in his body was reported to have been crushed. Two ladies had seen the engine backing up toward him and they yelled at him to lay down in the other engine pit, but he did not understand them and must have thought it was safer to be outside than inside. Vasiloff "was a Macedonian and came to America with his wife...leaving his two daughters in the old home in Macedonia."<sup>330</sup>

In Midland, Pennsylvania, in 1913, Charles Petroff's foot got caught in the frog of a switch, which he could not free, and an electric car ran him down. The 30-year-old Macedonian was employed at Pittsburgh Crucible Steel and was walking along the tracks when his foot got stuck. "The car, loaded with coal, was approaching from the coal hoist and the man who was operating the car apparently thinking that the foreigner would be able to extricate himself before the car arrived, did not shut off power until it was within a few feet of the man." Petroff's legs were crushed and he died three hours later at a Rochester hospital.<sup>331</sup>

In Pennsylvania, in 1905, Christian Alas was working alongside 40 other men cleaning up the freight yards. While the men were finishing up their work and cars were being returned to their switches, one of the freight cars got loose and crushed Macedonian Alas against a bumping post. Alas had only been working there for a few days.<sup>332</sup> Also in Pennsylvania, in 1912, working at the railroads, Peter Steve was almost killed when "a heavy piece of steel was dropped from a car, striking him across the head." Of his many injuries included his flesh having been torn away from his head.<sup>333</sup>

Trains were even dangerous for Macedonians while they were not on the job. In one instance, a freight train headed for Erie collided with a train full of immigrants. Thirty Macedonians were injured in the wreck and five were killed. The cause was due to brake

failure on the freight train.<sup>334</sup> In another instance, Milan Matcheff and George Atzeff from Steelton, ages 27 and 32, went to visit friends in Duncannon. At the Duncannon Station, they had expected several friends to be waiting for them. But their friends never showed up. After an hour or so of waiting, the men decided to return home. As one of the trains pulled into the station, the two men became confused by all the lights and accidentally stepped in front of the train. They initially survived, suffering many internal injuries; but doctors could not save them, so they died together at the Harrisburg Hospital.<sup>335</sup>

Mining was also a very dangerous job for Macedonians. John Denny was a 37-year-old Macedonian employed by the Amalgamation Development Corporation at the Elk Creek Mine in Colorado. He and several men were reinforcing a bridge with rocks because high water was threatening to damage it. While riding in a car loaded with several large rocks, the car jumped the tracks and dragged Denny for forty feet until the engine stopped, killing him in the process.<sup>336</sup> In December of 1915, Anton George, 33 years old, had a rock roll on his right foot and crush it. Cristo Talle, 40 years of age, was caught between two cars and had his wrist fractured two months later.<sup>337</sup> Tale Noumcheff, 41, at the Cambria Fuel Company Mine, in 1916, had his neck and left leg broken after rock fell on him, which was nearly just as bad as the accident that struck the same-aged Angelo

Botseff at Antelope Mine the previous year. When large rocks fell on Botseff, he broke his right leg, some ribs, and suffered many cuts and scrapes on his face and hands.<sup>338</sup>

In the first half of 1910, at Cambria in Wyoming, Ilia Traikoff and George Bogeff were killed a few months apart, Bogeff being crushed by falling rock and Traikoff being run over by a coal car.<sup>339</sup> Four years later, also at Cambria, 26-year-old Macedonian Joe Steve had his leg broken by the falling rocks, as did Tony Jurania, aged 42. Both were out of work for several months.<sup>340</sup> The year before in the same place, 29-year-old Peter Angeloff lost his leg after rock fell on him while he was smoking a cigarette.<sup>341</sup> At that same unlucky mine in 1914, Risbee Joseff, age 30, had his spine crushed when coal fell on him.<sup>342</sup>

Even when not directly related to work, Macedonians were encountering strange and new technologies that piqued their curiosities. For example, in 1906, a Macedonian railroad worker in Bellefontaine, Ohio discovered a torpedo on the tracks. Not knowing what the object was, he asked someone and one of his American co-workers told him it was very dangerous. The Macedonian, thinking he was doing himself and employees a good thing, proceeded to eliminate the danger by banging the torpedo with a hammer. Before his comrades could stop him, the torpedo exploded, taking one of the



Macedonian's eyes with it, along with putting a dent in his skull.<sup>343</sup>

A more amusing, but potentially serious, incident happened along the tracks in South Dakota in the summer of 1906. "Two Macedonians...had the misfortune to be bitten by a rattlesnake." While working on the railroads, the Macedonians saw a rabbit go into a hole and decided to try to catch it. One Macedonian stuck his hand in the hole – but quickly pulled it out, shrieking in pain. The other Macedonian, being none the wiser, stuck his hand in hopes that he would have better luck; but no – the rattlesnake got him, too.<sup>344</sup>

A more severe and deadly incident occurred in Kane Pennsylvania in 1915. Sixteen men – all Macedonians<sup>345</sup> from Bitola – were employed as wood choppers with the Tionesta Valley Chemical Company. On that winter night, the men were sound asleep in a two-story boarding house with five rooms. Unbeknownst to them, a rubber hose to the gas stove somehow became disconnected and the entire house soon began to fill with escaped gas. The gas made its way upstairs where two oil lamps were burning, and then an explosion rocked the house. Being that the house was made of dry wood, the entire structure was quickly engulfed in flames. Most of the nine dead Macedonians either suffocated to death or burned to death within minutes. The injured men who escaped did so by jumping from windows, with their clothes

still on fire. They extinguished their fires by rolling in the snow, but not before the feet of two men had the skin charred off. The only one to not be severely injured was Mike Tanis because the explosion blew him out of a first story window. Tanis reported that “he was awoken by the explosion and before he realized what had happened he found himself sitting out in the snow and the boarding house in flames.”<sup>346</sup>

In addition to their lives, the men lost about \$1,500 in savings, as they kept their cash in the house and not a bank. Luckily for their families in Macedonia, about \$400 in gold was recovered, and some of those who escaped also managed to take their money with them, as they wrapped their belts with money around their waists before jumping out. The dead and injured were: Vassal and Cristo Bosch, Lazor Tador, Pete Cristo, John Williams, Christ and Sam Spas, Christ Tosco, Levi and Tony Tomy, Nick Tanis, Christo Youman, James Angello, Nick Tanis, and Mike Tesco.<sup>347</sup>

Even though that was a terrible incident for Macedonian immigrants, it was not the only accident involving leaky gas stoves. Two Macedonians, John George and James Chris, were asleep in their house in 1908 in Indianapolis when James George, a brother to John and cousin to James Chris, walked into their rooms to awaken them because they were late for work. Upon walking in, he smelled gas and found his brother and cousin unresponsive. When the authorities came, Chris had already passed away but

John was unconscious and still breathing. Apparently, he survived the gas leak because he was sleeping with his head under the covers. Chris, who was 40 years old, left behind a wife and children in Macedonia.<sup>348</sup>

Other accidents, also due to ignorance and negligence, happened in Macedonian households. Take the case of John Dimitroff, who accidentally shot himself in the eye, with the bullet entering his brain and killing him. He was working in Lansing in 1920 at the Riverside Country Club, when he came to the rooming house of John Tonas to shave Tony Mike, another roomer. Dimitroff was rummaging through a trunk of Tonas' belongings when he found a weapon that was a "combination knife and revolver." Dimitroff was examining a spring on the weapon that acted "as both hammer and trigger" when it accidentally fired, instantly killing him. In efforts to relocate Dimitroff's relatives, the police discovered that he had traveled across much of America and left behind a large sum of money.<sup>349</sup>

Macedonians in the first two decades generally lived in boarding houses like that of John Tonas – sometimes the houses were owned by an established Macedonian, sometimes not. Rarely, there would only be a couple of roomers in a house that a family took in to make extra money. Often, however, they were boarding houses where several men would share one or two rooms between them. Of the rooms they rented, normally one would be for sleeping and one

for cooking.<sup>350</sup> Speaking of cooking, the Macedonian daily diet was simple: a three-pound loaf of bread, one pound of meat (usually boiled beef cooked with seasonal vegetables), hot milk in the morning, and coffee and beer throughout the day.<sup>351</sup>

There were, of course, variations in living standards throughout the country, but Macedonian frugality combined with very few hours of non-working or non-sleeping time meant a very rudimentary lifestyle for most Macedonian laborers. Here's how one household of Macedonians in Birmingham was described:

*"This household is a boarding group of six males, three of whom are Bulgarians and three Macedonians. Their ages range from 20 to 26, and all have been in the United States between one and two years...The house occupied by this group contains two rooms, which are used as living and sleeping rooms. There is no bath, the water being supplied by a hydrant outside the house, which is used by six other families. The flush toilet is in the yard and is used by two families. The house is in only fairly good repair and rents for \$5.25 per month. The interior of the apartment is unclean and no sanitary precautions are in evidence. Heat is supplied by open grates and light by oil lamps. All of this group eat at a restaurant and share equally the cost of rent, fuel, and light. Beds and other furniture are owned separately. Only one individual in this household is married, his wife being in Europe. One newspaper, published in Bulgarian, is subscribed to, and no persons are affiliated with trades unions or other organizations...All were either farmers or farm*

*laborers abroad. Three left Europe on account of low Wages and three for political reasons. All came to the United States through the advice of friends.*"<sup>352</sup>

As mentioned, Macedonians eventually hosted other Macedonians at their homes. This was good for both the hosts and the roomers: the Macedonian host could earn some extra money, and the Macedonian lodgers would have a lower rate or at least be comfortable with people of the same culture that they could trust and understand. In one example, a Macedonian husband and wife would rent two rooms in their house for \$5 a month to five or six other Macedonians. The husband was 28 years old and his wife was ten years younger than him. The husband also worked as a bartender at a Macedonian saloon, generally leaving the wife to address any issues the Macedonian roomers would have. Usually the roomers did their own cooking, but furniture and other belongings were generally supplied.<sup>353</sup> Other Macedonian roomers could be found living with a dozen other Macedonian roommates, where half of them would work the night shift and the other half the day shift. The Macedonians working on the night shift would do the cooking for the day shift workers and vice versa.<sup>354</sup>

Of course, some Macedonian entrepreneurs were not afraid to make a lot of money from the lodging needs of Macedonian immigrants. For example, in Granite City, two Macedonian men started a bakery in

1904 and their business then extended into a bank, saloon, grocery store, dry goods store, mineral baths, steamship agency, and assembly rooms. They would rent out over 100 living rooms in buildings that they bought, and the Macedonian lodgers would naturally gravitate to the businesses that the Macedonian businessmen established. These two Macedonians eventually started smaller scale operations in Hammond, Indiana to serve the needs of Macedonians there.<sup>355</sup>

Even Macedonian businessmen from Macedonia took advantage of the situation, conducting business in America with the express purpose of capitalizing on other Macedonians. The \$25,000 capital to establish a Macedonian mercantile house in Hungary Hollow came from a merchant who had an establishment in Macedonia, which was managed by a Macedonian banker from Istanbul.<sup>356</sup>

A household of families of Macedonian-Americans was rare in the early years, but by the 1920s and 1930s, Macedonian families were growing. Yet, for some, it was difficult to transition from the traditional Macedonian way of living to the American way of living. Andon Atanasoff's wife, for example, was seeking to escape from the communal style of living that her husband and brothers were living, which had been passed on to them from Macedonia. Thus, she filed for divorce. Her problem was that the family of four brothers, their wives and children lived together

in a 16-room house, “all sharing the work and pooling their funds for maintenance.” Moreover, she was not allowed to buy groceries and “everything was supervised by a brother-in-law.” The court awarded her \$35 in separate maintenance for herself and two children pending the outcome of divorce proceedings.<sup>357</sup>

Living arrangements and business exploitations aside, the Macedonians found themselves sticking together wherever they lived in the U.S. In Granite City, an American observer noted that “an American almost thinks himself in a foreign country when he goes over into Hungary Hollow.” When visiting in May for the celebration of the important Orthodox saints, Cyril and Methodius, the observer stated that “on all sides you will hear singing and the music of the concertina, while every saloon and coffee house overflows with all sorts of festivity.” But when the Balkan Wars erupted, “all such festivity as dancing and gay music was abandoned; national hymns and ballads descriptive of soldier life and bravery in death were mainly to be heard.”<sup>358</sup> Macedonians brought their old-world customs and traditions with them, and that made life with thousands of other single Macedonian men in a strange land more tolerable. And this strong sense of community and kinship was expressed more than just in living conditions. For example, at a Pennsylvania train station, over 100 Macedonians gathered to bid farewell to six of their compatriots

who were headed to New York in order ship out back to Macedonia.<sup>359</sup>

This strong sense of community and kinship was especially needed during the early 1900s, when America was experiencing many radical and tense approaches to drastic social reform. Workers were essentially fighting for higher wages, safer working conditions, and more worker rights in general. There were also movements afoot for women's equality and other progressive ideals. But at the same time, many of these very same Americans could not stand foreigners. An example of this comes from Indiana, where scores of Americans working in ditches building sewers suddenly quit one day. They gave three reasons for quitting: one, they had been worked as if they were slaves; two, \$1.50 was too low of daily pay for the type of work they were doing; and three, they did not want to "lower themselves by working with syndicate controlled foreign laborers." These foreigners were none other than 75 Macedonians who had recently arrived in the U.S. Thirty Americans quit on the spot as soon as they saw the Macedonians arrive, throwing down "their spades and picks" into the ditch. "No self-respecting Yankee," they said, "would work side-by-side with a Macedonian or any other kind of a 'Dago'."<sup>360</sup> Macedonians, of course are not Dagos (often used as an ethnic slur for Italians); but to native-born Americans, all Southern European foreigners were the same: unwanted and not needed.



Like their American coworkers, Macedonians would also quit by walking off the job – but not because they didn't like other foreigners or Americans. Thirty-three Macedonians quit the railroad yards in Pennsylvania in 1910, for example, because the foreman fired a Macedonian for not performing his work satisfactorily enough. The Macedonians defended their co-national, insisting that he was doing all that was expected of him. After going home that evening and discussing the issue, the Macedonians decided they would quit the next day if their Macedonian brother was not rehired. The foreman refused to rehire him, so all the Macedonians walked out. The company immediately replaced the Macedonians with other foreigners.<sup>361</sup> Loyalty and the “one for all, all for one” mentality was one of many values Macedonians carried with them to America, even if it meant losing one's job.

Other Macedonians, however, were very aware of their unsafe working conditions and demanded changes – or at least justice. For example, in Indiana in the spring of 1910, a train's engineer and others were mobbed by Macedonian and Italian workers after Nicolai Marcoff was run over by the train. Marcoff was working on the railroad tracks when the train suddenly reversed direction, knocking him down, and the wheels ran over his neck, practically severing his head from his body. The engineer and

others escaped, but the Macedonians relentlessly demanded justice.<sup>362</sup>

Six years later, in the summer of 1916, eight Macedonians in Indiana went on strike for a different reason – the company refused to move their bunk car or hire a watchman for it. The Macedonians were having a particularly annoying problem: when they went to work at the Nickel Plate, there would be no one left at the bunk car since they all were working the same shift. While they were away, hobos would come in and scavenge through their belongings, sometimes using their belongings and other times taking their valuables. The bunk car had originally been in a safer location, but as the company took on new business, the Macedonians' bunk car needed to be moved; and thus, it was moved to a sketchier part of town. The tipping point came when Macedonians caught a thief in the act at 5:30 p.m, after one of their shifts, and that's when they gave their ultimatum to the foreman – either move the car, find a watchman, or they would quit. The foreman said their demands were impossible to meet, so the Macedonians went on strike. This time, the company could not fill the positions quickly. Only one out of the eight positions had been filled within a few days.<sup>363</sup>

In addition to adjusting to different work conditions and aspects of life in America, Macedonians had to adjust to changing laws that they found to be unjust and unreasonable, as did many of

their American compatriots. The Prohibition period, for example, was one of these difficult adjustments. Between 1920 and 1933, there was a nationwide ban on the production, transportation and sale of alcohol. While there were many dedicated supporters of the Prohibition, many Americans (and immigrants) hated the alcohol ban.

But it became the law of the land and, like other Americans, Macedonian immigrants were getting in trouble for selling and possessing it. For example, in Ohio, Andrew Popov was fined \$200 for having liquor in his possession at his establishment. The police chief noted that he was selling a certain type of liquor, possibly raisin jack, and charging 50 cents per glass. Typically fines for such a violation were much higher, but the mayor let him off lightly because he had served in the military for two years during World War I.<sup>364</sup>

Of course, Popov was not the only Macedonian to be caught selling liquor during this difficult. In 1930 in Indianapolis, Chris Vilaschoff and Christ Schischoff were arrested for selling liquor at a soft drink establishment they owned, of which eleven of the men they sold to were police officers who had been congregating there. The police officers were acquitted, but Chris and Christ were sentenced to three years in prison. The judge was also insistent on deporting them back to Macedonia.<sup>365</sup>

Even after the national Prohibition period ended, many states still had strict laws on the sale and consumption of alcohol. In Indiana, the Macedonian ‘Alexander the Great’ organization had its picnic raided by federal excise tax officers on a sunny, summer Sunday in 1943 because they were dispensing liquor on a Sunday. The ladies section of the group had thrown the picnic and were absolutely embarrassed and upset because of the raid.<sup>366</sup>

There were violations of other laws (much less serious than liquor laws) that Macedonian immigrants were probably just unaware of. In Mansfield, Ohio, in 1907, Tony Nick was arrested for peddling – specifically, selling ice cream on a Sunday. The authorities acknowledged that Nick had a license to sell, but that it didn’t permit him to sell ice cream on Sundays. The mayor directed him not to sell on Sunday and fined him \$4.60.<sup>367</sup> In another instance, in Ohio as well and in December of 1920, Christ Chokreff was driving a wagon for his Macedonian Bakery when he drove on concrete that had not yet set. He was fined \$10 for ignoring the barricade, but Chokreff insisted that there was no other way to deliver his bread.<sup>368</sup>

Macedonians seemed to have trouble with following ice cream regulations, though. Wichita’s City Attorney, John Blood, issued arrest warrant for four Macedonians selling ice cream in the city because they were selling it “several degrees below standard.”

Apparently, their process was not up to code. They would make up to 30 gallons of ice cream “from eight to ten gallons of milk, one pint of gelatin, a small quantity of white powder and some other liquid for a filler.” The state law required ice cream to be 14 percent fat, but the Macedonians’ ice cream was only 1.4 percent fat. Investigators put the ice cream in a hot room, and it was an hour before it began melting.<sup>369</sup>

On a more serious note, Macedonians faced biases by authorities because they were immigrants and because they were considered a different type of European. In 1909, Fort Wayne’s Judge O’Rourke ruled that the county commissioners could refuse to issue a license to sell liquor to people with poor character and fitness. While this is not groundbreaking, the judge reasoned that Space Petro, the individual seeking a license to open a saloon, was an “ignorant Macedonian.” The judge stated: “Space Petro, the evidence shows, is a Macedonian – came to this country six years ago, leaving his wife behind him in his own country, expecting to send for her some time when he is able to do so. He speaks the English language very poorly – it is difficult to understand him – he cannot read the English language – has been under the influence of liquor once and once drunk.” The judge further said: “This applicant knows very little about our institutions and civilization, does not comprehend the relations which citizens of this country sustain to each other. It would be dangerous

to the peace and good order of the community to grant him a license to sell intoxicating liquor.”<sup>370</sup> Having previously been drunk once was not the same standard held to most applicants for liquor licenses. That Petro was a Macedonian played a significant role in the judge’s decision.

There were other laws and norms that Macedonians had to adjust to as well. For example, when Ilia Mircheff, a Macedonian barber in Harrisburg, took a 15-year-old bride, he soon discovered that Americans thought being younger than a certain age meant one was too young to marry. Mircheff had eloped with his young bride and then visited her father to get his official blessing. But her father did not approve of the age difference and had him arrested instead of giving Mircheff his blessing.<sup>371</sup>

Marriage laws also hampered the desires of the occasional single Macedonian woman in America. One Macedonian girl to journey to America by herself was Mary Koneva. In 1912, at the age of 17, she came to Pennsylvania at the request of a Macedonian named Spirkoff, who had sent her a picture of a man that wasn’t him when asking her to marry him. Upon arriving here, she realized that the photograph was not of him and she refused to wed him. She soon, however, fell in love with another Macedonian named Dimko Yloff. They were acquainted with each other for only three weeks before they applied for a marriage license. Unfortunately, she needed a guardian to grant

her authority to marry; but her previous guardian was appointed at the time she was scheduled to marry Spirkoff, and the court decided she needed a new one. The news reported that it was no surprise she did not have trouble finding a new man so quickly in America because, as they put it, “she was quite pretty.”<sup>372</sup>

Child labor laws, too, often interfered in the desires of Macedonian immigrants. Macedonian fathers believed that no age was too young for their children to find work in America so they could send back money to their struggling families. On several occasions, American authorities encountered Macedonian children working jobs and hours that violated child-labor laws, though. For example, in Columbus in 1908, ten Macedonian boys under the age of 16 were discovered to be working in the South Side glass plant. The police uncovered the child workers after Wasoli Koti, 15, asked to see the new pistol that Trisuki Mitri, 13, had bought. The pistol accidentally fired, piercing Mitri through the lungs and killing him. The investigation revealed that there were ten boys living in the same room, that their fathers in Macedonia had employed a labor agent to send them to America, and that one 14-year-old Macedonian had \$400 saved to take back with him to Macedonia.<sup>373</sup> Macedonians were desperate to better their lives in Macedonia, and having children work in heavy manufacturing and industry was far better than the alternative of a suffering or struggling life.

Yet, adjusting to life in America did not just mean adjusting to work conditions and changing laws, but also to its customs and holidays. An interpreter explained one Macedonian's understanding of Thanksgiving in Indianapolis in 1911:

*“Last year he didn’t know Thanksgiving. This year has brought him many good things. Last year he was wondering why they celebrated the day here. Was surprised and was asking another man to tell him what the meaning of this celebration was. One told him it was chicken day, but he knew better for everybody killed turkeys. So he knew it was not chicken day.*

*“After two, three months, someone very wise, his countryman, told the story of Thanksgiving to him. How all people who came first to America thanked God for their dinners. Today he says he enjoys himself and is thankful because he knows what he’s doing in America. He made ready one month before today so he could celebrate like all Americans. He is happy he is educated not to break the laws.”*<sup>374</sup>

Being that Macedonians were generally very thankful to have found prosperity and freedom in America, Thanksgiving was a much-appreciated holiday. For many Macedonians who remained in America, freedom and the opportunity to not just prosper, but to excel, defined the rest of their lives. Hard work, frugality, motivation and an understanding of how bad life could get propelled many Macedonians to early and lasting success in the New World.



## **5. Excelling in America**

For many Macedonians, earning money to then send it back to Macedonia or to live comfortably (and sometimes luxuriously) in the United States was all the success they needed. The reason they came to America was to avoid the danger, discomfort, and rampant poverty in the Balkans. Thus, living in an American society that was many times better in these regards was sufficient for them – it was the only goal that really mattered for most.

As the Macedonian colonies became more permanent in certain areas, Macedonians in general became known for operating small businesses, such as restaurants and bakeries. Macedonians were attracted to owning small businesses – whether it was a bakery, restaurant, mechanic shop, or shoe repair store – for several reasons. Chiefly, Macedonians appreciated the

freedom and opportunity that came with controlling one's own affairs and also possessed a tenacious work ethic. There are thousands of Macedonians who owned such businesses, and the following examples represent the successes that many Macedonians experienced in owning and operating their own businesses.

In the mid-1950s, Christ Acevski opened Christ's Café in Mansfield, Ohio. Christ came to the U.S. in 1938, but then World War II consumed the planet and Christ couldn't return to retrieve his family. His wife Tinka, daughter Milica, and two sons, Zhivko and Pete, who were all born in Macedonia, eventually made it to America<sup>375</sup> in 1957.<sup>376</sup> The restaurant was popular with many people, especially for its beef and chicken-style Hungarian goulash.<sup>377</sup> Other hit meals included their steaks and fried chicken.<sup>378</sup> People of all ages and from all walks of life loved the place, such as Aaron Davis, the president of the Mansfield Board of Realtors in the 1980s, who declared it was his favorite restaurant.<sup>379</sup> In 1989, thirty-five years after opening, once Christ was no longer around, his children decided to move the restaurant to the suburbs. In the move, they dropped the "t" from Christ, as people were constantly mispronouncing the name of the restaurant.<sup>380</sup>

There were many other Macedonian immigrants to successfully operate restaurants in the Akron area. Angel Nicolas (Nicoloff), for example, came to

America in 1910 and quickly became the owner of a bakery and grocery store before eventually opening the Cadillac Café in 1940.<sup>381</sup> James Nicholas was another early immigrant who moved to Akron in 1913 after arriving in America in 1911. He owned Nicholas Café for 20 years before opening the Westgate Tavern in 1946, for which he became widely known in the Akron area.<sup>382</sup> The tavern was considered “a monument to one man’s nostalgia for the saloon business.”<sup>383</sup> Other popular restaurant owners in the Akron area were the Thomas brothers. The five’s names were George, Chris, Pete, Mike and Nick.<sup>384</sup>

The best-known Macedonian restaurant owner in the Akron area during the middle of the century, however, was Nicola Yanko. Born in a village outside of Skopje in Macedonia in 1899, he came to the U.S. in 1915, began shining shoes for pennies, and eventually pursued the restaurant business. During the 1930s he operated a restaurant called The Buchtel Eat across from the university campus, which at the time had no dining establishments or cafés. It was very popular with the general public and especially the college students, who referred to the place as “the Greek’s”. But Yanko hated this reference and protested every day. “I’m not a Greek, I’m a Macedonian,” he would say.<sup>385</sup>

Eventually, student housing and on-campus dining stole his customers, so he closed his shop in 1940 and bought a one-room restaurant called Oregon, which

eventually turned into the Bubble Bar, and then finally Yanko's, which had seating for 400 people. Yanko was known to place cards on restaurant tables that started with the phrase: "When I was a small boy in Macedonia, I used to envy the rich pashas..." Unfortunately, the place burned down in 1969 and Yanko took over another restaurant elsewhere. It makes sense that Yanko had served both as president of the Akron Restaurant Association and the Macedonian Businessmen's Club.<sup>386</sup>

Of course, Ohio was not the only state with Macedonian restaurant owners. Vasil Dimitroff arrived in Lansing, Michigan at the age of 19 in 1929. A member of St. Andrew's Orthodox Church, he eventually opened several bars and restaurants throughout the decades, including Broadway Lunch, Senate Grill, Saginaw Bar, White Spot Grill, White Spot Lounge, and Regent Bar.<sup>387</sup>

But perhaps the most infamous restaurant name that Macedonians initiated was Coney Island. Coney Islands were very popular and numerous in the Midwest, especially Michigan. Famous for their Coney Dogs, which are essentially hot dogs smothered with a mild-peppered meat sauce (not unlike many traditional Macedonian sauces or spreads), and usually topped with white onions and mustard, other states often refer to them as Michigan Dogs.<sup>388</sup>

Debates rage about who started the first Coney Island restaurant. The name, however, comes from

1913, when Macedonian immigrants arriving to New York City would grab a hot dog from Coney Island. However, they did not know that they were actually called hot dogs because the city had banned the term 'hot dog' on restaurant signs. Thus, the Macedonians began referring to all hot dogs as 'Coney Islands'.<sup>389</sup>

These Macedonian immigrants brought themselves and that name to states like Michigan and Indiana, where they would establish restaurants and sell hot dogs under the Coney name. Two popped up around the same time in 1914: Todoroff's Coney Island in Jackson, Michigan,<sup>390</sup> opened by George Todoroff,<sup>391</sup> and Ft. Wayne's Famous Coney Island Wiener Stand in Indiana. The Ft. Wayne Coney Island was started by three Macedonians, who then sold it to another Macedonian, Vasil Eschoff, in 1916.<sup>392</sup>

Todoroff's Coney Island, though, was one of the most successful Coney Island restaurants in those days. Todoroff came from Armensko, Macedonia, where he was known as Gligor Markuleff. Before he settled in Jackson, in the early 1910s, he had worked as a cook on the Pacific Northwest railroad.<sup>393</sup> From 1914 until George's retirement in 1945, his Coney Island sold over 17 million Coney Dogs. That it was a great recipe was a big factor for his success; but so was the fact that his restaurant would never close and was located in front of the train station.<sup>394</sup>

George Todoroff had even teamed up with other Macedonians to run his joint: William Christoff

(Velian Markuleff) joined him in 1915, and Tom Christoff (Tanas Kruteff) joined him in 1916. Both men also came from the village of Armensko.<sup>395</sup> But after World War II they sold it to other Macedonians, Andy and Don Lazaroff.<sup>396</sup> Yet, George's son and grandson did not give up on the family business and ran a successful Coney Dog and sauce business through the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>397</sup>

In a great part thanks to Todoroff and his partners, Michigan Coney Islands exploded in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and just after a few years from the opening of the initial ones, there were several variations on the Coney Dog, including the Detroit, Kalamazoo, Flint and Jackson varieties. The sauce for the Flint variety, for example, was created by Macedonian Simon P. Brayan (Branoff) for his 1924 Coney Island Restaurant in Flint.<sup>398</sup>

While Macedonians were the initiators of the original Coney Island concept, other immigrants soon found prosperity in the business. Greek and Albanian immigrants especially have been known to operate Coney Island restaurants in the metro-Detroit area in the later decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. By the end of the century there were scores of such Coney restaurants in Michigan; some were under the auspices of large chains, such as National, Kerby's or Leo's; and others were owned and operated individually.

If Macedonians in general had to be known for operating one type of business, however, then

bakeries undoubtedly were that business. From Granite City to Akron to Detroit to Steelton, Macedonian bakeries were very successful. The Macedonian Bakery in Indianapolis was so successful that it often took part in charitable causes. For example, when several hundred Hungarian immigrants and others became unemployed in 1908, the city's Charity Organization Society organized the community to supply the jobless immigrants with bread and soup. The Macedonian Bakery supplied 125 two-pound loaves and the American Bible Society handed out tickets to the needy. One ticket got each Hungarian a half-loaf of bread and one pint of soup.<sup>399</sup>

All Macedonian colonies thrived around the bakery business. For example, in the Pittsburgh area, there were over two dozen Macedonian-owned bakeries by the 1940s.<sup>400</sup> But by far the city with the most number of Macedonian bakeries was Detroit. From the 1970s through the 1990s, the Detroit area had an overwhelming number of bakeries in Hamtramck and surrounding areas. Hamtramck, initially a Polish settlement, had attracted many new Macedonian arrivals in the 1970s and 1980s. On "paczki day," a reporter went to Caniff Bakery in Hamtramck and asked the owner, Vitko Milovski, some questions. "Vitko, are you Polish?" "Nope," replied Vitko, "Macedonian, from the village of Vratnica." The reporter went to more bakeries and found that the owners of New Polka Bakery, New Martha

Washington Bakery, New Palace Bakery, and the New Deluxe Bakery were all owned by Macedonians.<sup>401</sup>

After further investigation, he discovered that “about 60 percent of the more than 220 commercial bakeries in metropolitan Detroit [were] owned by Macedonians”, with many of them being operated by immigrants from the village of Vratnica. Many people from Vratnica had become bakers due to two main reasons: first, there was a commercial baking school in Tetovo (the nearest large town to Vratnica in Macedonia), and many people from Vratnica had attended that school; and second, many of them would work in bakeries after arriving in Detroit until they had saved enough money to establish their own bakeries.<sup>402</sup>

Many Macedonian bakeries would incorporate recipes from their villages back in Macedonia into their doughy goods. But while there was a large and growing Macedonian population in Detroit, the large number of Macedonian bakeries could not only focus on Macedonian foods – they had to expand their specialties to reflect the greater needs of the diverse ethnic community, such as the Poles and Italians, if they wanted to thrive. For example, when Slavko Gavriloski and John Srbinovski assumed ownership of the Oakwood Bakery in 1984, they continued to use the techniques and recipes of the former owners, who were Italians. They used a “brick-lined oven” that



could hold up to 300 loaves of bread, and they served Sicilian hard rolls as well as French cornets.<sup>403</sup>

Another Macedonian bakery in Detroit in the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was Chene Bakery. Originally owned by Polish immigrants in the 1930s on Chene Street, they eventually moved their business to a growing Polish neighborhood elsewhere in Detroit, but the name ‘Chene’ remained. In 1980, they sold the bakery to Macedonians, Vasko and Janice Maksimovski. To make their business a success, Vasko would “come in at midnight and work until dawn baking the next day’s sweets.” At the height of their success, nine bakers were needed to catch up with demand.<sup>404</sup>

Yet, while numerous Macedonians owned bakeries and restaurants, many other Macedonian immigrants ventured into other types of businesses. George and Josif Atanasoski, from the Prilep region in Macedonia, started Microflex in the 1970s as a business that manufactures metal products, supplying many industries, including NASA. Mike Zafirovski, from Skopje, joined General Electric in 1975 and retired at the end of the millennium after attaining the position of President and CEO of GE Lighting in Europe. Like Zafirovski, Boris Vishanoff also became a significant player in a large international corporation. Boris, who was the son of Demetrius Vishanoff, (the 19<sup>th</sup> century Macedonian immigrant from Solun who lectured frequently on Macedonian customs), spent 35 years

with Shell Oil Company, ending his career there as an assistant to the executive vice president in charge of exploration and production. After graduating from Pennsylvania State University and the University of Southern California, he joined Shell in 1924 and retired in 1959 in Sayre, the Pennsylvanian town his father had given several lectures in.<sup>405</sup>

Most Macedonian business owners, however, were content and comfortable with their smaller-scaled ventures. For example, George Popoff, of Mansfield, was a shoemaker who was still repairing and making shoes in 1970 at age 75. “Business is good,” he said. “But I have to turn a lot of it down mostly because of my health. You have to be in top shape to run the machinery.” He and his wife operated their shoe shop together for 40 years, but most of the shone shining boys refused to learn the trade, saying that they wanted to be architects or engineers instead. “You always have to have shoemakers,” pointed out Popoff. “In Cleveland they are desperate for shoemakers. You are fixed for life if you learn the trade and are good at it.” Popoff had picked up the trade from his brother in Indiana, who had been a shoemaker in Macedonia. Even though Popoff was born in what is today considered Greece, he insisted he was Macedonian. “I’m a Macedonian, not a Greek,” he exclaimed. Speaking of Kostur, his hometown, he noted that it used to be in Macedonia until 1913 when it was occupied by Greece. He explained that after the

Young Turk uprising in 1908 he and his brother fled to Bulgaria and then, with \$85 to his name, he came to New York City and then eventually settled in Indiana.<sup>406</sup>

However, other Macedonians wanted to expand even further into the limitless world of prosperity, excellence and notoriety in their respected fields. From vast business enterprises to professional athletics, and from politics to music and arts, many Macedonians did indeed excel beyond reasonable expectations, with some becoming widely known.

One of America's wealthiest and most widely known Macedonians was Mike Ilitch, a very successful business entrepreneur. Mike's father, Sotir (Samuel) Ilitch, immigrated to America in 1922<sup>407</sup> and his wife, Sultana, came six years later in 1928.<sup>408</sup> Mike was born in Detroit shortly after in 1929. He served in the marines and then in 1952 he signed with the Detroit Tigers to play in the minor league.

His father, however, was not happy with Mike's decision to play baseball, especially when he came home one day with a broken ankle. He thought Mike "was destined to be a bum" and kicked him out of the house, telling him that baseball wasn't a job and that he needed to get a real job, like something to do with the tool and die business, which Sotir worked in and thought held great promise for the future. So, Mike eventually started selling pizzas on the side when the baseball season was over.<sup>409</sup> Several years later, he and

his Macedonian wife, Marion, opened the first Little Caesar's Pizza; and in the 1970s, they began offering the revolutionary 2-for-1 pizza deal.<sup>410</sup> By the 1980s, Little Caesar's was among the top three pizza chains in the nation.<sup>411</sup>

In 1982, Mike joined the National Hockey League as an owner of the Detroit Red Wings, and then acquired the management company for the Joe Louis and Cobo sports and entertainment arenas. When he bought the Red Wings, he notably remarked: "This could only happen in America."<sup>412</sup> His marketing strategy, which included giving away free cars at games and improving the concession food so that it became rated the best food in the NHL, was considered clever and ingenious by many observers.<sup>413</sup> In 1988, he opened the newly renovated Fox Theater, and in the early 1990s he bought the Detroit Tigers and the Detroit Rockers, Detroit's professional soccer team.<sup>414</sup> He even acquired teams in the Arena Football League and the American Professional Slow Pitch Softball League. With Mike's leadership, the Detroit Red Wings became one of the National Hockey League's best teams, making it to the finals in the 1990s three times and winning the championship twice.

In addition to helping rebuild Detroit's sports teams, he was credited for helping revive downtown Detroit. By the 1990s his net worth was estimated to be several hundred million dollars, and it allowed him to invest in all sorts of business opportunities. After

restoring the Fox Theater, he moved the Little Caesar's headquarters downtown, and bought and renovated several apartment buildings and other buildings, such as department stores<sup>415</sup> and a comedy club.<sup>416</sup> By the end of the century, his fortune was approaching \$1 billion.

Wealth, however, is often accompanied by controversy. Thus, it is not surprising that Mike Ilitch was occasionally criticized for his ventures. For example, Ilitch found himself on the opposite end of another Macedonian in Detroit. James Voikos, with roots from Lerin, had owned Jolly Jim's Coney Island on Woodward Avenue for over three decades when, in 1988, the City of Detroit attempted to condemn his struggling business (along with others in the area) so the City could sell the land to Ilitch, who was renovating the Fox Theater across the street at the time. "Now that the cream is coming, they want to kick me out," said Voikos. "They want to take my land and give it to one of these big guys." Even though his business had slowed down since the 1960s, it was his only means of living and he wanted to stay downtown and not be forced to relocate.<sup>417</sup>

In reaction to this, Ilitch's assistant told the media that Ilitch might have to reconsider tackling the renovation of the entertainment district if Voikos didn't move. Ilitch's aides and Detroit officials said that "they needed to take the properties under the City's right of eminent domain to consolidate land in

the six-block site north of Grand Circus Park.” They said that without the land, it would be very difficult to develop the area. Voikos and his fellow business owners fought the issue in court, saying the City failed to show that it needed their land for the project to continue.<sup>418</sup> The City told Voikos that the property was only worth \$35,000, but Voikos demanded more and the courts agreed by blocking the City’s effort to condemn his land. Voikos was then able to sell Jolly Jim’s for \$230,000 to an Ohio businessman.<sup>419</sup>

Mike Ilitch, however, did make an impact on the revitalization of Detroit. Kirk Gibson, one of the Detroit Tigers’ greatest players, said: “He’s the guy who rebuilt Detroit. It was his vision.”<sup>420</sup> Many credit his part in revitalizing Detroit as a result of his willingness to embrace African Americans when many other investors would not.<sup>421</sup> And aside from his business endeavors, he often focused on philanthropy. For example, he paid civil-rights activist Rosa Parks’ apartment rent so she could live in a safer section of Detroit.<sup>422</sup> He also started the Little Caesars Love Kitchen in the 1980s, which is a “restaurant on wheels” established to help Americans in need, especially after natural disasters, by giving out free pizzas.<sup>423</sup>

Ilitch was not the only Macedonian (nor the first) to make a big name for himself in the National Hockey League. The NHL featured several prominent Macedonians in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, including another

Detroit Red Wing: Tommy Ivan. Although Tommy Ivan was born to Macedonian parents in Toronto, Canada in 1911, his was inducted into the Hockey Hall of Fame in 1974 because of his stint with the Detroit Red Wings as a coach and with the Chicago Blackhawks.

At 36 years old, Ivan took over as coach of the Red Wings without ever having played professionally. He left his coaching position with the Indianapolis Capitals in the American Hockey League to join Detroit.<sup>424</sup> During his time with the Red Wings from 1947 to 1954, the team never had a losing record and went to the Stanley Cup championship series five times, winning the Cup three times. As a Red Wing, Ivan was also a coach for the First Team in the NHL All-Star Game.<sup>425</sup> After he left the Red Wings, he joined the Chicago Blackhawks, where he was involved with the organization for a few decades, including as coach, general manager and vice president; and he also won the Blackhawks a Stanley Cup.<sup>426</sup> Many hockey fans lauded his ability to bring big stars to his teams, such as when he brought Gordie Howe to the Red Wings and Bobby Hull and Bobby Orr to the Blackhawks.<sup>427</sup> Of his ability to make his teams successful, former Red Wings player Ted Lindsay said: “He understood men, understood that everyone had a different personality and different strengths.”<sup>428</sup>

Of course, Macedonians also entered the National Hockey League as players. Some players with great potential never managed to become stars, such as Alex Stojanov (drafted seventh in the NHL draft pick) and Steve Staios, who when asked if he was a Greek simply replied, “No, Macedonian.”<sup>429</sup> But Edward Jovanovski is one Canadian-born Macedonian who played for American teams and was quite successful.

Jovanovski was born in Windsor, just across from Detroit, in 1976 to Macedonian immigrants and went number one in the 1994 NHL draft, having been recruited by the Florida Panthers. He played defense and was described as a “vicious body checker.” Jovanovski did not start playing hockey until age 11, having played soccer up until that point – but the game was not physical enough for him.<sup>430</sup> Throughout his career he was referred to as a “one-man wrecking crew” on the ice with “a real passion for the game.”<sup>431</sup> “I like collisions, I like to hit people,” exclaimed Jovanovski.”<sup>432</sup> That urge to hit people earned him plenty of time in the penalty box; but during his career, he was consistently one of the better defensemen, having played in five separate All Star games.

Hockey is not the only sport that Macedonian-Americans were involved in. Several played soccer nationally and internationally. Jovan Kirovski, born in Escondido, California, played for several teams throughout the U.S. and Europe, as well as playing for the U.S. National team in the 1990s, making an



appearance in the 1996 Olympics. Two other soccer players were brothers George and Louis Nanchoff. Both were born in Resen and then migrated to Akron in the late 1960s. Both played for the University of Akron in college and then for several different teams in the North American Soccer League and Major Indoor Soccer League in the 1970s and 1980s. And Ohio was blessed with another great Macedonian soccer player, Kosta Bulakovski, who was born outside of Bitola in 1943. He came to America in 1970 and eventually owned and operated the Majestic Lounge in Mansfield. But his real passion was soccer and he played for both the Columbus All Stars and the Mansfield Chargers. For the Chargers, he scored over 400 goals in six years.<sup>433</sup>

While not many Macedonian-Americans played professional football in the U.S. during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Pete Stoyanovich made a name for himself as one of the National Football League's best kickers. His parents came over from a village in the Prespa region of Macedonia and Pete was born in 1967 just outside of Detroit. He mostly played for the Miami Dolphins and the Kansas City Chiefs during the 1990s. In 1992, he led the NFL with the most points – kicking 30 field goals and 34 extra points for a total of 124 points. Stoyanovich also kicked the longest field goal in NFL playoff history, and remains among the top kickers in all kicking categories.

Other Macedonian-Americans excelled in individual athletics. Peter George, for example, was a three-time Olympic medal winner for the U.S. weightlifting squad. His father, Tryan Taleff, changed his name to Tony George when arriving in America<sup>434</sup> to work on the railroads.<sup>435</sup> Peter was born in Akron in 1929, and at a young age found a passion for weightlifting, after other kids would tease him for being weak.<sup>436</sup> He competed in the men's middleweight division and won silver in 1948 at the London Olympic Games, gold at the Helsinki Olympic Games in 1952, and silver again in 1956 at Melbourne.<sup>437</sup> He also won five world championships during that period, as well as championships at the Pan-American games during that time.<sup>438</sup> Similarly, Peter's brother Jim won several world medals for weightlifting, and both men went on to become dentists.<sup>439</sup>

Further, in the 1960s, a recent Macedonian immigrant became a U.S. pro-wrestler. Chris Markoff was a Macedonian heavyweight champion of Greece before he came to the United States in 1965. In September of 1966, he joined Angelo Poffo (the two were called the "Devil's Duo") in a pro-wrestling tag-team match at the Coliseum in Chicago. They had been the defending champions for a month and faced-off against Wilbur Snyder and Luis Martinez.<sup>440</sup> Throughout his wrestling career, Markoff had several tag team partners, such as Bronko Lubich of Serbian

ancestry and Nikolai Volkoff of Croatia. Markoff wrestled all around the country for pro-wrestling organizations such as the World Wrestling Association and the American Wrestling Association.

Macedonians were also known for their contributions in the arts, music and entertainment fields. Milcho Silianoff, who was born in Wilmerding, Pennsylvania to Macedonian immigrants, eventually became a widely known stained glass designer. He was often asked to give lectures and classes on glass staining. For example, in 1964, at the Uniontown Art Club meeting in Pennsylvania, he gave a lecture called “Stained Glass in the Contemporary Building.” He had studied at the Pittsburgh Art Institute for two years and then found employment with a group called “Bulgarian Church Decorators” and Pittsburgh Stained Glass Studios. He also designed stained glass for many Methodist, Catholic and Lutheran churches throughout the country.<sup>441</sup>

Other Macedonians found their place in film and television. For example, Milcho Manchevski, one of Macedonia’s best-known directors, came to the United States in 1982 to attend film school at the University of Southern Illinois. His 1994 film *Before the Rain* was an international sensation, with very positive reviews from critics, and it won Venice Film Festival’s Golden Lion award.<sup>442</sup> On the other hand, Nick Vanoff came from Solun and was a very successful film and television producer. On the list of the many

shows and films he produced was the Tonight Show.<sup>443</sup> Macedonian actors also found air time on American television shows. In the 1990s, Starr Andreeff, born in Canada, played the role of Jessica Holmes on General Hospital, and starred in many movies as well.<sup>444</sup>

Another actor to accomplish much in his career was Jordan Zankoff. Jordan's parents, Eli and Dorothy, immigrated to Ohio in the 1930s and in 1940 Jordan was born in Youngstown. When Jordan was a child, his family moved to Akron and Jordan was eventually sucked into the world of music. In the 1960s, he moved to New York, changed his name to Jordan Christopher, and joined the Wild Ones as a lead singer, a rock band that went on to release the original version of the song "Wild Thing."<sup>445</sup> During this time, he worked as a waiter at Lorraine Murphy's Restaurant with another band member and would proudly tell others that he was Macedonian, as well as how he would go on to marry money and become famous.<sup>446</sup> And he did marry into money and fame shortly after: he caught Richard Burton's ex-wife, Sybil, and the two were married by 1965.<sup>447</sup> He eventually made it onto Broadway, replacing Michael Crawford in "Black Comedy" in 1967 and then became Patrick Macnee's news co-star in "Sleuth" in the early 1970s.<sup>448</sup> Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, Jordan appeared in many plays, movies and television shows, until his

untimely death of a heart attack at the age of 55 in 1996.<sup>449</sup>

Macedonians, of course, were not just about money, sports and entertainment. They also had a serious side and were deeply opinionated about political matters. Stoyan Christowe is America's most well-known Macedonian politician. Christowe was born in Konomladi in 1898<sup>450</sup> and came to the United States by the time he was a teenager. He started out in St. Louis, where many people from Konomladi were working in the railroad round house. Christowe hated that work, so he trekked out to Montana setting railroad tracks. That work provided him with two things: a sense that he had helped build America in a small way; and enough money to study at Valparaiso University in Indiana.<sup>451</sup>

After completing school, Christowe worked as a journalist and news correspondent, covering the Balkans and Eastern Europe, especially his native Macedonia. He eventually would go on to write six books, all relating to Macedonia, with *This is My Country* and *My American Pilgrimage* being his most widely known works in the U.S. When writing his acclaimed investigative and historical book on the IMRO, called *Heroes and Assassins*, he had become familiar with, Vlado Czernozanski, the Macedonian who would go on to assassinate Serbian King Alexander of Yugoslavia and French Prime Minister Barthou. Christowe, of course, regretted not getting

closer with the assassin. “Had I known when I met him that he was going to kill Alexander,” said Christowe, “you may be sure I would have taken particular pains to cultivate his acquaintance.”<sup>452</sup>

After meeting his future wife in New York, he settled down in Vermont and soon took on politics in addition to writing. He settled in Vermont because, in part, it reminded him of his homeland. “When I embraced America,” he said, “it was too big for me. So I embraced Vermont.”<sup>453</sup> Even though he was entering the second half of his life, he was not ready to settle down from writing and activism. At the Rutland Fortnightly Club in Vermont in 1948, for example, he told the gathered audience that the U.S. was on the wrong side of the Civil War in Greece. He acknowledged that aggressive communism was something that could harm America and that “trying to contain communism” was “a sound policy.” He emphasized, however, that the Macedonian rebels in Greece were not Communists in the sense that America thought them to be. Talking about the Macedonian Cause, he described it as “an ancient love of liberty and of country, a spirit which prizes liberty above all things. Communism has merely been astute enough to exploit this democratic heritage, while we have been short-sighted enough to suppress it instead of trying to recruit it on the side of genuine democracy, where it belongs.”<sup>454</sup>

When the 1960s rolled around, Christowe was serving in the Vermont House as a Republican, but many of his views were in the middle and on the left of the political spectrum. In the early 1960s, as a Representative of Dover, he was livid that citizens still had to pay a tax to vote, exclaiming that in Vermont, “you can deprive a person of his voting rights, but you can’t interfere with his rights to fish and hunt.”<sup>455</sup> He further lambasted the House for keeping the poll tax a requirement for participating in Town Meeting votes. He claimed that the House was “putting human beings in the same category as cows and horses and pigs” and in other ways was putting humans below cows, as the House also had a bill that wanted to eliminate the tax on cows. He stated that Vermont tradition included freedom and unity and that making people pay a tax to participate in town meetings went against that tradition.<sup>456</sup> In legislative session in 1963, he stated: “The right to vote is the rule. The restrictions are the exception. The poll tax is a hangover from the days when there was a tax on windows and fireplaces.”<sup>457</sup> He even notably stated a couple years earlier: “Taxing people is like shearing sheep. You want to take all the wool you can, but you have to be careful of the skin. You can nip a sheep every year, but you can only skin him once.”<sup>458</sup>

On the other end of the spectrum, in 1962 he co-sponsored a bill that required political literature to indicate the name and address of the author and

publisher. His reasoning was that a lot of anonymous literature was damaging peoples' reputations without reprimand for false information. Democratic opponents said such a bill violated freedom of speech.<sup>459</sup>

In 1964, after serving two 2-year terms in the House, Christowe decided to run for the Vermont Senate.<sup>460</sup> So he faced-off against William Kissell of Westminster for the Republican nomination of Windsor County. In the September 8<sup>th</sup> primary, they tied with 1,859 votes. After a recount, irregularities were discovered and Christowe won by 17 votes.<sup>461</sup>

Christowe went on to become Windsor County's senator and in that role he continued pursuing causes he believed in. He sponsored a bill, for example, to raise the high school dropout age to 17. While he acknowledged that this would not solve the dropout problem in Vermont, he said it was a step in the right direction.<sup>462</sup> He also advocated for abolishing the death penalty and was disappointed when a House death penalty abolition bill was approved but amended by his fellow Senators to still allow the death penalty in certain cases. Christowe said that the bill had "degenerated into a bill that does and does not abolish the death penalty." But he ended up supporting it, given that it was a step in the direction of abolishing the death penalty.<sup>463</sup>

Pointing to his character and integrity, Christowe was fiercely opposed to lobbyists and their tactics. In



one case, the Vermont State Medical Society invited him twice to attend events they had sponsored, and Christowe declined to attend. Then, the executive secretary of that organization, Getty Page, criticized him in a letter to the VSMS council. The letter asked if the council should publically call for his resignation as the chairman of the Senate Public Health Committee because of his failure to attend those events and to mingle with doctors and other medical professionals. In response, Christowe remarked that Vermonters did not elect him “to attend free cocktail parties and dinners.” He emphasized that “it is not for lobbyists to decide who shall be a senator and who shall be chairman of a Senate committee.”<sup>464</sup>

He was very skeptical and cautious about the medical industry, especially pharmaceutical companies. In 1970, he served as a co-chairman of a committee looking into problems with Vermont’s drug industry. On a television program, he stated that “we have found instances of serious misconduct by the state board of pharmacy” and then went on to say how he hoped that the board’s power and influence would be weakened. During his investigation, he discovered that, for some drugs being sold at pharmacies, there was a price discrepancy of over 200 percent. “Maybe these drug store people will wise up,” he said, “if we expose their prices.”<sup>465</sup>

Christowe was just as passionate about books and libraries. Prior to being a politician, he had served as

the Vermont State Library Board's Chairman and believed in the benefits of the bookmobile service – a service that brought books to small towns four times a year so that small libraries could replenish their materials. As a senator, in the early 1970s, some people wanted to halt that service. “There is just no way these small towns could have offered adequate library service without the bookmobiles,” Christowe remarked. He introduced legislation – that the Senate unanimously approved – for continuing the bookmobile service. On this issue, he was “flooded with letters of support” from town libraries and townspeople in the Brattleboro area, as well as the Montpelier area, all of them wanting the “bookmobiles to continue.”<sup>466</sup>

Christowe retired from politics in 1972, at 73 years of age, after serving a total of 12 years in the House and Senate. On his retirement, he said: “It is time for me to step aside and give another man a chance...I have other work to do. I must say I have enjoyed serving in the legislature as much as anything I have done in my life, particularly the years in the Senate.” Although he did much in his time as a senator, introducing plenty of legislation and serving on several committees on topics he was passionate about – such as the House Education Committee, Senate Health and Welfare Committee, and Senate Natural Resources Committee – retirement from politics did not mean retirement from writing and activism.<sup>467</sup> He

continued writing and speaking on issues he held dear – from senior citizens’ rights and needs to his Macedonian homeland.

While it may be unexpected to find a Macedonian politician at the center of politics in a state with hardly any Macedonians, Christowe in Vermont was not the only such situation. There was also Jimmy Dimos of Louisiana, who served as a State Representative for a quarter of a century. Dimos was born in Bitola and came to America in 1951.<sup>468</sup> Like Christowe, Dimos put himself through school, eventually graduating from Tulane University Law School in 1963. After practicing law for over a decade, he decided to run for Louisiana’s 16<sup>th</sup> District House seat as a Democrat, a seat that he won in 1975. From 1988 to 1992, he served as Louisiana’s Speaker of the House.<sup>469</sup>

Dimos was also like Christowe in another sense: he often found himself wandering across the political aisle. For example, even though he was a Democrat, he was fiercely pro-life and had supported a bill that would have outlawed abortions in Louisiana. He also supported a bill to reduce voting hours on election days because municipalities were having trouble hiring people to work the voting booths. Many unions and civil liberties activists strongly opposed such measures, claiming it would prevent many working people from getting to vote.<sup>470</sup> In general, however, he supported common sense legislation that would cut costs or bring economic opportunity to Louisiana and

improve public health. In 1984, he introduced a bill that would have increased the minimum driving age from 15 to 16, stating that it would “reduce the number of accidents and reduce costs for automobile insurance.” “It’s just unreal,” said Dimos, “that we would let these kids go out there and cause all of these accidents.”<sup>471</sup> Two years prior, he co-authored legislation that aimed to increase taxes on downtown properties in order to revitalize the central business district of Baton Rouge.<sup>472</sup> And in 1996, he supported making the state sales tax permanent, saying it would give the government more stability and allow it to better prepare the budget.<sup>473</sup> In 1999, he retired from his long career as a representative and was elected as a judge to Louisiana’s Fourth District.

Dimos was not the only Macedonian-American to serve as a judge. Paul Nicolich, of Battle Creek, Michigan, became a District Judge in the mid-1970s and named his son after Alexander the Great, who Nicolich insisted was Macedonian and not Greek. Nicolich was born in Macedonia, graduated from Battle Creek High School in 1951, and then attended Michigan States University and Detroit College of Law. He had also served in the Korean War and was a member of the St. Elias Eastern Orthodox Church. Nicolich and his wife were both Macedonians, but he came from Vardar Macedonia and she came from Aegean Macedonia. Nicolich had insisted that

“Macedonians on both sides of the border... [were] united in a desire for their own independent state.”<sup>474</sup>

In District 10 of Calhoun County in October of 1976, Nicolich entered the race for the newly created third Circuit Court judgeship in the county. At that time he was 43 years old and had already been a judge for 11 years. During the race, he proposed that a domestic relations court be established with one of the three circuit judges presiding over divorce and custody cases. The other two judges, he said, would be free “to attack the large backlog of criminal cases.” His opponent, Rae, was 41 years old, had been an attorney for 15 years, and was the County prosecutor for two years. Rae proposed to fix the high divorce rate by creating a domestic relations counseling service within the circuit court. Although Nicolich wanted to see reconciliation like Rae, he didn’t think it was the answer. It “has been encouraged for several years,” he said. “The results have been rather unsuccessful.”<sup>475</sup>

Nicolich said that in addition to a domestic relations court, having a referee-type system would handle increases in child support payments, negligence in making payments, and visitation disputes. The final decision would be determined by a judge. He went on to say that the county had a backlog of 2,000 cases, preventing people from obtaining a speedy trial. On other topics, Rae was very supportive of mandatory minimum sentencing, but Nicolich felt that should be left to the Michigan legislature. Nicolich had a

reputation for being tough with setting bonds in serious cases, but believed that the determination of bonds should be left to the judge's discretion. Rae felt plea bargaining was often necessary while Nicolich said it was only sometimes necessary. But unlike Rae, he was not as interested in sentence bargaining, calling it "an invasion of the province of the judge."<sup>476</sup>

Of course, Macedonians who were engaged in local politics were often found in other states where there were large Macedonian colonies. For example, in Ohio, a Macedonian ran as a Republican against incumbent Democrat Clifford Nicholson in Akron's 5<sup>th</sup> Ward for Council Representative in 1973. The Macedonian was only 18 years old at the time – still a freshman at Akron University – and his name was Alexander Arshinkoff. Leading up to the November 6<sup>th</sup> election, he and his opponent both agreed that their ward in Akron needed "some type of low-interest loan program to assist residents in fixing up their homes and property." But Arshinkoff believed that Akron's community needed someone who could better represent the diverse constituency. "Blacks and other ethnic residents," he said, "don't feel they can communicate with Nicholson. I'm young and I'm a Macedonian-American and I can talk to them. I'm asking people not to hold it against me because I'm 18."<sup>477</sup> Arshinkoff lost the election, 60% to 40%.<sup>478</sup>

By 1978, Arshinkoff had become the Republican Chairman for Summit County in Ohio. Frances Rex

described Arshinkoff's desire to be a part of the mix when he first started politics. "Alex would do anything for us," she said. "He would run errands, knock on doors and do all the little jobs that no one else would do." Rex said that, because of his age, many people doubted that he should have the position. "But I felt like we should give him a chance," she said, "and now I feel like I watched a son grow up into a leader." Arshinkoff was credited by many for the republican candidate winning the mayor's seat in 1979. The former GOP national chairman, Ray Bliss, said Arshinkoff "brought a new zeal in revitalizing and redeveloping the party." Nicholas Andreeff, an Akron attorney, credited Arshinkoff's success due to his aggressiveness. "When you are outnumbered in registration by 3 to 1," said Andreeff, "you need that aggressiveness."<sup>479</sup> By the 1990s Arshinkoff had made several important allies in Ohio as well as throughout the country, such as former Ohio Governor and US Senator George Voinovich (who once said of Arshinkoff in Serbian that "he is one of us" to describe the closeness between the Macedonians and Serbians of Ohio).<sup>480</sup>

His aggressiveness and dedication to party politics got him into trouble, though. He was accused of using the Summit County Election Board, for which he served as president, "as a personal job bank for friends and relatives of the party faithful." Under his control, the Board was considered "the most negative,

backbiting, unprofessional, juvenile and hypocritical atmosphere” thanks to Arshinkoff’s antics.<sup>481</sup> In the 1980s, he was also targeted by local Democrats for his attitude, tactics and work ethic. For example, when Arshinkoff was striving to be the administrative aide to Summit County Commissioner, Don Stephens, another commissioner, Mark Ravenscraft, blasted Arshinkoff for his work as the assistant county purchasing agent. “Arshinkoff doesn’t come into work on time,” said Ravenscraft, “and hasn’t given us an honest day’s work since he worked for the county.” Arshinkoff’s response? “I do my job.”<sup>482</sup>

Arshinkoff also sharp differences with some Macedonians in his community. Nicholas Kozakoff, who belonged to St. Elia Macedono-Bulgarian Orthodox Church, with the majority of its members belonging to the Macedonian Patriotic Organization (MPO), stated that St. Elia’s parishioners were dedicated to the Macedonian homeland. But Arshinkoff, he said, belonged to the other Macedonian church in the area, St. Thomas Eastern Orthodox Church, whose Macedonian members were not affiliated with the MPO. Kozakoff questioned why people like Arshinkoff would want to maintain their Macedonian traditions and customs and culture, but not join the MPO in its struggle.<sup>483</sup> (See chapters nine and ten for a detailed look at the MPO and other prevalent Macedonian political organizations in the United States.)



Yet, MPO members also found themselves in the center of local politics. Ivan Lebamoff served as the mayor of Fort Wayne, Indiana from 1972 to 1976. In 1971, Lebamoff – who was a practicing attorney – ran as a Democrat against incumbent Republican Harold S. Zeis. Lebamoff ran a campaign against what he saw were failures during Zeis’ tenure: crime in the city had increased by over 40%; the city-county building cost double than estimated to construct; police and firemen were undertrained and underpaid; and Zeis’ poor communication skills with the press and public. Lebamoff also promised weekly news conferences if he won. Lebamoff won the election,<sup>484</sup> but he became a very polarizing mayor during his tenure, especially because he “demonized opponents with passion and fervor.” He lost his reelection bid because he had made many enemies, alienated several other moderates, and had too many controversial and suspicious ties with his family’s liquor business.<sup>485</sup> (In the 1980s and 1990s, Lebamoff was elected president of the MPO. But trouble relating to the liquor business followed him: in 1994 his license to practice law was suspended and he was temporarily barred for four months “for dishonest conduct before the Alcoholic Beverage Commission.” Specifically, the Indiana Supreme Court found that Lebamoff “made incorrect statements at an April 1990 commission hearing on the relationship between” a beer distributor and his brother, George Lebamoff.<sup>486</sup>)

Not all Macedonian-Americans who got involved in politics served in local, state or national positions. Ljubica Acevska, an Ohioan like Arshinkoff, surrendered her American citizenship to be a Macedonian politician. Born in Capari, Macedonia, she came to the United States in 1966 at the age of nine. When Macedonia became independent in 1991, she was selected to be the Macedonian ambassador to the United States. Her most important task was lobbying the U.S. to recognize Macedonia as an independent and sovereign nation.<sup>487</sup>

Moreover, sometimes Macedonian-Americans who had no official political standing (and who had no intention of making any political impacts) managed to make political statements, patriotic statements, and etiquette statements all at the same time. During the Kennedy Administration in the 1960s, for example, Supreme Court Justice William Douglas, Interior Secretary Stewart Udall and a bunch of other important national figures trekked 25 miles up the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal in Washington, D.C. and Maryland to raise money for the canal's restoration. But "it was a rainy, miserably muddy day" and the group of 40 decided to stop for a break at Old Angler's Inn, a restaurant owned by Olympia Reges.<sup>488</sup>

Olympia had just spent all her expendable savings to buy new furniture, carpeting and decorations for her place. So, when the political brass came in to rest, without spending any money, and without being

respectful to the cleanly environment at Olympia's restaurant, she kicked all the politicians out. "Nobody comes into my place dressed like a tramp," said Olympia. "It doesn't matter who they are. If they would have asked, I would have made arrangements. But they just barged in here as though they felt they owned the place. It was shameful. I was embarrassed for them."<sup>489</sup>

Political commentators and politicians blasted her in the media for her "lack of respect for public officials" and her ungracious attitude toward the businessmen and politicians who made it possible for her to succeed in this country. The Kennedy administration simply laughed at her peasant understanding of how to treat officials. But hundreds of ordinary women from around the country wrote her letters of support, envious of the opportunity she had to stick it to the man.<sup>490</sup>

And when Olympia was being interviewed for this act of political rebellion, the interviewer mistook her for a Greek. As he stated, he learned his lesson: "But Olympia Reges, not a Greek, but a Macedonian, she will tell you in no uncertain terms, is not a lady to be trifled with."<sup>491</sup> In one gesture, the Macedonian, Olympia Reges, taught American politicians about respect, power and the Macedonian identity.

Other Macedonians directly used political activism to defend their interests and demand justice. In Milwaukee in the summer of 1936, a family of five

Macedonians “sieged” the mayor’s office. This happened shortly after they had staged a weekend-long sit-in at the District Attorney’s Office. The family – Dr. Joseph Atanasoff, Andon, Lazar, Angel and Julia – staged the sit-in at the mayor’s office after they lost their home and the World Theater that they had been operating by what they claimed was a “sinister combine” resulting in a mortgage foreclosure. “We will sit for a hundred years if necessary,” shouted Andon. “We are taxpayers and we can stay. We demand rights and justice. We have no home. We will wait for the federal government to act.”<sup>492</sup>

The mayor, Daniel W. Hoan, told the family that he had appealed to U.S. Senator Burton Wheeler to aid them in their troubles, but the Macedonians refused to leave. The mayor left the office and a few minutes later the police sergeant stormed in. The sergeant asked the Macedonians to leave, but they refused. The sergeant asked again, and the Macedonians refused again. Shortly thereafter, a police wagon arrived with six officers. All of the Macedonians rose except Julia. An officer pulled her to her feet, but the Macedonian men did not like the way the officer handled her, so a brawl broke out. Eventually, the Macedonians were arrested and charged with disorderly conduct.<sup>493</sup>

This type of resilience, stubbornness and understanding of fairness by Macedonian-Americans was not uncommon. It is, in part, what has allowed many Macedonians to succeed and surpass

expectations. It helped them earn a reputation as responsible citizens within their communities. However, especially during those early years, several Macedonians were sucked into the dark side of life – sometimes willingly, and sometimes not.

## **6. The Dark Side**

Macedonian immigrants were known to be frugal, hardworking, and respectable members of their communities. Unlike many other immigrant or native peoples, Macedonian-Americans never organized into small or large criminal networks – gang and mafia lifestyles that profited from harm done onto others never intrigued Macedonians. Thus, in this sense, Macedonians in America never earned a notorious reputation in the underworld.

However, as we have seen, it was not easy for an immigrant in America: work was long and tough, laws and customs were different, the language was foreign, and Macedonians mostly only had other Macedonians to rely on and trust. Therefore, it was inevitable that Macedonians would come into conflict with each other as well as other Americans. Sometimes minor

arguments would escalate into major brawls; sometimes individuals lost their minds or had violent outbursts; and sometimes greed or poverty motivated some to commit despicable acts. Yet, criminal acts committed by Macedonians and against Macedonians, as disturbing as some cases may be, do serve another important parts of Macedonian-American history during the 20<sup>th</sup> century: they document the existence and recognition of a distinct Macedonian people when Macedonia and Macedonians were not recognized in the global arena; and they show where and how Macedonians were congregating and living.

As mentioned, Macedonians often congregated together wherever they went in America. This was mostly beneficial – they would help each other with jobs, food and communicating, and were there for general social and moral support. But such close quarters inevitably led to conflicts between Macedonians, and such reliance on one another allowed fellow Macedonians to exploit one another. There are several such documented cases.

Macedonians were very protective of their money. Very few trusted banks, and many were suspicious of other Macedonians. Thus, most Macedonians would keep most of their money on them in a belt, or hide it somewhere in their house. This common method of hording money meant that Macedonians knew where to target other Macedonians; and because Macedonians kept their money on them, robberies

were almost always violent. For example, in 1909 in Danville, Illinois, Bozin Tase was “terribly crushed by a blow from a rock” by fellow Macedonian Aristo Dimitri. Both had been track laborers and Dimitri knew Tase’s financial situation well enough to attack him and rob him of the \$140 in his belt. Tase did not survive.<sup>494</sup>

Then there was the Macedonian serial killer of 1909 whose primary motive was robbery – he killed four men, three of them Macedonians, in separate incidents. In Buffalo, he killed two Macedonians, robbed their dead corpses, and left their bodies in a boxcar on a railroad. In Bedford, Indiana, he killed a British man by shooting him to death and then stealing his money. Some Macedonian friends of his in Indiana helped him lie low until he could escape the looming presence of authorities. After that he moved to Canada, where he murdered a Macedonian in Toronto by the name of Van Simoff. He killed him with a hatchet and then got away with \$104 of Simoff’s money. A Toronto jury found him guilty of the crime, and just before his execution he confessed to killing the British man in Indiana.<sup>495</sup>

Two years later, in the early autumn of 1911, a Macedonian bakery delivery boy in Indianapolis, Glegor Deneff, was making a delivery to a boxcar of Macedonian section men when he discovered the dead body of Tono Chrestoff inside. Chrestoff was “partly dressed and lay across the couch” with a bullet



in his left temple and his money-belt (which contained \$200 in gold) missing. Chrestoff, who was 35 years old, had been living in America for several years. Macedonians who had lived with him accused another Macedonian, Chris Stanos, with committing the murder.<sup>496</sup>

Apparently, the two men had been involved in a heated quarrel over the previous few weeks. No one really knew what the quarrel was about, but only that it was very passionate. Chrestoff had “threatened to cut Stanos deep with a knife if he didn’t quit work and leave the section.” So Stanos did quit. But the foreman, upon hearing about Chrestoff’s actions, discharged him. Chrestoff trekked back to the Macedonian boxcar and must have fallen asleep. Stanos came back to the boxcar while the others were at work, and after what was presumably an unprovoked attack, Stanos not only killed Chrestoff but took all of his money.<sup>497</sup>

Macedonians in Pennsylvania also didn’t hesitate to target one another. In Bradford, in 1916, four Macedonians bound a fellow Macedonian workman by the name of Samono Trache to a tree, gagging him and tying his wrists so tightly that they bled. The five were all woodchoppers, and Tache’s assailants stole \$95 from him, as well as \$620 worth of certificates of deposit.<sup>498</sup> Trache, or Sam Treitch (as he was more commonly called) had worked as a bricklayer for a construction company for a year leading up to his

brush with death in December of that year. He was very thrifty and many Macedonians knew this, including Nidelko Kostoff, who had also been employed in the area. Kostoff had left Kushequa, where Treitch lived and worked, only after a few months of residing there; but then one day, several months later, he returned with three other Macedonians.<sup>499</sup>

Treitch had them over his house as guests when around noontime the five Macedonians took a stroll to Mt. Jewett. "As they reached the watering trough, one of the men grabbed Treitch by the throat and dragged him into the woods...He was gagged, his hands tied and he was bound to a tree. The quartette then robbed him...of \$95 in cash, and certificates of deposit of the Mt. Jewett National Bank" worth over \$600. The gang then left Treitch suffering with many injuries from cuts on the head and throat, but Treitch managed to free himself and make it to a farmhouse, from which he managed to find help. The police then initiated a search for the gang, and especially Kostoff, who also went by Costa Ristoff, because of his alleged involvement in a shooting incident several years prior.<sup>500</sup> A \$600 reward was then issued for the capture of Kostoff and the other Macedonians. The reward was issued by Treitch's boss who was interested in seeing that his employees were safe and their interests protected. The police were having no luck, with Kostoff and the others several steps ahead of them,

so Treitch's boss, Kane, wanted to take control of the matter as soon as possible.<sup>501</sup>

Also in Pennsylvania, a couple of decades later in 1932, five Macedonians attempted to kidnap and rob Tony Simo, also known as Todor Nedelco. Those Macedonians – Antonio Orazio, Dusan Verxin, Sprio Yovanoff, James Swetten and Paul Babac – were sentenced to several years in jail. However, Simo was again victimized the following spring. Simo, who did not know how to read or write English, had worked in America for several years and had much money stored away. A distant nephew of his, Peter Space, came down from Buffalo and convinced him that it was no longer safe to keep money stored in the banks that he was using and advised him to let him help Simo pull out all his money and transfer it to another bank. The banks would not give him such a large amount all at once, so they gave them a “draft” for \$500. Space took that draft and attempted to cash it at a Buffalo bank. However, the banking institutions had suspected something was amiss and the draft was not cashed. Space was then arrested.<sup>502</sup>

Trivial arguments and heated feuds also resulted in Macedonians fighting or attacking each other. For example, Lazo Ruda, who had been employed in northern Indiana in 1910 for three years after coming over from Macedonia, was assaulted and threatened at work by a fellow Macedonian one day. Later, that same Macedonian attacked him with a pick and

threatened to kill him. So, on his way to work the next day, Ruda arrived armed and ready to defend himself. “Strapped around his waist he carried a belt full of steel-capped cartridges, which fit a heavy magazine revolver he had in his pistol pocket and in one of his boots was found a long heavy dirk.” But instead of having a chance to confront the other Macedonian, he engaged in an altercation with the foreman and fellow workmen who did not feel safe with a heavily armed Ruda working alongside them. Thus, they called the police, who took Ruda away to jail.<sup>503</sup>

Two years later in Hammond, Indiana, two 21-year-old Macedonians, Bozin Tanos and Louis Maldj, were sent from Detroit to assassinate fellow Macedonian, Liza Koto, who was employed at the Standard Steel Car Company, over an unknown feud. They came to Koto pretending to be friends and persuaded him to walk with them in the middle of the night to visit another friend – and that’s when they turned on him. The two Macedonians beat Koto until he was unconscious and then robbed him. After a few hours of laying in the woods motionless, Koto woke up, dragged himself to the street and stayed there until a passerby found him and took him to the doctor’s office.<sup>504</sup>

Macedonian feuds turned violent quite a few times during the early decades. For example, in Cincinnati in 1907, Tashe Franze shot and killed his brother-in-law, Risto Baazar, over personal matters before taking his

own life.<sup>505</sup> A personal feud in Pennsylvania left two wives without a husband when in 1919, Thomas Lignon was shot and killed by Sim Velko, a Macedonian. The strange thing was that two wives both belonged to Mr. Lignon, and both showed up to the police station with their children.<sup>506</sup> In October of 1908, in Waukesha, Wisconsin, “two Macedonians were killed in a mysterious shooting affray in the cook house in a gravel pit.”<sup>507</sup> The two murdered men, Rompo Usranoff, a cook, and Sperro Achtshiroff, a laborer, aged 19 and 23, respectively, were employed at the Milwaukee Light, Heat and Traction Company.<sup>508</sup> In a field in the outskirts of Columbus, Ohio, the body of Warne Stepe was found with bullets in the head. He had been living in Indiana, but old enemies from Macedonia found him there, so he had moved to Columbus to evade them.<sup>509</sup> The police found documents on his body suggesting that he had fled Turkey because of the feud and they ruled out robbery because \$171 was found on his corpse.<sup>510</sup> And in the outskirts of that same city, in September of 1907, a “Macedonian secret society” murdered Tony Naick. “His body was found lying in the railroad yards, and wounds on his head show that he was struck with a blunt instrument.”<sup>511</sup>

In October of 1911, Christo Tanasoff was suspected of murdering fellow Macedonian workman, Tani Christoff, in the railroad yards of Indianapolis over a personal feud.<sup>512</sup> Several years before, in 1905,

also outside of Indianapolis, a Macedonian by the name of Vasil Constantius murdered two fellow Macedonians in a fight.<sup>513</sup> The two victims were Antanas Cristoff and Antanas Stoyanoff, who were cousins.<sup>514</sup> Constantius initially pleaded not guilty to second degree murder,<sup>515</sup> but then changed his plea to guilty and received a life sentence that was served in Indiana State prison. He insisted in court that it was self-defense – he had wanted money from the two victims in order to sail back to his hometown in Macedonia because he could not find employment in America like the men had promised he would. The men would not give him money. A fight erupted between them and then he killed the two men while seriously injuring another. At fifty years old, Constantius went to prison, leaving his wife and four kids in Macedonia to figure things out for themselves.<sup>516</sup>

One of the most perplexing and disturbing criminal cases in the history of Macedonian-Americans is the stabbing deaths of six Macedonian men (all from Prespa) in March of 1906, which at that time was “the bloodiest tragedy in the history of Minneapolis.”<sup>517</sup> The murdered were Andry, Antonas, Nicolas and Gole Kaleff, Krste Lovka, and Kire Demitre.<sup>518</sup> Their house was located on Tenth Avenue, not far from downtown Minneapolis.<sup>519</sup> Four of them were found in their beds upstairs, while two others were later discovered in the cellar.<sup>520</sup> The police categorized it as

a “carefully planned murder.”<sup>521</sup> “The four upstairs were murdered as they slept. Their throats were cut and they were stabbed 19 to 20 times each.”<sup>522</sup> All the knives were new and of the same make (long, bowel patterned knives), indicating that they were purchased at the same place and time.<sup>523</sup>

Shortly after the murders, Nido Lazaroff, a Macedonian living in Indianapolis, sent a telegram to someone in Minneapolis. The telegram stated: “Please send information about six Macedonians murdered in your city. Their relatives live here.” This was an extremely helpful clue for the Minneapolis police because they had not been aware that Macedonians lived in Indianapolis. They asked Indianapolis police to investigate and to gather any information from relatives or friends of the deceased.<sup>524</sup>

As a result of these quick and preliminary investigations, two Macedonian men were arrested. One even had blood stains on his clothes. The police, however, had no proof of their involvement and were forced to release them. The two men then fled Minnesota as quickly as possible. They were last spotted in Chicago, where some people thought that they had boarded on a train for either New York or Indianapolis. Others indicated that they were on their way to Washington in the northwest. The police, however, had very little to work with.<sup>525</sup>

Instead, they brought in a 50-year-old Macedonian from Duluth, Minnesota, by the name of Peter

Stoyanoff (also known as Ian Sekuloff), to assist in answering questions about the Macedonian colony in Indianapolis. The police discovered that Stoyanoff was actually a relative of one of the murdered victims and a friend to the rest.<sup>526</sup> For two hours, the chief, assistant county attorney, and several detectives interrogated Stoyanoff. However, after the questioning, the cops determined that he was innocent of any crime and would only be useful for background information. “His demeanor was straightforward and apparently honest. He gave what information he possessed with the utmost readiness, but it proved to be of little value as far as locating the criminals is concerned.”<sup>527</sup>

Stoyanoff had just visited the men a day before their murder. He indicated that he was on friendly terms with all of them, but “that none of them had great confidence in his fellows.” “Although they all had money”, he said, “neither would tell the other how much he possessed and where he kept it.” He told police that they each kept their positions in a belt “which they carried buckled around their waists.” The Macedonians were so careful with their money that police found “one money belt securely sewed up in a bucket.” Stoyanoff several times iterated that he believed robbery was a motive, because only one money belt containing \$304 was found in the home. From his personal relationship with the men, he knew there had to have been more money saved up between



them and that the men never dared to combine their money to stash it in the same place. He was determined that it was robbery and not some sort of Balkan feud.<sup>528</sup> Stoyanoff was released, and he said that he would be back in Duluth if the police needed him.

The police were not convinced that robbery was the sole motive but rather that robbery was simply a cover up or a convenient bonus for the criminals. Further, they had a bunch of evidence at the crime scene that suggested it was planned and related to some sort of possible political feud. The evidence included brand new gloves with blood stains on them, which seemed to be gloves that could fit a large man. There was also a jumper that men often wore over their clothes; it too had blood on it, but no gashes, suggesting that the attacker who shed it was not injured. The gloves and jumper were all thrown into the corner of the room.<sup>529</sup> Further, there was a letter written in Macedonian. When detectives would interview Macedonians to translate the letter and to make sense out of what had happened, all Macedonians had the same reaction: “They’d stare at it a few minutes and then shake their heads, pleading that if they told us what was in there they wouldn’t live long,” recalled one detective.<sup>530</sup>

Eventually, the police gathered evidence that at least one of the two suspects released earlier was actually involved in the murder. Thomas Wilson, of a hardware store in Duluth, identified that the knives

used in the murders were sold by him. Also, after being given descriptions of the two men, he was confident that one of those descriptions fit the man who bought the knives from him. Upon hearing the description, he stated: “That’s one of the men who bought the knives. I took particular notice of him, as he was dressed in the same cloth as worn by American soldiers.” The police asked him if the buttons on his coat were stamped with a horseshoe, and Wilson replied, “They were; I noticed that, too.”<sup>531</sup> The two men, however, were long gone.

Meanwhile, in Cleveland, police there arrested three Bulgarians – two men and one women – who they believed may have been involved in the murders. Shortly after the murders, they had boarded a train from Minneapolis to New York. As the investigation unfolded, the police started to pursue another theory – that these three were part of party of twelve Macedonians and Bulgarians that lured three strangers into their boarding house in order to rob them. The theory went that a fight then broke out with the three lured men having been killed, along with three from the party of twelve. But the three Bulgarians were let go after it was determined that their lack of English contributed to miscommunications about their involvement – they had nothing to do with the case.<sup>532</sup> Police also determined that the latest theory was invalid and Stoyanoff’s account of the relations of the six Macedonians was indeed accurate and truthful.

While all this was going on, the six murdered Macedonians were supposed to be given a burial, but it was temporary postponed by the City as “university students made a formal demand for the bodies for scientific purposes.” They were to be buried at Layman’s Cemetery, and all the money found in the house was to be used for the funeral and burials.<sup>533</sup> The students’ plea, however, never made it far. Moreover, soon after the murders, the owner of the house the Macedonians had lived in approached a police captain inquiring into whether he could rent out the house in order to charge admission to curious people who wanted to know more about where and how the murders happened.<sup>534</sup> But such a scheme was not allowed – the police denied a permit to operate it as a museum. The owner then announced that he was going to knock down the house and replace it with a barn. The public was very disappointed with this idea, and many people were found hanging around the house daily peeking through its windows and hoping to get into the “house of murders”.<sup>535</sup> Individuals were so desperate to get into the house that the police put it under constant surveillance, as they had caught several people raiding the place and either stealing items or just lurking around.<sup>536</sup> The owner still had not knocked down the house by the end of the year and instead sold it to people who wanted to live in the “house of death,” which was the final name given to the house by the newspapers.<sup>537</sup> A commentator

questioned why anyone would want to live in “a filthy hovel” with “stains of blood...still visible on the floors and walls.”<sup>538</sup>

By the end of June the police began to suspect five Austrians for the murders. The Austrians had been arrested for larceny in a different matter and two of the Austrians fit the physical descriptions given of the two original suspects that were released by police in the spring. Many doubted that the Austrians were behind it because they were convinced that it was a Macedonian feud. But some of the detectives suggested that some Austrians resembled Macedonians due to the fact that Austria had ruled countries near Macedonia and that original witness accounts were mistaken in the nationality of the murderers. But Chief Doyle was not as confident. “I am not really optimistic with regard to this clue,” he said.<sup>539</sup> His pessimism served him right: evidence and testimony was obtained completely ruling out the Austrians of the murders.<sup>540</sup>

The summer had come and gone with no further clues relating to the murders. Then in October, a Macedonian who was considered the leader of the six murdered Macedonians was found dead. This leader was Peter Stoyanoff, the man who had traveled down from Duluth the day after the murders in March and identified each of the dead Macedonians. After police released him, however, they never heard from him or saw him again, until someone spotted his body

floating in a river two blocks from where the six other Macedonians had been killed. The police believed that Stoyanoff was killed before he was thrown into the river, and that it was absolutely not suicide, for several reasons: there was no water in his lungs; he was missing seven toes that had been recently amputated; and several cuts and scratches were on his hands, indicating an intense struggle. Other Macedonians had previously warned police that he would be the next to die in order to finally resolve a Balkan vendetta that police still hadn't fully understood.<sup>541</sup> The vendetta was known to many Macedonians, but the police had difficulty in securing details. For example, back in the spring when detectives went to Chicago and Indiana to investigate the murders, one Macedonian had told them "that the six slain men had been doomed to death years before in the old country."<sup>542</sup>

By the end of the year, detectives were no closer to solving the murder mystery and different theories were still abound. One coincided with the arrest of two Bulgarian men in Indiana who had been officers in the Bulgarian army. A Greek in Minneapolis claimed that those two men were now in America trying to get money from Macedonians and Greeks in order to fund Bulgaria's campaign in Macedonia.<sup>543</sup> However, after interviewing the men, detectives gave up on that theory and called it "erroneous".<sup>544</sup>

Over a century later, the "Macedonian Massacre" remained unsolved. Some people believe that the

Macedonians who committed it for political reasons got away; others think that one of the murdered men was one of the attackers and was killed in self-defense by one of the other five. Regardless, their remains are still at the Minneapolis Pioneers Soldiers (Layman's) Cemetery<sup>545</sup> and much of the money found on the victims and in the house (which is suspected to be a lot more than reported by police) never made it back to Macedonia,<sup>546</sup> where relatives of the dead had demanded it to help pursue the murderers, who they insisted were hiding out in the Balkans.

Unfortunately, that was not the only Macedonian murder case in Minnesota. Another Macedonian was killed several years later in 1911 by two other Macedonians. Atanas Lazoff and Costa Nickoloff killed John Witanoff over an unspecified feud. They were charged with first degree murder, pled guilty, and were given life sentences.<sup>547</sup>

Yet, Macedonian feuds littered the entire country, even where there were not yet significant Macedonian colonies. In northern California in 1908, for example, several Macedonians were implicated in a murder scandal that rattled the police and public. While working his shift at a meat factory – a lonely midnight shift where he was watching over boiling vats in a basement – Stoyan Steff was stabbed to death. When Steff went down to the basement, he had “but left the foot of the stairs when a man sprang at him from behind and jabbed him in the jaw with a knife.” He

tried to get the knife, but the attacker was too quick – two more jabs of the knife at his face. So Steff crunched into the finger of his assailant, “but the man tore it loose and then proceeded to stab Steff viciously in the body and lower limbs.” The blood on his face blinded Steff, who then fell to the complete mercy of his attacker. Steff eventually succumbed to the eleven knife wounds on his body. The coroner was surprised that Steff lived for almost seven hours after the stabbing incident.<sup>548</sup>

On his deathbed, Steff gave vague and rambling descriptions of his assailant, but did mention that it was the attacker’s index finger that he had gnawed off, which was the best information police possessed in order to identify a potential suspect. Steff was also persistent that the aggressor’s intent was to rob him; but the fact that all of Steff’s money was found on him proved to them that something else was going on.<sup>549</sup>

They had every reason to suspect so, too. See, Stoyan Steff was set to testify in the murder trial of another Macedonian named Kiproff. Steff was the principal eyewitness in the shooting deaths of two other Macedonians: Peter and Slavo (Spiro) Georgi. Kiproff was the primary suspect. All four men were partners in a Macedonian bakery and Steff had been in the room when the Georgi brothers were murdered. The police stated that Steff was prepared to testify against Kiproff and that Kiproff’s friends wanted to silence him once and for all. But even on his deathbed,

Steff was reluctant to accuse any Macedonian: he insisted that his attacker was an American and not a Macedonian. The District Attorney, however, had earlier expressed fear that something like this would happen. He had held Steff for two weeks without releasing him, knowing how critical his testimony would be in the trial. "I let him go reluctantly," said the District Attorney. "And this is the result."<sup>550</sup>

Without Steff's testimony, life got much easier for Kiproff. He was first tried and then acquitted for killing Slavo Georgi.<sup>551</sup> A couple weeks later, during his trial for the death of Slavo's brother, the judge dismissed the deadlocked jury. For three hours they had deliberated and would not budge on their beliefs: nine were for acquittal and three were for manslaughter.<sup>552</sup>

Kiproff's two victims lost their lives in a Macedonian bakery, and it seemed that a lot of action revolved around Macedonian bakeries. Take one case of the Macedonian Bakery in Terre Haute, Indiana, a couple of days before the beginning of the New Year in 1908. Mike Demetrio, several months prior, had been blackmailed by Pete and Stanus Christo, two other Macedonians, at Mike's bakery. Pete was arrested and went to jail for that incident. Now insert William George, also known as Gagorg. He had in the previous month tried to blackmail a Macedonian who was in the hospital. Gagorg was briefly detained for that. Another Christo brother, Steve, apparently



entered Gagorg's room while he was asleep and shot him. But Gagorg had only been shot in the arm and survived. The police had difficulty in unknotting the tangled web of this Macedonian blackmailing circle, for which the Greek consul in the area attributed to the fracturing of the Macedonian revolutionary committees in Macedonia and Bulgaria.<sup>553</sup> Of course, this incident was not the only case of blackmail in Terre Haute related to Macedonian revolutionary activity. A year earlier in 1907, two Bulgarians – Kotef and Gradtus Grastus – were found guilty of “levying blackmail on a Macedonian.”<sup>554</sup>

Not every incident revolving around bakeries was handled illegally, of course. At the Macedonian Bakery in Fort Wayne, in the fall of 1914, a civil case arose between two Macedonians and an American. Dan Ball filed a complaint against Toni and John Christ. He claimed that he invested in the Macedonian Bakery with them, with his personal contributions amounting to \$1,450. He alleged that the two Macedonians turned the stock into money, deposited it in a bank, and refused to hand over any share of the bakery profits to him. He demanded that they return his \$1,450 and dissolve the partnership.<sup>555</sup>

But financial disputes between Macedonians and other Macedonians did not always take such a civil course, as we have seen. Take the case of Karl A. Mitsareff, for example. Mitsareff had fled to America in the early 1900s because the Turkish government

put out a warrant and reward (\$10,000) for his arrest as a result certain political offenses. On March 21<sup>st</sup>, 1911, he shot and killed his brother-in-law, P.V. Gosheff. Both of the men were partners in a saloon they operated and “also acted as bankers for the many Macedonians who [were] employed in the mills and factories at Granite City.” The two also dabbled in real estate transactions. Around 1909, the two had entered into a severe disagreement, with Mitsareff having Gosheff arrested for embezzlement, a court case that was still on-going. The only witness to the shooting, a small boy, said that he saw Mitsareff shoot Gosheff three times as Gosheff entered his saloon.<sup>556</sup>

Mitsareff, however, claimed he shot Gosheff in self-defense. He immediately dialed the police after the shooting and then collapsed due to supposed heart complications. But that was three hours after the shooting – in the meantime, “members of the Macedonian colony” were discussing the affair amongst themselves. The police gathered from the Macedonians that Mitsareff was “in an ugly mood all day” and had “announced he was going to kill someone.” Many of the Macedonians thought he was talking about A.W. Morris of the Morris Real Estate Company, whom Mitsareff accused of conspiring with Gosheff to rip him off on a real estate transaction. Mitsareff said that after meeting Gosheff at the saloon, it appeared that Gosheff was reaching for a dagger, so Mitsareff shot him three times – in both

legs and through the heart. No weapon was found on Gosheff.<sup>557</sup>

The two had previously represented a Macedonian bank from New York that “failed for \$1,000,000 and the Macedonians of Granite City lost about \$75,000.” Mitsareff placed the burden of his own \$30,000 loss in the venture on Gosheff’s shoulders. And this was not Mitsareff’s only brush with crime and murders – his brother had been murdered four years prior to Gosheff’s killing just down the block. The murderer was never caught, but Mitsareff claimed that African-Americans handed over \$500 to some Macedonian men, telling them it came from the dead Mitsareff, who then gave it to the living Mitsareff.<sup>558</sup>

Where there are large concentrations of Macedonians, especially during a period when Macedonia was the hotbed of political and revolutionary turmoil, it should not be surprising that there were a lot of tensions in the Macedonian community. And the Macedonian revolutionary committee based in Bulgaria and controlled by the Bulgarian government (not the IMRO) found ways to make life miserable for Macedonians in America through the use of some of its Macedonian-American agents. For example, three Macedonians in 1907 belonging to this society were charged with larceny and blackmail over attempting to extort \$25 each from several Macedonian men in the railroad camp where they were working. They threatened the Macedonian

workers that if they did not pay, then they would be killed, along with their relatives in Macedonia. Some of the Macedonian victims marked their money before handing it over to the three blackmailers. They then reported this fact to the police, who found the three Macedonian suspects with the marked money on them and were subsequently arrested.<sup>559</sup>

There were other feuds, too. In Portland Oregon, six Bulgarians and Macedonians were arrested and warrants issued for six others in 1909 for the murder of Theodore Atjam, a Macedonian. Police reported that it was spillover from a feud in the Balkans, where a total of 50 people had been killed relating to the same incident.<sup>560</sup> A grand jury determined, however, that there was insufficient evidence to try the accused.<sup>561</sup>

Of course, not every murder was about money, feuds or politics. In 1930, Agir Evanoff of Fort Wayne “struck his wife on the head with a hatchet as she sat in the dining room,” fracturing her skull, which led to her death two weeks later. Agir was 40 and his wife, Catherine, was 30. Agir was found guilty of first degree murder.<sup>562</sup> In 1912, a Macedonian murdered another Macedonian out of anger. Both men had been part of a railroad construction crew in Indiana. The murdered Macedonian, Peter Dineff, had been the crew’s cook. But when the Macedonian, Stamat Naseff, injured his foot on the job, Naseff and Dineff traded positions. The crew could not stand Naseff’s

cooking, so they relieved him of his position. Naseff then got really drunk and was incarcerated for a night. When he was released the following day, he found Dineff alone and attacked him, “driving a knife into [Dineff’s] abdomen, the blade penetrating the stomach and left kidney.” Naseff fled without stealing the \$400 on the murdered Dineff, but he was eventually captured in the woods of Ohio.<sup>563</sup>

While most the crimes and murders discussed so far have dealt with Macedonian-on-Macedonian violence, there was much more confrontation between Macedonians and non-Macedonians. In northwestern Indiana in 1918, Peter Tom or Tomasoff (also known as Peter Tryco), a Macedonian immigrant, shot to death in broad daylight two sisters, Mabel Robinson and Ruby Hilligas. Tom and the sisters had been seen together on several occasions.<sup>564</sup> Apparently, Tom had been infatuated with Robinson, but she was married with children and would not separate from her family to be with him.<sup>565</sup> She was dissuaded from leaving her family by her sister, Hilligas, and this greatly upset Tom. So, he hid behind a hedge near where they were walking and fired several shots from his thirty-two-caliber revolver, killing them instantly.<sup>566</sup> The police initiated a wide scale search for him after he fled into the woods, hoping to catch him before he crossed over into Michigan, as they theorized he would.<sup>567</sup> Several days later, however, Tom was spotted by a store employee outside of South Bend, who chased

him for a mile, pinned him down, and held him there until the police arrived.<sup>568</sup>

Some Macedonians, being unaccustomed to or unappreciative of American laws, had their own way of dealing with problems. In the fall of 1909, at the Macedonian Bakery in Harrisburg, Strezo Dimitroff and a man named Smith, who owned a local grocery store, had been involved in some sort of legal dispute for several months. Dimitroff told Smith to meet him at the Macedonian Bakery to settle their problems alone. Smith refused to settle outside of the courts, so Dimitroff and another man pounced on him, beating him severely and almost choking him to the point of unconsciousness. The men fled the scene but the police eventually caught Dimitroff. Yet, Dimitroff's partner got away.<sup>569</sup>

Also in 1909, Costa Chokreff (Chokroff or Chokeroff or Chockeroff) had also run into trouble at his Mansfield Macedonian Bakery. A man from Barberton accused him of blackmail, so the police arrested Chokreff. Apparently, the Barberton baker fired a Macedonian employee and Chokreff sent a letter to the Barberton baker saying that "he would be severely dealt with unless he took back the discharged employee." Several letters were sent; but the Barberton baker finally contacted the police when he received a letter signed by Chokreff. Chokreff did not deny that he wrote the letters, of which one referenced a similar situation in San Francisco where a bakery

owner was killed for not taking back a discharged employee.<sup>570</sup>

In 1921, Chokreff and his brothers at the Mansfield Macedonian Bakery found their bakery in trouble again. This time the Tennant & Hoyt Company was suing them for \$775 for refusing to accept a shipment of flour that they agreed to accept. The plaintiff stated that the Chokreff brothers agreed to accept a shipment of 310 barrels of flour in August of 1920, which was to be delivered on January 1st, 1921. However, the Chokreff brothers notified Tennant & Hoyt in December –shortly before the shipment was scheduled to arrive – that they no longer wanted the flour. Tennant & Hoyt said this amounted to a violation of the contract.<sup>571</sup>

Four years later at the same Mansfield Macedonian Bakery, the Chokreff brothers fought off would be robbers. The two bandits were dressed as salesmen, pretending that they were there to sell goods to the owners. “After some smooth talking” the two men pulled out revolvers and demanded the Macedonians to hand over all their cash. But the Chokreff brothers snapped into fight mode instead of flight mode. One jumped on the guy who was just about to pull out his gun, while the other brother snatched a long knife, holding it up in the face of the gun. The robber ordered him to put the knife down. The Chokreff with the knife exclaimed, “Go ahead, shoot...I’ll cut.” Suddenly, another Macedonian worker at the bakery

jumped the would-be robbers from behind. The two men eventually got away, fleeing in a car with either a New York or New Jersey license plate.<sup>572</sup>

That was not the end of troubles for the Macedonian Bakery in Mansfield. The Chokreff brothers again found their bakery in the midst of legal trouble. George Bauer had sued them for \$368 for the time and expenses he had spent caring for the Macedonian Bakery wagon horses. The judge found, however, that the plaintiff only deserved \$80.<sup>573</sup> Then again, in 1933, after switching over from horses to a truck, the Macedonian Bakery truck crashed into a parked car as it was making deliveries.<sup>574</sup> It was really hard for the Macedonian Bakery to catch a break. Despite that, they lasted for a long time. John Chokreff, one of the brothers, however, died young at age 55 in 1953. His father had come to American in 1901 and shortly afterwards established the Macedonian Bakery in Mansfield.<sup>575</sup> John Chokreff had also served as the Mansfield MPO president, and was known for throwing Macedonian parties with “Macedonian music...supplied by string instruments of Macedonia” and where “Croatsians, Bulgarians and Romanians” were invited to attend.<sup>576</sup>

Speaking of parties, Macedonians in Pennsylvania were trying to nab parties of foreigners trespassing onto their property. It was the summer of 1908 and Gligor Christoff and four other Macedonians were having troubles with other foreigners trespassing onto



their yard and stealing vegetables from their garden. So, they set up a trap: they dug a trench fifty yards from the shanty and piled it with bags, covered it with coats, and would take turns laying there guarding the garden. On this particular summer night it was Christoff's turn to guard the garden, and after a couple of hours he saw Peter Schikley, walking around the garden with what looked like to be a watermelon in his hand. Christoff then jumped out of his hiding spot and shot Schikley. Luckily, he only wounded him. But Christoff was still thrown in jail, for it was discovered that Schikley was simply taking a shortcut to the fire house to schedule a baseball game and Christoff mistook him, in the darkness, for out-of-work fellow foreigners stealing from his garden.<sup>577</sup>

Putting aside Macedonians' genius plots to catch criminals, sometimes Macedonians did indeed just lose their minds. In 1920, Peter Christoff suddenly – with no previous signs of trouble – “became virtually a raving maniac” as if he was demented. After several hours of raging on the west side of Steelton by his residence, he attempted to slash his own throat, but others prevented him from doing so by taking his knife away. As the police approached him after arriving on the scene, he ran into a boarding room in his residence building and piled a bunch of mattresses and beds in a corner on top of him. After some time, the police tore down the beds and finally subdued

him. They took him to the police station, where a commission was brought in to rule on his “lunacy”.<sup>578</sup>

A decade earlier in Granite City, one of the richest members of the Macedonian colony, a saloon keeper by the name of Andrew Lovas, began firing his shotgun at random people when the sun had set. After a couple of hours, he barricaded himself in the rooms above his saloon firing the shotgun at the gathered crowd, as well as policemen who had arrived. Eventually, the police charged and subdued him, placing him in a mental institution in St. Louis.<sup>579</sup>

Not many Macedonians went mad, relatively speaking. But unfair treatment from others did indeed make them mad. A growing problem for Macedonians was that many Americans did not like foreigners because they blamed foreigners for taking their jobs and the perceived worsening conditions in society. In some places, the Macedonian immigrants and the Americans absolutely despised one another and brawls constantly broke out. In 1906 at the American Steel foundry in Granite City, 500 Macedonian and American employees brawled due to the escalation of ill-feelings, especially among the American workers toward their foreign Macedonian co-workers. Several Macedonians were seriously injured, including Christo Tole, who was shot in the back; Vassil Pedro, who had his left eye torn out; and Stano Pedro, who had broken some ribs.<sup>580</sup>

In 1910, this time in Indianapolis, two Macedonians got into a fight with an American for similar reasons. The two young Macedonians were cut up with a knife and had to be taken to the hospital. The American was beaten, but didn't need hospital care. A knife was found on the scene. The American claimed the Macedonians started it, but eye-witness accounts proved otherwise. The American was charged with assault and battery with intent to kill.<sup>581</sup>

Macedonians were not always as fortunate with police treatment. In Indianapolis in 1908, five Macedonian laborers were taken to jail for picking up coal as they worked along the tracks of the Big Four Railroad. The deputy constable saw them pick up the coal and arrested them, and then brought in the section boss to testify that he had warned the Macedonians against picking up coal along the tracks. At trial, the Macedonians' attorney said that the city should "stop the railroading of ignorant foreigners." The jury, twelve men who were also laborers, "could not see the heinousness of the offense" and found the Macedonians not guilty.<sup>582</sup>

In an Indianapolis Macedonian café in 1932, a Romanian waiter (Chris Nicholas) was killed and a Macedonian waiter (Vasile Steff) seriously wounded when drunk street car workers attacked them. The owner, George Petroff, and another Macedonian working there, Mike Gitchoff (who was Steff's brother), refused to serve them alcohol and asked the

men to leave. But instead a fight ensued with the streetcar workers hurling ethnic slurs at the Macedonians. Witnesses said they then saw the American men take out knives and stab the Macedonians. Nicholas was stabbed in the abdomen and Steff was stabbed near the heart.<sup>583</sup>

But Macedonians also had tensions with other immigrant groups, as would be expected in a melting pot like America where people from a variety of backgrounds and cultures are forced to live and work together in close quarters. In Steelton in the fall of 1913, as Macedonia was being divided by her neighbors, four Macedonians and six Croatians got in a huge fight in the streets. The men had been arguing about the future borderlines of Macedonia and the Macedonians had enough of the Croatians' persistent denial that Macedonia deserved to be its own country. The Macedonians then crossed to the other side street to settle their differences with the Croatians. After several minutes of bloodying each other, the ten men were fined a total of \$800 and convicted of rioting.<sup>584</sup>

That incident was not the only time Macedonians and Croatians came to blows. In 1905, in South Lorain, Ohio, Macedonians and Croatians got into an even bigger melee over ownership rights to a house. A Croatian women believed that she had full rights to the Cassidy Boarding House, which hosted up to 75 boarders. Kiro Trajko, however, insisted that the rights to the house were his. When Trajko and five

other Macedonians came home from work, they got into an argument over the matter with the Croatians. The argument soon became very heated when Mary Mestrites, the Croatian woman claiming rights to the house, hurled a boiling kettle at the face of one of the Macedonians, knocking him out. "In a moment, the Croatians and the Macedonians who were hanging about the house for supper were fighting. Clubs and knives were going and there were many cuts and bruises inflicted." The police eventually came and escorted the Macedonians to jail.<sup>585</sup>

Bulgarian and Macedonian feuds, too, were not uncommon. One such case revolved around the trial of the Demetrius Stefano, a Macedonian living in Indiana in 1909. Pietros Anastas, a Bulgarian, claimed that Stefano tried to kill him over a dispute about foreign politics between a group of Macedonians and Bulgarians. The circuit court brought surety of the peace proceedings against Stefano. Anastas had claimed that Stefano had murdered several men in Macedonia and Bulgaria, and was now bullying and threatening the local Bulgarian population. Basil Stephanoff, one of Stefano's attorneys, denied this and stated that his Macedonian client was "a gun repairer for the Macedonian revolutionists and that he was captured and served several years in prison." Stephanoff stressed that Stefano was unfairly subjected to persecution by local Bulgarians. But instead of the trial going any further, Stephanoff

managed to get the two men, in court, to shake hands and kiss, and each paid half the costs of the proceedings. The case was then dismissed with Stephanoff receiving much media praise for his actions.<sup>586</sup>

In another instance, Postal George, a Macedonian, and Tony Peter, a Bulgarian, got into an intense fight in Mansfield in February of 1915. The men were not seriously hurt, but “they were rolling in the gutter and growling like cinnamon bears” according to one witness. A Romanian witness, who admitted he was friendly with Bulgarians but not Macedonians, said that the Macedonian was the aggressor. However, he had no idea why the fight started because he could speak neither Macedonian nor Bulgarian. After some police investigation, it was discovered that Peter apparently published an article about George in a Bulgarian newspaper that infuriated George. But that was essentially the limit of their investigation. Mayor Marquis of Mansfield used several interpreters who either witnessed the event or knew how to speak the men’s languages, but determined that they were all too biased toward one man or another. Based on the limited available evidence, Postal George was found guilty and fined \$10.<sup>587</sup>

Macedonian bakeries also became the scene for feuding between Bulgarians and Macedonians after the Balkan Wars of 1912 and 1913. Back in Chokreff’s Macedonian Bakery, in the summer of 1914, scores of

Macedonians and pro-Bulgar Macedonians and Bulgarians got into an altercation that spilled into the streets. Some of the Macedonians involved included George Angel, E.C. Angel, Christ Yanko, Gus Mike, Mike Novnia, Iozo Spero, Joe Lozo, Peter and Steve Spero, Frank Yancha, and Samuel Spero. There were several serious and minor injuries. Once the Macedonians were arrested at the Macedonian bakery and the Bulgarians at a Bulgarian house down the street, the Angel brothers insisted that the Bulgarians were the instigators.<sup>588</sup>

The fight started because Bulgarian agents came over to Mansfield from Chicago looking to collect funds that they were obliging the Macedonians to pay as insurance or protection. Much of the money would then be sent to Bulgaria to support Bulgaria's efforts in Macedonia. Well, after Macedonia was divided and Bulgaria occupied it, the Macedonians no longer wanted a part in the scheme. "They said they were Americans now and would not send any more money to Europe, as their interests and their families are here." The Bulgarians acknowledge that the money was going to assist Bulgaria in the war, but said that they were not forcing anyone to pay. The judge fined all men between \$8 and \$10 for rioting.<sup>589</sup>

While political and ethnic feuds were common throughout these years, the number one motive for attacking Macedonians was to rob them of their belongings. In Granite City, 1906, Nicola Annanastas

was killed and robbed in Hungary Hollow, which was considered “the Macedonian settlement in Granite City.” Two African-American men were spotted walking in the area, which was very unusual during that time because the settlement was entirely Macedonian with some other foreigners. A witness to the murder only witnessed the murder because he had been curious as why there were two African Americans in the neighborhood. He followed them to Nicola’s store, into which the men entered, and peered through the window to see what they were up to. After a few seconds, he saw them approach Nicola and one of them shouted, “Give up your money, quick!” Nicola, however, did not give up his money and struggled with the men. One of them then shot him with a revolver, the bullet hitting him in the heart. The men ran out, saw the young witness hiding by the window and fired at him as well, narrowly missing him. The police chased the men for a while but were not able to apprehend them. Nicola was 22 years old, well-respected in the Granite City and wealthy for his young age.<sup>590</sup>

Some years later, in Harrisburg, four Italians performed “one of the boldest attempts at highway robbery in the borough in recent years” on an autumn evening in 1914. They surrounded five Macedonians at knifepoint and demanded that they give up all their cash and valuables. But the Macedonians refused, not willing to give up their years-long savings tucked away



in their belts. The Italians then began slashing and cutting at the Macedonians, who fought back; but being that they were weaponless, the Italians got the better of them, sending three to the hospital with deep cuts. One of the Macedonians managed to escape and call for the police, who eventually caught up with the Italians and placed them under arrest. The five Macedonians were Kostodin Sandoff, Kostodin Zagotsoff, George Javanoff, Luban Danchoff, and Dimeter Ashtanoff.<sup>591</sup>

A decade later in the fall of 1924, James Christo's restaurant in Battle Creek was robbed for the second time. The first time, two years prior, the Macedonian owner did not let the assailants win. He fought off the three would-be robbers; and even though Christo had ended up in the hospital, the assailants got away with no money. This time, however, different robbers came with guns just after midnight. Christo, armed with a broom (as he was sweeping when the men walked in), once again defended his territory. The two masked men went straight to the register and pressed the 'no sale' key. At first Christo thought it was a practical joke; soon, he realized that it wasn't. He then attacked the men with his broom and they then started firing, with a dozen bullets showering the walls of the restaurant. Two of the bullets pierced Christo, one in his head and one near his ribs. Once the robbers retreated, Christo ran outside to his neighbors' house, where Macedonians Tanas Geleff, a shoemaker, and

Joe Toteff, a barber, were living. Christo survived. Being that he was very popular in the town despite having only been there with his restaurant for three years, he received many calls of concern and sympathy visits.<sup>592</sup>

There were many other instances when Macedonians successfully fought off attackers and robbers. For example, in Steelton on September 13<sup>th</sup>, 1918, James Wylie (known as 'Blackberry' in the community) stormed into John Dundoff's shop and attacked him after John refused to give up \$500. John's son, 20-year-old Vasil, threatened to call the police, but Wylie shouted he wasn't afraid of the cops. So, Vasil pulled out a revolver once Wylie charged and shot him, killing him instantly with a bullet to the brain. The police rushed him to jail as fast as possible because the robber was black and the black community was on the verge of rioting over the incident.<sup>593</sup> Vasil was then charged with murder and he entered a plea of self-defense. During the trial, his attorneys called many character witnesses, who spoke of his "good reputation." When Vasil took the stand, his mother collapsed from distress. The jury deliberated for about an hour and returned a verdict of not-guilty. Upon his release, Vasil was driven to his uncle Tasco's house where a party was held with hundreds of people in attendance. Many people in the city, including prominent businessmen, respected and adored the Dundoff family, especially John.<sup>594</sup> (John

was so well respected in Steelton by fellow Macedonians that on his birthday in 1922 they threw a huge party for him and scores of friends visited him at work throughout the day.<sup>595</sup>)

Twenty-two years later, Vasil's own store was robbed by two high school students, who got away with \$315.<sup>596</sup> Seven years later, in 1947, Vasil's grocery store was again robbed successfully. The criminals tore a hole into the wall of the store and stole nearly \$100 plus some cartons of cigarettes.<sup>597</sup> The next year, Vasil was robbed in his home as he slept, with five others' homes on his street also having been burglarized on the same night.<sup>598</sup>

Vasil's self-defense case, however, was not the Dundoff family's most shocking brush with the law. In October of 1928, Vasil's uncle, Tasco, was arrested for murdering his wife, supposedly for insurance money. While his wife, Magdalene, was waiting in the car at a gas station they owned, Tasco told an employee of the gas station to put a quart of gas inside the car so he would have some just in case of an emergency. Somehow, the car caught fire with Magdalene still in it. One passerby "attempted several times to pull Mrs. Dundoff from the burning car," and testified that Tasco made no attempt to help his wife. Another witness said that Tasco asked him to extinguish the car to save his new tires, but made no mention of saving his wife.<sup>599</sup> Tasco claimed, however, that his wife had lit a match (since it was dark outside)

to see if there was sufficient gas in the car.<sup>600</sup> Police say, however, that Magdalene “was either killed or knocked unconscious before the fire in the machine was started.”<sup>601</sup> In late November, a grand jury freed Tasco and would not hear the case.<sup>602</sup>

Of course, not all Macedonians crimes and disputes were vicious in nature. For example, in 1917, Kostus Ivanhoff was arrested in Indiana for grand larceny after a dice game. Marion Boomhauer had accused him of tricking him out of \$160.<sup>603</sup> In the autumn of 1908 in Harrisburg, three Macedonians were also arrested for larceny. The men – Taso and Nicola Abrashoff and Jordan Angeleff – had almost gotten away with a wagonload of produce and clothing from a general store. The twist, however, was that Taso used to own the store until the sheriff closed it down due to a claim by the Harrisburg Grocery & Produce company. The store was in the City’s possession and was to be sold in two weeks, so Taso and his partners took matters into their own hands. He called the sheriff letting him know that someone had robbed the store and that most of the goods inside were missing. After some investigating, the sheriff discovered that the goods were spread amongst the houses of several of Taso’s relatives and friends in the area.<sup>604</sup>

Some Macedonians’ troubles were a little less serious. Five Macedonians – Nick Stefano, George Demetre, Stoco Demetre, Lampro Constante, and Louis Yeova – found themselves in court twice over

the same incident. In March of 1905, at the Big Four railroad yard outside of Indianapolis, the five men were sharing one bed in their boarding room. Well, Lampro wanted more room so he kicked his brother-in-law, Nick, out of bed. The five men then all began fighting each other. The men were tried and fined in Judge Sheppard's court for assault and battery. But then they were called in again to Judge Whallon's court. Whallon eventually discovered that they had already been tried and fined, so he dismissed the case.<sup>605</sup>

In another case in Indianapolis, a rowdy Macedonian celebration was something that a hard-working Macedonian, who just wanted to eat in peace, was not in the mood for. On Orthodox Christmas Eve in 1911, Steve Stoyanoff was sitting at the dinner table about to eat his meal, when he overheard Macedonians in the house next door being noisy and destructive. As he began eating, a piece of plaster fell into his plate. And then another piece followed, along with the shouts of the other Macedonians. After several pieces of platter fell onto his plate, he "lost his temper," pulled out his revolver and shot it at the wall. Unfortunately, the bullet passed through the wall and caught Louis Perpche in the cheek. Stoyanoff hadn't intended to shoot anyone, but upon discovering that he had wounded Perpche, he fled. Perpche lived and Stoyanoff was taken in for custody, as were three men

causing the ruckus that triggered Stoyanoff to lose his temper.<sup>606</sup>

Coming from a country where justice was administered unevenly (if at all) to a country where the justice system generally was used equitably to handle disputes and serve justice could be unusual for Macedonians to adjust to. For example, when two Macedonians, John Petroneff and Simon Helojian, engaged in a heated personal argument in the early spring of 1911 in the Hungary Hollow section of Granite City, they agreed to settle the matter by means of a good-old fashioned duel. A crowd gathered, traffic was impeded, and the men were loading their pistols when the police arrived to prevent the duel from proceeding. Apparently, Helojian still wanted to go forward with the duel despite police presence and was arrested and fined \$5.40.<sup>607</sup> While dueling had been common in the United States in the previous century, the practice had almost entirely died out and was a rare gift for onlookers.

Unfortunately, as we have seen, some Macedonian-Americans found themselves on the wrong side of the law; and others found themselves victims to the cruel intentions and exploits of others. Overwhelmingly, however, Macedonians were law-abiding citizens and were integral to the economic and cultural fabric of the areas they settled. And one important reason why so many Macedonians managed to not only survive but thrive in their new American landscape was due to

the development of strong support systems that often centered around the Macedonian churches in their communities.

## **7. Organizing Around the Churches**

Throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, churches served as centers for Macedonian political, social and cultural activity. Individual churches established by Macedonians in their towns and cities served as the focal point of the Macedonian community. Without such churches, the Macedonian cultural, social and political spirit in America would likely be severely limited. Although the church served an important role in many Macedonian-American's spiritual and religious needs and desires, it primarily served as a place for Macedonians to congregate and advance their interests as a community.

It is important to note the religious situation in Macedonia during this period of Macedonian immigration to America. Under the Ottoman Empire,



the Macedonian Orthodox Church was not allowed to exist. For many years, only the Greek Orthodox Church served the religious needs of Christian Macedonians. However, the Sultan eventually allowed the Bulgarian (and then Serbian) Orthodox Church to be established in Macedonia. On one hand, this move was welcomed by Macedonians because the Greek language was an unfamiliar tongue to most Macedonians and it was much easier to understand services in Bulgarian or Serbian, which are closely related to Macedonian. On the other hand, the infusion of three different Orthodox churches in Macedonia created animosity among the Macedonians, as these Orthodox churches essentially operated as propaganda tools for Bulgaria, Greece and Serbia (each country was trying to claim as much Macedonian territory as possible). Macedonians did indeed agitate for their own Orthodox church; but the other Orthodox churches did not want to concede power and territory in Macedonia, and the Sultan could not allow a separate Macedonian church, as doing so would have meant a unified Macedonian movement against the Turkish Empire.

Hence, when Macedonian immigrants came to the U.S., they usually joined Bulgarian, Greek or Serbian congregations in their respective communities. Macedonians who moved to areas without Bulgarian, Greek or Serbian churches would go to other Orthodox churches (such as the Russian Orthodox

Church), and some Macedonians in communities that had Bulgarian, Greek or Serbian churches refused to attend any of those churches. Pando Andreeff in Akron, for example, attended the St. Nicholas Russian Orthodox Church,<sup>608</sup> along with Theodore Rousomanoff. Both men were part of the Macedonian-American Society.<sup>609</sup>

A majority of Macedonians, however, created their own churches under the jurisdiction of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church. These churches were called “Macedono-Bulgarian” churches and primarily consisted of Macedonians. In the 1950s, however, the Macedonian Orthodox Church became autonomous – and eventually declared its independence in 1967 – and by the 1990s the clear majority of Macedonian immigrants and their descendants (recent arrivals and American-born Macedonians alike) created and joined Macedonian Orthodox churches in their communities. This was the more practical and natural option, as these churches would better serve the Macedonians’ linguistic, cultural, ethnic, political and religious needs.

As mentioned, though, Macedono-Bulgarian churches were the primary churches used by Macedonians in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. After 1922, most of these churches were also controlled by members of the Macedonian Political Organization (MPO). The first such of these churches was SS. Cyril and Methody, established in 1909 in Lincoln Place,

Illinois, just outside of downtown Granite City. Granite City was America's largest concentration of Macedonians at the time. Many of the immigrants who established this church came from the Lerin and Kostur regions of Macedonia. Upon completion, the church was blessed by the Bulgarian archimandrite in the U.S., whose sole purpose in America was to organize Macedonian immigrants in the US around the Bulgarian Orthodox Church. However, until 1922, the church had no permanent priests. In the 1930s, the church began to see more activity, but after World War II its support base began to decline and it was sold to the Armenian Orthodox Church in 1954.<sup>610</sup>

Because the Granite City area had such a large Macedonian population, it made sense that it needed another Macedonian church. In 1910, Macedonians and some Bulgarians came together to form the St. Holy Trinity church in Madison, just two miles south of Granite City. The church caught fire in 1919 and was destroyed, but by 1929 it was finally reconstructed. St. Holy Trinity was not controlled by the MPO until 1938, and it is one of the few Macedono-Bulgarian churches to have thrived throughout the century. Part of its survival plan included expanding its services in the English language to attract non-Macedonians as well as Macedonian descendants who no longer spoke Macedonian.<sup>611</sup> Many of the remaining SS. Cyril and

Methody parishioners eventually joined St. Trinity after their church had been sold.<sup>612</sup>

Around the same time as the Granite City churches were being established, the Steelton Macedonians were progressing with their church, called St. Annunciation Macedono-Bulgarian Orthodox Church. The church congregation was formed in 1909 and there were hundreds of Macedonians who donated to construct the church, including: Milan Soleff, Boris Mircheff, Spiro Kuzmanoff, John Petcoff, George Midzeff, Nikolo Kodach, Ylio Bogiaff, Nikole Koramondzoff, Tono Amborodo, Petre Soleff, Voids Proikoff, Ordon Topchio, John Toleff, Pontus Omkkoroff, Aroico Kostoff, George Otomosoff, George Petreff, Rampo Soakos, Vangel Ytzooff, Peko Serkoff, Itzco Padleff, and Ylio Bairamche.<sup>613</sup> Several years later, new Macedonian immigrants, mainly from Prilep,<sup>614</sup> decided to reorganize and charter the church in the area. These initiators were Reverend David Nakoff, Jordan Stankoff, John Dundoff, Alexander Minoff and Peter Vasseliff.<sup>615</sup>

In Indianapolis, about 1,000 Macedonians and 100 Bulgarians formed St. Stephan in 1915. Most of the founders were from the Lerin and Voden regions of Macedonia. In the late 1930s, the church had 150 families as members.<sup>616</sup> By the end of the century the church was still around, but services were only conducted in English.<sup>617</sup>

The following decades saw several more church congregations come together, including St. Resurrection, which was formed in Toledo in 1923; and SS. Peter and Paul, which was created in Madison City, Iowa in 1928. Many Macedonians from Minnesota attended this church.<sup>618</sup> By the 1960s, several Macedono-Bulgarian churches in America had sprung up. St. Mary was established in Syracuse; St. Nicholas sprouted in Fort Wayne in the 1940s; and five Macedono-Bulgarian churches were created in Ohio: St. George of Toledo, Holy Sabbath of Springfield, Holy Ghost of Youngstown, SS. Cyril and Methody of Lorain, and St. Elia of Akron.<sup>619</sup>

One of the more important Macedono-Bulgarian churches in America was formed in Detroit in 1927 by 25 Macedonian families.<sup>620</sup> The main financiers for the church, now called St. Clement of Ohrid, were from Aegean Macedonia. It had originally been called St. Trinity, but after experiencing financial troubles (mainly due to the Great Depression, which resulted in the congregation being unable to pay the mortgage),<sup>621</sup> it was resurrected in 1935 as St. Clement, and by 1942 there were 400 families attending the church.<sup>622</sup> Twenty years later there were over 700 families;<sup>623</sup> however, along with the increase in families came a major division among the church members. One sect eventually split off to form a St. Paul congregation in Dearborn.<sup>624</sup>

The disagreement leading to the split cumulated into a major court case between St. Clement of Ohrid and the MPO. St. Clement (led by the church's president, Yovan) brought suit against its former priest, George Nicoloff (who had become its priest in 1936),<sup>625</sup> from conducting religious services on property owned by the church because he had "participated in a schismatic creation of a new hierarchy." Nicoloff's followers, under the MPO title, countered-sued for "a determination of the proper governmental body of the temporal affairs of the church." The Wayne County Circuit Court found in favor of Yovan's faction in the first issue and in favor of Nicoloff's faction in the second issue. Thus, the case was appealed to the Michigan Court of Appeals in 1970.<sup>626</sup>

In 1938, the hierarchy of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church was as follows: at the top was The Holy Synod (located in Sofia); below that was The Diocese of America, North and South, and Australia; and below that was all of the individual Macedono-Bulgarian and other Bulgarian churches. When communism grabbed a hold of power in Bulgaria, Bishop Andrey and Nicoloff helped form a new diocese in America so that the Bulgarian government could not control the churches in America. Through the 1960s, Nicoloff claimed that St. Clement operated under the jurisdiction of this new diocese and not the former diocese. In 1963, due to the changing political

situation in Bulgaria, Bishop Andrey stated that the North American diocese should be back into control of the Holy Synod in Sofia. Yovan's faction backed Bishop Andrey's wishes, while Nicoloff was against it. Nicoloff even sought the guidance and protection of the Russian Orthodox Church in the matter.<sup>627</sup>

The land on which St. Clement was situated was owned by the MPO. They had also bought land for the construction of another church in Dearborn. By 1965, Nicoloff's faction was using St. Clement's property and Yovan's faction was using the new property in Dearborn. The Michigan Appeals Court, however, citing previous cases, determined that the civil courts had no role in litigating ecclesiastical questions and vacated the summary judgments awarded by the lower court.<sup>628</sup> On a rehearing of the case, the Michigan Appeals Court affirmed the lower court's decision, stating that Nicoloff had left the St. Clement of Ohrid Church and became a member of a new diocese under the jurisdiction of the Russian Orthodox Church and that almost 90% of St. Clement's followers voted against association with Nicoloff's new diocese.<sup>629</sup> Nicoloff and his followers, having lost the battle, formed a new congregation.

Like St. Clement in Detroit, St. Elia in Akron saw major political and ideological differences in 1960. Over 100 Macedonian families began to form a new Orthodox Church called St. Thomas after Reverend Christo Christoff resigned as pastor at St. Elia. There

were some severe ideological differences between the priest's followers and many of the members.<sup>630</sup> Christoff and his followers refused to continue recognizing the authority and influence of the MPO<sup>631</sup> – so they raised \$15,000 for a new church within days after Christoff's resignation. Although St. Thomas was still to be under the jurisdiction of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church, the Macedonians decided to drop the word "Bulgarian" from the official name of their church. The following individuals became St. Thomas' church leadership: Boris Mitseff as president; Max Gorcoff as vice president; Michael Kormushoff as secretary; Chris Vasiloff as treasurer; Tsena Nakeff and Chris Arshinkoff as corresponding secretaries; and John Velikoff, Nick Yanko, George Klimson and Sam Vasiloff as trustees.<sup>632</sup>

St. Clement and St. Elia were not the only two Macedono-Bulgarian churches to experience turmoil. By the early 1980s, differences over who had authority over SS. Cyril and Methodius of Lorain had reached a tipping point. The parishioners wanted to remove the Reverend Vladimir Ivanov, claiming that he no longer was their pastor. Ivanov was a Macedono-Bulgarian priest and had been at the church since 1983; but the parishioners, however, said that their church had now belonged to the Orthodox Church of America. So, the parishioners ordered Ivanov and his wife to leave the parish house; but they refused to leave and remained there beyond the stipulated deadline. The parishioners



then changed the locks on the church and the parish house.<sup>633</sup>

The head of the Macedono-Bulgarian churches in America, Bishop Dometian, insisted that the church was established in 1934 under the jurisdiction of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church. He claimed that the parishioners “violated church law by switching their affiliation and changing the church’s bylaws without approval.” He further criticized the church members for preventing Ivanov from performing his religious duties.<sup>634</sup>

The Macedonians shot back. SS. Cyril and Methodius church board president, Thomas Velleff, emphasized that Ivanov was brought in for a five-year contract and that his tenure had expired in 1978. Other church members iterated that their church had always been an independent church and “was never part of the Bulgarian hierarchy.” They replaced Ivanov with a priest from Orthodox Church in America, Reverend Lawrence Casati.<sup>635</sup>

A fourth Macedono-Bulgarian church to experience sharp division was St. Annunciation of Steelton, which went through a years-long battle that divided the church into two factions: one pro-MPO, and the other, not.<sup>636</sup> Through the 1920s and early 1930s, Reverend David Nakoff was the pastor of St. Annunciation. He was born in Veles and became a naturalized U.S. citizen in the early 1920s.<sup>637</sup> When the Steelton congregation was formed, it included 85

families and a total of 115 children.<sup>638</sup> The congregation continued to grow under the admired leadership of Nakoff.

The divisions started in the late 1920s when two of the original creators of the church (Nakoff and Jordan Stankoff) found themselves on opposite sides of the Macedonian political spectrum. In February of 1929, Stankoff was elected president of the church congregation, and many of his right-leaning and MPO buddies were also elected in high positions (Atanas Gugoff became vice-president and Jordan Atseff became secretary.) Left-wing Macedonians also got elected to positions, with Vasil Dundoff as treasurer and Alex Elioff, Traico Stoyanoff and Peter Vasiloff as trustees.<sup>639</sup>

By June, the left-wing faction had ousted the right-wing leadership from the board of the church. The right-wing faction, led by Stankoff, then filed a lawsuit against Nakoff and his followers claiming that they had violated both American and Bulgarian Orthodox Church laws. In particular, they accused Nakoff's followers of maintaining "a hostile attitude toward the Holy Synod" based in Bulgaria and "refused to yield, obey and follow instructions from the Holy Synod in relation to church management and control." Stankoff asked the court to demand that the defendants rescind his ouster and that Nakoff's re-election as parish priest be overruled because it was counter to the desires of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church based in Sofia.<sup>640</sup>

By the early 1930s, the head of the Bulgarian missions in the United States and Canada, Reverend K. Tsenoff, also entered ouster proceedings against Nakoff, charging him with “insubordination and deviation from the dogma of the church.” Nakoff fired back, saying that Tsenoff had no authority to unfrock him and that the Holy Synod of Bulgaria had no authority over his Steelton church.<sup>641</sup> Nakoff was adamant he would remain the pastor: “The Synod of Sofia is a part of the Bulgarian government and since I have taken my citizenship papers in this country and have been encouraging my countrymen to do the same, the Synod has looked upon me as a traitor to Bulgarian political aspirations.” He stated that the Bulgarian political unit of Steelton was opposed to his Macedonian agenda and did not want him there any longer.<sup>642</sup> The Bulgarian Church iterated, however, that Nakoff was no longer considered a pastor by the church and rather just a “layman” for his actions of spreading “anticanonical Doctrines Contrary to the Exarchial laws of the Church” to the members of his congregation.<sup>643</sup> Most of the St. Annunciation church members were surprised by the Bulgarian Church’s decision, with the president of St. Annunciation, Alex Kormushoff, stating that parish members looked up to Nakoff.<sup>644</sup>

Siding with Tsenoff and the Bulgarian Orthodox Church were two members of the congregation: Traiko Stoianoff and Petar Taleff. At a meeting of St.

Annunciation's members, all other members voted to support Nakoff and stated that the Bulgarian Synod no longer had jurisdiction over them.<sup>645</sup> But Stoianoff and Taleff, under direction from Tsenoff and eventually joined by George Patoff, brought civil proceedings against Nakoff (to remove him from the church) and nine other members of the church congregation, including Kormushoff, Todor Atanasoff, Milan Naidenoff, Alexander Spaseff, Milan Kristoff, Peter and Mirchie Christoff, Dimko Koneff, and Jordan Dameff.<sup>646</sup> Nakoff and his supporters stated that only the congregation of St. Annunciation had the authority to oust Nakoff, while the plaintiffs insisted that the Bulgarian Church had that authority.<sup>647</sup>

The original court case was withdrawn in the summer of 1934 after the judge refused a motion to postpone the case until depositions from Sofia, Bulgaria were completed; but Tsenoff, Stoianoff, Taleff and Patoff promised they would resubmit the case. Still, Nakoff's supporters celebrated this small victory in a huge way. Sixty members of the congregation walked him out of the courtroom and then a parade was held with dozens of children participating in it. They carried signs that read, "No other government can rule our church" and "Long Live Rev. Nakoff, Down with his Enemies!" The celebration then moved to the parish hall, where there was Macedonian music and folk dancing.<sup>648</sup>

As promised, two weeks later the plaintiffs reinitiated their case.<sup>649</sup> They accused Nakoff of changing the church's bylaws "contrary to the teachings of the church." Tsenoff discovered this when, in 1928, a member of the St. Trinity congregation in Detroit brought a copy of the bylaws back to her church to introduce them in that Detroit congregation.<sup>650</sup> Witnesses for Nakoff continued to implore that their church was not subject to the authority of the Bulgarian Church, and that the "ritual of the church and the mode of worship, including customs and manners adopted in the Steelton church, are the replica of the ritual employed in the Church of St. Annunciation, Prilep [Macedonia], after which the Steelton Church was modeled." The new president of the church, Anthony Nickoloff, also from Prilep, said that they recognized Exarch Joseph of Constantinople as their authority and not the Bulgarian Synod based in Sofia. Other witnesses stated that when they had been married in the church, never had "Bulgarian Orthodox Church" ever been mentioned.<sup>651</sup> The term "Macedonian," however, had consistently been used.

On October 7<sup>th</sup>, 1936, the Dauphin County Court ruled against Nakoff and ordered him to turn over the keys to Tsenoff. Nakoff's supporters were also ordered to refrain from interfering with other members' decisions to worship according to the rules of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church. The court determined that Nakoff's actions of attempting to

prevent his own unfrocking meant that he recognized the Bulgarian Church's authority, even if the property of the church was autonomous from the Bulgarian Church.<sup>652</sup>

The case then made it to the Pennsylvania Supreme Court, as Nakoff appealed the Dauphin County Court's decision to oust him from the church. Nakoff's attorneys argued that Nakoff was not amenable to the Bulgarian Church; but even if he and his church were amenable to the Bulgarian Church at the time of its creation, granting authority of the Bulgarian Church over St. Annunciation today would be a violation of political liberties guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution because the Bulgarian Church was put under the jurisdiction of the Bulgarian Government in the 1930s. To them it was unconceivable that a foreign government could control the church activities of a U.S. congregation.<sup>653</sup> The Pennsylvania Supreme Court, however, upheld the lower court's ruling.<sup>654</sup>

When Tsenoff and the other church members took over, they claimed that several church items went missing, including "a baptismal tub, gold communion cup, gold altar cross, a gold inlaid bible, [and] church dishes and chairs."<sup>655</sup> Meanwhile, 200 loyal followers of Nakoff quickly began reorganizing to form the American Orthodox Church, or the American Macedonian Orthodox Church (sometimes referred to as the Macedonian-American Church)<sup>656</sup>. Alex

Kormushoff, in charge of the initiative, also denied that any church property was stolen from their old premises.<sup>657</sup> Eventually a criminal trial was held against Kormushoff and others for ransacking the church and stealing those items; but the jury in 1938 acquitted him and others of all larceny charges.<sup>658</sup>

The Macedonian-American Orthodox Church went on to be a very successful church for the Macedonian community of Steelton, despite the previous legal troubles with the Bulgarian Orthodox Church. Nakoff and his congregation were there for the Macedonian community. For example, he held special prayers for two Macedonians, Boris Spaseff and Milan Koneff, drafted to fight in World War II and in the winter of 1941.<sup>659</sup> The church was also always collecting funds and clothes for relief efforts during the war, especially when the Russians were defending themselves from an invasion by Hitler's Germany.

However, for St. Annunciation, things were still not going well. Bishop Tsenoff died shortly after Nakoff was forced out and a new priest, Charalamy Elieff, was brought in. Elieff had significant support from many of the congregation's members, but Vasil Dundoff and Trico Stoyanoff believed Bishop Andrey, in charge of the Bulgarian Church in America, should be the rightful priest, as ordered by the Holy Synod in Bulgaria. Elieff's supporters, however, said that the courts had no jurisdiction over the matter,<sup>660</sup>

something the court was probably tired of hearing over the past several years.

After the Second World War, the situation for ethnic Macedonians was looking better in Macedonia as well as in America. In 1958, the Macedonian Orthodox Church was restored in Ohrid as an autonomous institution within the Serbian Orthodox Church; and in 1967, the Macedonian Orthodox Church officially declared its independence. In Ohio, the first church congregation to be connected to the autonomous Macedonian Orthodox Church was formed in Columbus.<sup>661</sup> The first liturgy in Macedonian was held on December 25<sup>th</sup>, in 1958<sup>662</sup> and took place in the Alexander of Macedonia hall. The Alexander of Macedonia Society was founded in 1938 and the hall acquired in 1949. The church, called St. Mary, was completed in 1965.<sup>663</sup>

In Gary, Indiana, over 100 Macedonian families who had been in the U.S. since before World War II, initiated action to create a Macedonian Orthodox Church in 1960. In 1961, the congregation requested a priest from Macedonia to come and hold services. That same year they were registered as a church and held their first service in Macedonian tongue at a Syrian Orthodox church. Construction for the church, called SS. Peter and Paul, was finished in 1963. By 1971 a new priest was requested to come over from Macedonia as some members and the previous priest broke away and became followers of the Eastern



Orthodox Church. But this new priest injected new enthusiasm in the Macedonian community and initiated many Macedonian cultural and educational activities. A folk dance group, called Kitka, was created in 1979, and so were others groups and activities, including youth and sports associations, a theater group, Sunday school, the Vardar soccer club, as well as a library. An increasing number of immigrants had settled in the area in the 1970s and 1980s, so they began construction for a new church in Crown Point in 1988.<sup>664</sup>

Getting to that point, however, was not easy. The congregation initially wanted to build a large church complex on 61<sup>st</sup> Avenue and Colorado Street in Hobart. The plans were to first build recreational facilities and then the church.<sup>665</sup> But several planning commissioners objected to the idea of building picnic grounds and recreational facilities without a guarantee that the church would be “built within a specific time limit.”<sup>666</sup> Furthermore, several Hobart residents attended planning commission hearings to oppose the project. Most neighbors insisted that the picnic grounds would devalue their properties due to “traffic, noise and sewage problems.” One resident who used to live by the then current SS. Peter and Paul location even stated that “the actions of some persons at church functions were questionable.” The Macedonians’ attorney, however, responded to the allegations by commenting that the church would be

built from the funds raised on the picnic and recreational grounds, and that an extra traffic lane would be created and health sewage requirements would be met. “Just tell us what it is you want us to do,” pleaded the attorney. “We suggested the extra traffic lane, we will erect a fence to prevent unauthorized use. We have a retention pond to prevent water runoff on anyone’s property. We will meet all requirements of the ordinance.”<sup>667</sup>

The planning commission eventually approved the permit to build, but with 13 conditions that the Macedonian congregation called “intolerable.” Most worrisome to them was that if they didn’t start construction within one year, the permit would be void, and that the planning commission had the authority to “annually review conduct of activities and progress of construction” with the ability to “recommend the council revoke the permit.”<sup>668</sup> Hobart erected too many obstacles for the Macedonian congregation, so they sought land elsewhere. In 1988, Crown Point’s planning commission unanimously approved the site plan for SS. Peter and Paul to construct a church and hall.<sup>669</sup> In 1991, the new church was completed and consecrated by two Macedonian archbishops.<sup>670</sup>

Despite the obstacles to finding a home for the church, perhaps the biggest achievement of the SS. Peter and Paul was the initiation of the U.S. and Canadian Macedonian Orthodox Convention that

originated in 1975. The Indiana congregation proposed the idea to the Macedonian Orthodox Church communities throughout North America, and all were very receptive of the idea. At St. Mary Annunciation church in Columbus, in May of 1975, the different church leaders agreed that every year on Labor Day Weekend, the convention would be held in a different North American city where there was a Macedonian Orthodox community. They resolved that the two main aims would be to strengthen the unity of the Macedonian immigrants and to advance the activities of the Macedonian Orthodox Church in North America. A second large meeting was held in Detroit to continue charting the direction and details of such a convention, and they then decided that the first would be held in Toronto of that same year.<sup>671</sup>

Attendance at the conventions steadily grew, and by the fifth convention in 1979, held in Rochester, New York, there were 1,000 people in attendance, with nine different folk dance groups from Macedonian churches across North America participating and Macedonia's Ambassador, Dimche Popovski, in attendance.<sup>672</sup> Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, the conventions saw several thousand people attend each year. It was fitting, then, that the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Macedonian Orthodox Convention took place at SS. Peter and Paul in 1999, the last year of the century. Over 4,000 people showed up for the convention, which spoke to the mighty success the convention had

in attracting Macedonians from across North America.<sup>673</sup>

Throughout the 1970s, several Macedonian church communities across the U.S. were popping up. For example, the St. Dimitrija church was registered in Rochester, New York in 1969. Like the Macedonian community in Indiana, many of the Macedonians in Rochester came during the period between the two world wars and were from the Bitola, Lerin, Prilep and Prespa areas, with the majority from Bukovo and Dihovo near Bitola.<sup>674</sup> As a matter of fact, most (if not all) of the original attendees were close or distant cousins. For them, as for most Macedonian congregations in America, the church did not simply serve as a religious institution, but “as a social organization and a tie to their homeland.”<sup>675</sup> By the late 1970s construction for the church and the hall was completed. The congregation was known for two very successful groups: its soccer club called Makedonija that even competed in Macedonia; and the folk dance group, called Tanec. Like many other church communities, St. Dimitrija also had a Sunday school and a church radio hour.<sup>676</sup>

While New Jersey never had a large Macedonian colony in the first half of the century, the number of Macedonians there significantly increased in the 1960s and 1970s. In the mid-1970s, Macedonians established SS. Cyril and Methody in Passaic, just outside of New York City. In 1992 the church was destroyed in a

mysterious fire and it was not until several years after that they reconstructed the church a few miles down the road in Cedar Grove.<sup>677</sup>

Another SS. Cyril and Methody congregation was formed in Buffalo around the same time. Most of these Macedonians were from the Prespa and Bitola regions, with others coming from Lerin and Kostur. In 1969, they elected their first church board, and by 1975 they had completed construction for a hall. The church followed several years later in 1981.<sup>678</sup>

SS. Cyril and Methody was a popular name for Macedonian churches, and that's why in 1976, the Macedonians of Chicago initiated the construction of a church blessed with that name. Most of the Macedonians here were from the southwest part of Macedonia. The original church was blessed in 1981, and in 1992 they moved to the suburbs where they built a bigger church for their growing Macedonian population.<sup>679</sup>

Another popular name for Macedonians, St. Mary, was given to the Macedonian Orthodox church in Los Angeles. The first immigrants to the L.A. area were from Lerin. Shortly after, many more arrived from all parts of Macedonia – Tetovo, Gostivar, Bitola, Prespa, Prilep and Skopje. Most had attended the Bulgarian or Serbian churches upon arriving in the area, but in the 1960s a Macedonian Friendship society was formed with intentions to form a Macedonian Orthodox church. However, propaganda

and blockades from members of other Balkan churches and groups stunted the Macedonians' initial efforts. But the Macedonians persisted and finally succeeded in registering St. Mary's in 1980. They held several picnics and dances to raise funds to buy a church, which they succeeded in acquiring in 1982.<sup>680</sup>

By 1977, the Macedonian-Americans of Summit and Stark counties in Ohio also were itching to have own Macedonian Orthodox Church. For example, Vancko Dorakovski, who came to America in 1970, joined with other Macedonians to form St. Nikola Macedonian Orthodox Church. By 1984, they raised money from 60 Macedonian families to build a multi-purpose building, and in 1989 they began building an Orthodox church in the traditional Macedonian style. Dorakovski became the president of the church board in the late 1980s and stated that to create a successful church with such a small community demanded "hard labor, strictly from the members."<sup>681</sup>

Indeed, forming church congregations and building churches demanded a lot of hard work from initially only a handful of people. The Macedonian community's efforts to form a Macedonian church in Detroit is an illuminating case study as to how the aim was achieved, and it especially highlights the progress and setbacks that must have been experienced by many Macedonian communities throughout the country.

By the early 1970s, about 7,000 Macedonian immigrants had poured into Detroit within a handful of years. Even though Macedonians were now outnumbering Bulgarians and Serbians in the area and were establishing their own sports clubs and cultural associations, the Macedonians were still attending Greek, Bulgarian or Serbian churches. And although Macedonians in Detroit were receiving enormous pressure from Bulgarians, Serbians and Greeks to not form their own groups and churches, “the sense of self-identity and national pride was strong enough to withstand those pressures.” Several Macedonians felt that it was time for the community in Detroit to create their own Macedonian church.<sup>682</sup>

From 1971 to 1973, a handful of Macedonians held preliminary meetings on organizing the potential community for this purpose. Even with a strong will to create a church, there was no dependable leadership or organization skills among the small group of Macedonians. Eventually, the Yugoslav consulate (a Montenegrin by the name of Jovanovich) held a meeting with over 40 Macedonians at a Macedonian club in Hamtramck. Jovanovich stressed that a Macedonian church in Detroit would create a stronger sense of Macedonian identity among the Macedonians, as well as create deeper bonds between the immigrants. The Macedonians agreed. But many were newly arrived immigrants without the financial abilities to assume such an arduous task, so they asked

if Yugoslavia could contribute some friends. Jovanovich replied, in a roundabout way, that Yugoslavia was too poor to help the community and they needed to figure it out themselves.<sup>683</sup>

Then, in February of 1974, Mark Brown (also known as Branoff or Brayan) invited several Detroit Macedonians to gather at a Holiday Inn in Windsor, Canada in order to begin the process for the formation of a Macedonian church in Detroit. Brown had spearheaded the creation of the Macedonian church in Windsor and was the organizational spark that the Detroit Macedonians needed. He also invited Metodi Gogov, a high-ranking priest from Macedonia, who blessed the meeting and told them that they should organize without delay. The task of organizing the Macedonian community in Detroit to register the church was given to Vlado Pasharikovski and Dusan Sinadinovski.<sup>684</sup>

Andrija Mitrovich, another one of the Detroit Macedonians at the Holiday Inn meeting, was a business owner and had a business lawyer help the group initiate the paperwork for forming and registering the church. The group agreed on the name Nativity of the Virgin Mary, or St. Mary, for their church. They hit a snag, though: they could not get the necessary seven signatures to register the church. People made all sorts of excuses for not signing – some were too busy with their children, others had no



time because they had visitors from out of town, and others said they didn't know English.<sup>685</sup>

After several weeks, they managed to collect six signatures – Vlado Pasharikovski, Dusan Sinadinovski, John B. Christoff, Slave Nivicki, Vangel Koleski, and Andreja Mitrovich.<sup>686</sup> Still, they needed a seventh signature but no one would put their name on the paper. Many days later, at a restaurant where many Macedonians would gather, Pasharikovski was begging Macedonians to sign it without success. Meanwhile, a man from the Macedonian village of Vratnica, who had a Serbian identity, was mingling among the bunch and started laughing hysterically. He exclaimed: “What kind of Macedonians are you? You want a church but nobody wants to sign the documents to establish it. Let me sign it!” And he did. The seventh signature thus belonged to Veselin Kirovski.<sup>687</sup>

With enough signatures to get the legal framework established, the Macedonians now faced the difficult work – organizing the community and collecting funds. Yet, there were many obstacles. For example, many of the Macedonians didn't trust each other and were wary of their connections to other groups; others simply wanted power and recognition to stroke their egos. These petty differences created significant divisions.<sup>688</sup>

But before the divisions could become too damaging, Chris Nick, a revered member of the

Macedonian community, entered into the scene. He owned a manufacturing business in Detroit and had employed hundreds of Macedonians. During the early stages of organizing the community, his son was struck and killed by a car. Nick received \$50,000 from the insurance company for his son's death and he offered to donate the money to the church. In return, he wanted the church's name to be changed to St. Nikola, in honor of his son. Many of the church committee members vehemently disagreed with this suggestion and the Macedonian community was finding itself back at square one.<sup>689</sup>

Sinadinovski then suggested that the group needed a priest from Macedonia if they wanted to see success. He said that, above all, the church was meant to be a religious institution and that a man of the cloth would have the best chance in reaching out to the community. So, they managed to obtain a priest by the name Eco Jovanovski, who was from Tetovo. This was a very important development for two reasons: first, they now had a religious leader and could seem more official; and second, being from Tetovo and having been employed at Macedonia's largest factory based in Tetovo, he could relate to Detroit's Tetovo immigrants. Up until this point, there were hardly any immigrants from the Tetovo region involved in organizing the church, which was discouraging because most of the new Macedonians in Detroit were from the that region.<sup>690</sup>

Jovanovski managed to attract these untapped Macedonians to the cause and increase the membership and donations. Now that this important group of Macedonians were on board, the process regained its momentum. For example, Chris Nick promised to donate his money even with the St. Mary's name. Other Macedonians, such as a man named Ilija, who was an engineer and spoke English without an accent, managed to bring professionalism and sophistication to the church board.<sup>691</sup>

However, it would not be a Macedonian saga without another interruption. Pasharikovski began accusing the priest of stealing money; the priest, in turn, accused others of having stolen some money. On one hand, it was obvious that some money had been stolen, even though it wasn't known exactly by who; on the other hand, the suggestion that hundreds of thousands of dollars had disappeared was unrealistic because the church committee had not yet possibly raised anywhere near that amount. Regardless, Pasharikovski sent a letter to the Macedonian Orthodox Church in Skopje highlighting his accusations against Jovanovski, which deepened rifts between members and stalled progress. For example, Chris Nick once again withdrew his promise to donate his \$50,000. But Ilija managed to stem some of the divisions after he found a garage in Sterling Heights that the congregation could convert into a church. Chris Nick was motivated by this

development and again agreed to donate his money. The Macedonians then bought the property.<sup>692</sup>

Tensions were still high, though. Pasharikovski was still in charge of the church committee, but he had never been elected to that position and people believed his appointed time as leader should have expired. Further, because Chris Nick and Pasharikovski were not on speaking terms and there were still bitter divisions, Ilija backed out from his involvement stating that the politics of the situation was discouraging. Meanwhile, Sinadinovski suggested that perhaps the community needed two Macedonian churches. Both churches would be under the Macedonian Orthodox Church's jurisdiction, but one would only be for people with a Macedonian identity, while the other church would be for immigrants from the Polog region of Tetovo, which would include people with Macedonian, Serbian and Yugoslavian identities. Otherwise, he said, the Macedonian Orthodox Church would lose many potential members to the Serbian church. Other committee members, however, thought that the divisions would eventually work themselves out.<sup>693</sup>

Despite the divisions, the general Macedonian public was very receptive to the establishment of the church. The garage had been converted into a place of worship and people were baptizing their children there and celebrating holidays. They would rent out larger churches for weddings and big events, but some

of those places eventually stopped renting to the Macedonians stating that the Macedonians were a huge congregation that should be able to buy or build their own place. But a deal was made with a church in Warren to allow the Macedonians to use it.

In 1978, St. Mary's held its first elections. Over 200 people showed up for this election, with many of the attendees coming from the Tetovo region. After discussions, Sinadinovski was eventually elected president of the church board by a unanimous vote. What followed was a period of continued growth: donations poured in and the community was excited. Yet, it was obvious they needed to build or buy their own church to accommodate the growing number of Macedonians. So, a Macedonian Muslim from Debar was chosen as an architect and he proposed a hall and church that would have cost between 2.5 and 3 million dollars. Before that, the church board had selected an architecture firm from Macedonia, but the plans they produced were not feasible in the United States and cost much more money. These new plans, however, were also brushed aside due to political infighting.<sup>694</sup>

But the Macedonians chugged along. For example, they held a fundraising event on the church grounds in which 500 people attended and they raised over \$400,000. An official delegation from Yugoslavia was also in attendance and they had expected to be wined and dined from the funds that were raised. The priest's wife, however, told them that they would eat at the

priest's house like everyone else. Those same delegates then said that someone broke into their hotel room and stole thousands of dollars from each of them. They were on the fifth floor and claimed that someone had snuck in through the balconies. They insisted that the local Macedonians replace their stolen money. Sinadinovski told them that the congregation would pay for their meals and lodging, but not for the supposed stolen money.<sup>695</sup>

At the same time, immigrants from the Vratnica municipality with a Serbian identity were conspiring to create a village church under the jurisdiction of the Serbian Orthodox Church. The immigrants from this area of Macedonia were split between three main identities: Macedonian, Serbian and Yugoslavian. Many were still mostly only attached to their village identity and community. But there was a small yet influential group of hardcore Serbians that were not receptive to the idea of having their fellow villagers attend a Macedonian Orthodox church.<sup>696</sup>

This displeasure with the Macedonians stemmed from events in Macedonia after World War II. Four men from Vratnica had secretly prepared documents and plans to present to Serbian leaders in Yugoslavia that proposed to detach Vratnica from Macedonia and join it with Serbia. Some villagers who caught wind of these plans reported the four men to the local communist party leader. Once the conspirers crossed into Serbia by train, Yugoslavian police arrested them

and charged them with treason, for which they were sentenced to several years of hard labor. One of these men died while serving his time and another resettled in Serbia.<sup>697</sup>

Another, by the name of Stevan Petrovic, however, had completed religious school prior to being convicted of treason and joined the Serbian Orthodox Church after he served his sentence. He was given jurisdiction over parts of the Tetovo area in Macedonia, as it was still under the jurisdiction of the Serbian church. But once the Macedonian Orthodox Church declared independence in 1967, he quit and immigrated to Detroit. By the early 1970s, he and a few others from this village started pushing to create a Serbian church. However, there was little enthusiasm at the time.

In the meantime, another immigrant from Vratnica registered St. Petka Vratnica church under the Macedonian Orthodox Church, but it essentially existed in name only. There was no real effort to gather any members. Still, Macedonians thought this would dissuade pro-Serbsians of Vratnica from creating a Serbian church. But they were wrong – it motivated them even more. These pro-Serbsians appealed to Serbs, Yugoslavs and Macedonians from the region to stick with their Vratnica community and help build a village church under the Serbian Orthodox Church. Although the core group wanted it to be a domineering Serbian church, they marketed it

well and immigrants from Vratnica who held non-Serbian identities did not want to be the ones accused of not contributing to something that would positively contribute to the Vratnica community in Detroit. In a matter of five years, the Vratnica Serbian faction had raised \$4 million.<sup>698</sup>

Some Macedonians saw these developments as a big blow to the Macedonian church cause because Vratnica immigrants constituted a large funding base (thousands of Macedonians in Detroit today can claim descent from that village). The Serbian St. Petka Vratnica church and the Macedonian St. Mary's Macedonian church, for example, were competing for many donors. More importantly, an opportunity to drastically increase the number of individuals belonging to the Macedonian Orthodox Church and to keep members from the same region close was fumbled.<sup>699</sup>

The St. Mary's congregation, however, had to continue with their agenda. Chris Nick hired his neighbor to create new architectural plans. The planned construction was expensive – over \$3 million. Sinadinovski, as president of the church board, objected to the plans' price tag. But the treasurer and deputy treasurer of the church board wrote a check of \$10,000 to the architect as half of a deposit in order so the architect could break ground on the project. Once Sinadinovski found out, he called the contractor and told him not to go ahead with the plans because



he was president and his signature was needed on the check. The contractor then sued the church for the other half of the deposit he was owed, which the court awarded to him. Some Macedonians were not happy with Sinadinovski's decision and he received death threats because of it. Building a church had now become a dangerous business.<sup>700</sup>

With that proposal now scratched, John Christoff made an inquiry into a church that was for sale on Ryan and Nine Mile Road. The price was more reasonable and feasible for the Macedonians' current situation. Although the path forward wasn't clear, Sinadinovski signed the paperwork for the acquisition of the church grounds and then after a few months he submitted his resignation as church board president. Mile Topalovski was then elected president. However, the internal political situation had not improved and during the mid-1980s the church was struggling: they could not afford the mortgage, leaving a few individuals to finance it privately.<sup>701</sup> Vlado Stamevski became the next president. During this time in the late 1980s, Yugoslav officials were continuously visiting the church, which gave the church a reputation as a communist outpost, keeping many Macedonians away from it.<sup>702</sup>

In the early 1990s, however, things started to improve with the injection of Mishko Vasovski, who managed to convince more people to donate and helped to increase the attendance. By the mid-1990s,

Pero Ristovski had become president of the church board and the church was now looking to buy property so they could build their own church. Ristovski managed to secure a spot on 13 Mile Road, just a few miles away from the then current church. Further, Fisher Architects was hired to design the church and they began planning it immediately. For several different reasons, however, the location was not a good one and it was abandoned. The church congregation eventually found a spot further north that was in a location more convenient to the shifting Macedonian population, the location where the current church resides today.<sup>703</sup>

The church board again saw new leadership and Ilija Vidoevski became president. Under his leadership, they determined that Fisher's plans were too expensive. Instead, they decided to connect with an Italian contractor who scrapped Fisher's plans and instead teamed up with a Greek architect who had designed a Greek church in the area. However, some Macedonians such as Sinadinovski were upset with this proposal because the church already had invested \$230,000 in Fisher Architects. They felt that to abandon Fisher and to go with someone new was an irresponsible waste of money that came from the pockets of hardworking members. In addition to this development, personal grudges between church board members spilled into church business. Attacks and physical altercations escalated tensions and an

opposing church political faction even took the church board to court. For two years the church's functions were essentially paralyzed.<sup>704</sup>

The church board held several more meetings with the Italian contractor and the Greek architect. But most congregation members were livid that the new designed church would be in a different style than typical Macedonian Orthodox churches. Further, they were upset that they had already spent \$230,000 and that their money had been wasted. A vote of no confidence was called after tensions boiled over, and the 30 or so present board members voted no confidence in Vidoevski and the new proposed church plans. The congregation then went back to Fisher to revive the project and plans he had already prepared. Eventually, a new president named Vojche Simjanovski was elected to lead the church board. By the start of the new millennium, the new St. Mary's church had been built and the Macedonian community of Detroit finally had a permanent, beautiful home.<sup>705</sup>

Despite the obstacles and headaches, the growing number of Macedonians in America necessitated a larger number of churches and community centers. In 1982, the Cincinnati Macedonian community held its first services for its newly established church, St. Prophet of Ilija. Most Macedonians in this area had immigrated from the Lerin and Kostur areas, while others came mainly from Prespa and Bitola. In Lorain,

Ohio, the Macedonian community established St. Clement of Ohrid a few years earlier. Many of the Macedonians here were from Aegean Macedonia, Prespa, Ohrid and Bitola who had been attending either the Serbian St. Sava Orthodox church in Cleveland or the SS. Cyril and Method Macedono-Bulgarian church. Most Macedonians, however, no longer wanted to be under those jurisdictions, so they formed the Macedonian-American Aid Club, which led to the church community of St. Clement of Ohrid. While the first services were in 1978, the hall was constructed in 1983, and then the church was completed in 1986. Around the same time, the Macedonian community of Canton, Ohio was looking for their own church and formed St. Nikola in 1977.<sup>706</sup>

New York City and northern New Jersey also saw the birth of several more church communities. For example, St. Clement of Ohrid was established in New York City in the late 1980s; and St. George Monastery of Randolph, New Jersey was completed in 1984. When the SS. Cyril and Methody in Passaic was destroyed in 1992, St. George served as a church to satisfy the religious and spiritual needs of the New Jersian Macedonians. In the meantime, Macedonians from Ohrid, Bitola, Prilep, Negotino, Kavadarci and Skopje who were living in Totowa, New Jersey had their own church by the mid-1990s called St. Nikola.<sup>707</sup>

With the continued influx of Macedonians into America, the 1990s saw the formation of many more

church communities. The St. George of Kratovo congregation formed on the west side of Detroit in 1993. For a few years they held services at a Lebanese Orthodox Church. In 1995, they then bought a house and converted it into a church.<sup>708</sup> In Philadelphia, the first board of St. Naum of Ohrid was elected and in 1996 a building was purchased to fulfill their needs.<sup>709</sup> Meanwhile, in Chicago, Macedonians from Pirin, Prespa and eastern Macedonia needed a new church for those Macedonians who could not make it to SS. Cyril and Methody in the suburbs. Thus, the St. Petka congregation was registered in 1991; and then in 1992, they purchased a Russian Orthodox Church.<sup>710</sup>

By the start of the new millennium, there were about two dozen Macedonian Orthodox Churches in America (or communities that were organizing to build a church in their community); which, of course, is in addition to the many Macedono-Bulgarian and Eastern Orthodox Churches that Macedonians had established in the first half of the century. On top of the many Macedonian Orthodox churches described above, the following churches were in the process of being built: St. Dimitrija in Miami, Florida; St. John the Baptist in Tarpon Springs, Florida; St. Mary in St. Louis, Missouri;<sup>711</sup> and St. Archangel Michael in Phoenix, Arizona.

These Macedonian Orthodox churches became the center of all community affairs for the Macedonian people. Yes, the churches were there for people's

religious and spiritual needs and would often have hundreds (or thousands) of attendees on major holidays, such as Easter and Christmas. But a church was more than just a religious institution: it was the one place Macedonians could come together to enjoy their culture and traditions while feeling comfortable and safe speaking in their mother Macedonian tongue and being surrounded by their ethnic kin.

## **8. The Macedonians' Cultural and Social Lives**

With their own churches established, Macedonian communities across the nation had a base from which their religious, cultural and social lives could blossom. In addition to religious activities, church congregations would organize community or youth dances, picnics, Macedonian holiday celebrations, and other social gatherings. That is not to say that there were no Macedonian clubs or organizations prior to the creation of Macedonian churches or in areas where there were no Macedonian churches. Many clubs had formed without there being a Macedonian church. Still, the church served as a focal point that would unite the community.

Like with many Christian Americans, two of the biggest holidays for Macedonian immigrants were

Easter and Christmas; except that Macedonian Orthodox Christians celebrate those holidays according to the Julian calendar, while much of the world uses the Gregorian calendar. Thus, Orthodox Christmas is always on January 7<sup>th</sup> and Orthodox Easter is usually after Catholic Easter. While Macedonians never attended church on non-holidays in massive numbers, Christmas and Easter would see hundreds, if not thousands, of people. Masses would also be held the nights before, where it wasn't uncommon for passersby to spot Macedonian parishioners holding candles and circling the church, with the priests in the lead. On Easter, youth and old alike would bring their boiled eggs to church and instead of simply exchanging them, they would try to crack the boiled egg of another. One would hold the egg tightly in his hand while the other would strike the egg with his egg. Whosever egg broke would have to give it up. Also on Easter, many families would visit the cemetery to visit their beloved ones and would often time bring baskets of food and practically have a picnic at the cemetery if there were several Macedonians buried in the same area.

January was one of the busiest Macedonian months for holidays. In addition to Christmas, Macedonians would celebrate New Year's with the rest of the world on January 1<sup>st</sup>, but they would also celebrate the Orthodox New Year's, which falls on January 14<sup>th</sup>. One of the more exciting January religious holidays,



however, is Epiphany Day, which is always held on January 19<sup>th</sup>. At the height of the religious ceremony, the priest throws a cross in some sort of body of water (usually a river, but parishes without nearby rivers bring in large pools) and young men or children then dive in the water to retrieve it. For example, in Steelton in 1935, it was 16-year old Demo Atanasoff who “plunged into the icy Susquehanna river” outmaneuvering several other Macedonians to retrieve the wooden cross that was flung into it by the priest.<sup>712</sup> In 1939, in the same river, it was Kiro Kristoff who captured the cross, with over 1,000 onlookers cheering him on. The temperature outside was 26-degrees and Kristoff was simply wearing a bathing suit. After retrieving the cross, he was brought up the bank by the father of two boys he contested with, Mato Atanasoff.<sup>713</sup>

Macedonians around the country would eventually follow suit, such as in Detroit, Granite City, Indianapolis and Lorain, Ohio.<sup>714</sup> The tradition was revived in America by Nakoff’s congregation in the late 1920s, and the only other place where it was happening before then was in Macedonia.<sup>715</sup> Nakoff offered some reasons as to how the custom started. “Perhaps this custom is taken from the Egyptians who, during the month of January, went along the banks of the Sacred Nile, and worshipped the river for fertilizing the soil of those vast Egyptian deserts... The custom was later seen during the early Christian

centuries in the Greek towns along the Mediterranean Sea, where the climate is mild, but later it spread north into the snowy hills of Macedonia, where the people are observing it until present times.”<sup>716</sup>

Another important holiday for Christians speaking a Slavic language, and especially the Macedonians, is SS. Cyril and Methodius, Slavonic Enlighteners Day on May 24<sup>th</sup>. Macedonians celebrate the day “as a holiday in honor of the brother saints, Cyril and Methodius, who according to legend 1,100 years ago Christianized the alphabet of these races.” On 1911, in Steelton, they suspended all business to celebrate this important day. A Macedonian band then played Macedonian music as 400 Macedonian and some Bulgarian men paraded. Two prominent Macedonian businessmen, Jordan Stankoff and John Dundoff, then gave speeches to the crowd.<sup>717</sup> This important holiday was a time for Macedonians to appreciate the efforts of the two saints that gave the spoken Macedonian a written form.

The church is only one of many important factors in Macedonian weddings, which eventually transformed into hybrid Macedonian/American weddings as the decades progressed. “The reason for that,” said one Macedonian, “is that we’re trying to blend, sort of, with the Americans...we have added the American customs [and] blended them together with the Macedonian.”<sup>718</sup> This mix of old Macedonian traditions and customs (which varied from region-to-

region and village-to-village) with new Western fads is the plot for the biggest celebration in most Macedonians' lives.

During the early days of immigration, the groom's family generally made the major arrangements for a wedding and paid most of the costs. By the end of the century, however, the costs were usually split between both families. In the days leading up to a wedding, the groom's parents officially invite the godparents to the wedding by either visiting them or having them over. Usually, both the bride's and groom's families do the same with all close relatives: an in-person invitation.<sup>719</sup> Sometimes close relatives are even invited with a band playing traditional Macedonian folk music.<sup>720</sup> On Saturday, the night before the wedding day, both families usually hold separate small gatherings or parties. Then, on the morning of the wedding, the groom's close family and guests meet at the groom's house where they dance to folk music and practice certain traditions,<sup>721</sup> such as where the godfather (today, the best man) shaves the groom because, as tradition goes, the groom is too nervous to shave himself and afraid he might cut himself.<sup>722</sup> After a couple hours of festivities, they then head to the bride's house to "pick up the bride" or "whisk her away."<sup>723</sup>

As the groom approaches her house, the bride peeks through a window (sometimes through a ring) to get a glance of the groom but makes sure not to be

noticed by him. The bride's family greets the groom and his family, usually with a battle of brandy or whisky, and generally seats them inside for food and more dancing and customs. The groom's side then symbolically pays for the bride, usually by handing over money to receive a boutonniere or by pretending to attempt to steal the bride, which results in failure and a symbolic price is negotiated. In the early days, the best man would stuff a good luck coin into the bride's shoe; by the end of the century, they were padding the bride's shoe with cash until the shoe fit just right.<sup>724</sup>

Afterwards, all families go to the church, but the groom usually leaves early in order to arrive at the church before the bride. In Macedonia, when the bride would leave the house, her mother and old female relatives would wail as if at a funeral to signify the last time that the daughter would be home. In America, however, traditional songs are usually sung with smiles; but the mother, of course, sometimes still cries. Often, before the bride exits the house by way of the front porch, the mother pours a glass of water in front of her. "In stepping over the water, the bride irrevocably separates her old life as a daughter from her new life as a wife." The other implication with throwing the water is a wish that bride's new life "flow as smoothly as the water flows over the stones of the steps."<sup>725</sup>

The religious ceremonies are not completely unlike most Christian ceremonies, except that: the godparents play a bigger role; music only became added to the religious ceremony recently;<sup>726</sup> gold crowns are placed on the bride's and groom's heads; and other flavorful customs are adhered to. For example, the godfather crosses the crowns three times on the heads of the bride and groom and then they together circle three times around a table that displays several religious and cultural artifacts. They then usually sip wine in a symbolic representation of swallowing in truth. Once married, the couple walks out of the church and the godparents and other wedding attendees shower them with candy, coins,<sup>727</sup> and rice (in Macedonia it used to be wheat). The rice (wheat) signifies fertility; the coins, abundance; and the candy symbolizes the hope that the couples' life together will be sweet.<sup>728</sup> The bride sometimes lifts a young baby boy three times in the air outside the church or kisses the boy three times, signifying "that she expects her first child to be a boy."<sup>729</sup>

Wedding receptions host anywhere up to 1,000 or more guests. These numbers fluctuated, of course, depending on several circumstances; sometimes just a couple hundred would be in attendance, but often there would be more than 500 attendees. In small Macedonian villages, it was typical for the whole village to show up to a wedding. Part of that tradition has been carried over to America, where almost every

Macedonian known to the family could potentially be invited. As weddings have become more expensive, elaborate and eloquent, the number of guests has been sacrificed for aesthetics and more expensive decorations and food.

Once at the reception, the first dance is usually performed by the godparents, but some Macedonians first dance with a loaf of bread (which is a sign of the bride's fertility).<sup>730</sup> The loaf of bread, generally prepared by the groom's mother, is usually circular and between one and two feet in diameter.<sup>731</sup> Then the groom, bride and other important family members dance to Macedonian folk music throughout the night. Dinner is served either before the dancing begins or in between the dancing, depending on the wishes of the couple. Some weddings now also have a "pig dance" in which certain members of the wedding party carry and dance with a roasted pig on a tray to collect money from the guests. The dance then ends up at the head table where the newlyweds are usually seated next to the godparents, who must then pay for the pig (the dinner) before food can be served.

Macedonian dancing is essentially open circle dancing – one person leads and everyone connects by holding hands, but the last person never connects hands with the first person. There are several different and complicated versions of such dancing with different steps; but as people have become more Americanized, the dances often became simpler and

sometimes American music and dancing is thrown into the mix. Mostly, however, the music is Macedonian and performed by Macedonian bands. The bands generally used to consist of brass instruments and on occasion would feature traditional Macedonian instruments. The bands eventually incorporated saxophonists, accordionists, drummers and guitar players. By the new millennium, synthesizers and keyboards replaced many of these instruments.<sup>732</sup>

While Macedonian weddings were (and still are) one of the biggest events in a Macedonian's life, the Macedonian community throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century never missed an opportunity to celebrate their culture. Throwing dance parties was probably the most prevalent social and cultural get-together for these Macedonian immigrants and their descendants. Sometimes these dance parties were solely for the community to participate in. For example, in 1939, the Macedonian American Orthodox Church of Steelton held a Valentine's Day party on behalf of the Macedonian Ladies Aid Society.<sup>733</sup> Actually, most Macedonian communities in America throughout the century would throw dances for Valentine's Day as well as New Year's, Christmas, Easter; while in many communities there would also be celebrations on other holidays, such as Thanksgiving dances. These dances were good both for young people to socialize, as well as to raise money for the church communities.

Other times, professional dance groups would perform and then the community would join afterwards. Professional dancers were always impressive to watch. While church dance groups always produced excellent shows, Macedonians would especially flock to see Macedonia's national folk-dance group: Tanec. In 1956, the Macedonian Businessmen's Club, the Macedonian American Society, and the Macedonian Women's Social Club hosted the musical and dance group Tanec on their first American tour. Tanec was the first Macedonian folk dance group from the newly established Republic of Macedonia within Yugoslavia to perform in America.<sup>734</sup> Tanec would return several times over the course of the century. For example, they appeared at Oakland Mall outside of Detroit in 1994 as part of an international performance.<sup>735</sup>

In 1981, the Detroit Folkdance Club hosted a spring camp in May where mostly Macedonian dances were taught by Atanas Kolarovski. Kolarovski, who came from a village near Skopje, had helped to form Tanec. For 19 years, he was their choreographer, artistic director, and lead solo dancer. He moved to the U.S. in 1964 and traveled the country giving dancing lessons to groups. He eventually settled in Seattle with his wife, Ljupka, where they owned and operated the Yugoslavian Restaurant.<sup>736</sup>

Other types of cultural and social activities were more broad – large festivals and picnics would be held,



which would include music, dancing, games, food, speeches and the sale of Macedonian products (such as clothes and canned goods). Throughout much of the 1990s, the Macedonian Festival in metro-Detroit was held at Freedom Hill Park in Sterling Heights. The first Macedonian Ethnic Festival in Detroit took place at the park in the summer of 1994.<sup>737</sup> The Macedonians of metro-Buffalo, however, are known to have begun hosting an earlier version of such a Macedonian festival in 1991 called “Mac Fest”. It took place on church grounds at SS. Cyril and Methody Macedonian Orthodox Church in Blasdell. All proceeds went to the church.<sup>738</sup>

But Macedonian events took place throughout the entire century. In Mansfield, Ohio, the Macedonian-American Society would host large summer picnics with food, drinks, music and dancing, and often they would take place at the Macedonian Park.<sup>739</sup> And the women’s section of the Macedonian Men’s Association in Granite City constantly hosted cultural events in the 1930s. In February of 1938, they hosted a cultural program that saw hundreds of Macedonians attend from out of the area. Pictures from Macedonian conventions and festivals were shown, and dancers performed traditional Macedonian dances and a Macedonian play was performed.<sup>740</sup>

Many of these celebrations often revolved around village saint days or Macedonian holiday celebrations, such as Ilinden, the day in 1903 that Macedonians

revolted against the Turks and created a temporary independent republic. For the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Ilinden in 1928, for example, Macedonian organizations gathered hundreds of people for a picnic in Mansfield, Ohio. Their aim was to keep Ilinden alive “in the memory of all as the initial move to set up a free Macedonian country.” A Macedonian band from Youngstown performed, with Macedonians from all over Ohio attending, including from Akron, Youngstown, Canton and Cleveland.<sup>741</sup>

A year later, in 1929, MPO Macedonians in Cincinnati held an evening of entertainment with several performers that extended beyond traditional music and food. Mary Dimitroff performed “Declamation”; Alexandra Stevens performed “Groba”; Kiril Yankoff and V. Stefanoff performed “Untche at the Doctor’s Office”; N.G. Bitsoff performed a violin solo; Joachim Raff performed “Cavatina”; Mary and Kiril Dimitroff performed mandolin solos; Frances Thome played a violin solo; Kiril Dimitroff and Christ Chachoff performed “Old Vojvoda”; the Cincinnati Macedonian choir performed “Sedenka”; and Vladimir Stefanoff performed “Ivancho the Drunk”.<sup>742</sup> Large performances like this were not as common as typical dances and picnics, but they were always a spectacle and good time when they did take place.

A big part of Macedonian culture, as in many cultures, is food. In 1973, Ellen Cooke’s interview

with an Arizonian librarian, Mary Choncoff, gave Arizona a taste of both Macedonian food and history. Choncoff had been the Director of the Library Media Services Division for the Arizona Department of Education, as well as a cake decorator, which came after her stint as the Assistant Dean of Women at Ohio State University. Her parents, originally from Skopje, moved to the United States during the waning Ottoman years and eventually operated a hotel and a bakery in Indiana. Her father had even served as an American soldier during the First World War. Choncoff told Cooke of Macedonia's division and how, ironically, it was in communist Yugoslavia where the Macedonian people "can say they're Macedonians" and "for the first time they have pride in themselves."<sup>743</sup>

When it came to food, Choncoff explained: "It's a tradition that goes back to Macedonia, though, to serve any guest something. No matter how poor the family, a bit of *slatko*, a sweet preserve or jam, was put in a tiny fancy dish and served with cold water or Turkish coffee. They still do this, even if you're there just a few minutes." She also spoke of other Macedonian traditions. Macedonians would "take bread to anyone who has returned from a long journey"; or bring *pituli* (doughnuts/fritters) when visiting a newborn. Choncoff still held onto many of those food customs, such as putting "yogurt on everything."<sup>744</sup> Other common Macedonian foods

include stuffed roasted peppers; *kevapi* (grilled meat in the shape of a small sausage, usually consisting of equal portions of beef, lamb and pork); and *gravche tavche*, a baked-bean dish.

Aside from music, arts and food, Macedonian boys and men were avid soccer fans and nearly every Macedonian male played the game. With the new wave of Macedonian immigrants in the 1960s and 1970s, several Macedonian soccer clubs popped up around the country. For example, in northern New Jersey, the Macedonia Clifton football club was established in 1972 and was considered one of the best Macedonian clubs in the country.<sup>745</sup> In Los Angeles, the Macedonia Football Club competed from 1974 to 1980.<sup>746</sup>

Detroit, however, hosted Macedonian soccer clubs that were very successful in Michigan and in the nation. The Macedonian Soccer Club was founded in Detroit in 1967, and the main initiator was Toni Temelko from the Mala Prespa region (today in Albania) and whose nephew is a human rights activist for the Macedonian minority in Albania. Temelko came to the U.S. in the late 1950s or early 1960s and ignited a decade of great success for Macedonian soccer. Another man involved in the Macedonian Soccer Club from the early years was Petko Mihailovich from Vratnica. Most on this original team consisted of Macedonians from all regions of

Macedonia, but there was also a German and a Greek.<sup>747</sup>

In 1972, the Macedonian Soccer Club played against the Canonsburg Maggi's in the opening round of the National Open Cup Tournament in Pennsylvania. The Macedonians had a 16-2 record that year and came in second place in the Detroit Soccer League. Larry Christoff and Alex Sandunski were their best goal scorers, Christoff with 18 goals and Sandunski with 22 for that season.<sup>748</sup>

The 1970s also saw the participation of another Macedonian soccer club in the Detroit Soccer League: Vardar. In 1975 both Macedonian teams were in Division One of the league and they played against a variety of clubs. On May 18<sup>th</sup>, 1975, the Macedonians lost to the Iraqis 2-0, but Vardar beat the Ukrainians 4-0.<sup>749</sup> On May 12<sup>th</sup> of the same year, the Macedonians beat Mexico 6-3, and Vardar beat Club Italia 4-2.<sup>750</sup> In 1977, by the end of May, Vardar was in first place of Division One in the Detroit Soccer League with a record of 4-0-0, while the Macedonian Club was in 8<sup>th</sup> place with a record of 0-2-1.<sup>751</sup> By the middle of the summer, Vardar was 6-0-0 and Macedonians were 0-4-1.<sup>752</sup> In that same year, the Cleveland Serbians eliminated Detroit Vardar team 4-2 in the semi-finals match at the United States Open Cup tournament.<sup>753</sup> By 1980, the Macedonian Soccer Club had evaporated and 'Yugo Americans' appeared in the Detroit Soccer League, a team that included several Macedonians.<sup>754</sup>

Also in 1980, Vardar played the Detroit Iraqi Soccer Club for third place in the Michigan Soccer League Maxwell Cup.<sup>755</sup> The Vardar Club would evolve into one of the best and most elite soccer clubs in Michigan and America, where now most of the players are non-Macedonians.

Several other types of Macedonian social and cultural groups and societies littered the American landscape. In 1953, Macedonians and Bulgarians opened the American-Bulgarian-Macedonian Hall in Lansing. The purpose of the group and hall was to promote “community, social, recreational, cultural and educational projects.” The president was Theodore Dines, the vice-president was A.G. Popoff, the treasurer was Spiro Vasiloff, and the secretary was Alex Bosheff.<sup>756</sup> The group did a variety of things. For example, in 1959, they awarded Mrs. Louis Lambo with the Mother of the Year award, for her good motherliness as well as having served as president, vice-president and secretary of the ladies’ auxiliary group.<sup>757</sup>

In the late winter of 1967, dozens of Macedonians in Rochester, New York gathered at the Downtowner Motor Inn to form the Macedonian-American Club. Slave Ristich was elected president; Boris Ilijevski, vice president; Kosta Kordovich, secretary; and Anna Galovski, treasurer. Their first planned social event was an Orthodox Easter dance in late April.<sup>758</sup> The Macedonian American Society was formed in

Mansfield several years prior in 1956. Mike Pandoff was elected president, with Louis Sazdanoff as vice president, George Popoff as treasurer, and Mrs. Popoff as secretary.<sup>759</sup>

“The Macedono-Bulgarian Society” was incorporated in Steelton in 1926 for “promoting friendship and social enjoyment among its members, to promote citizenship among the Macedonian and Bulgarian inhabitants in the vicinity and to assist and encourage Macedonians and Bulgarians to become citizens of the United States of America.”<sup>760</sup> Alex Kormushoff was elected as its first president.<sup>761</sup>

One of the most significant Macedonian groups in the country was the Macedonian-American Businessmen’s Club in Ohio,<sup>762</sup> (also known as the Macedonian Businessmen’s Club). It was formed in 1950 by 27 Macedonians with a mission of education, community support and the celebration of Macedonian heritage and it still existed by the start of the new millennium.<sup>763</sup> Soon after establishing themselves, the club honored Tommy Ivan, coach of the Detroit Red Wings hockey team. He was “inducted as the first honorary member in the club’s history.”<sup>764</sup>

Throughout the decades, they hosted a variety of events and performed several good deeds in their communities. In 1955, the Macedonian Businessmen’s Club donated \$3,000 to the Akron Children’s Hospital as part of the drive for their

building fund, with donations coming from a total of 35 Macedonians.<sup>765</sup> Also in 1955, they hosted a dinner at Yanko's restaurant for a "Ladies Night" where 30 Macedonian men and women showed up.<sup>766</sup> In 1964, the club donated \$4,500 to the Red Cross in relief efforts for victims of the 1963 Skopje earthquake.<sup>767</sup> In 1965 the club raised \$500 to bring a five-month old chimp to the US and donated it to the Akron Children's Zoo.<sup>768</sup> At the 1990 Macedonian Businessmen's Club annual scholarship benefit dinner dance, Nicholas Economu was honored as Macedonian of the Year.<sup>769</sup> In 1993, Peter George was awarded with the Macedonian Hall of Fame Award and Patrick Petroff received the Macedonian Man of the Year Award.<sup>770</sup>

Ohio saw the birth of a variety of groups and associations many years before the inception of the Macedonian Businessmen's Club. For example, in 1917, the Gumendga charitable organization sprouted in Springfield and in 1918, the Saint Dimitrija Society of immigrants came into existence in Cleveland. The 1920s, however, saw a significant explosion of Macedonian groups in Ohio: Dayton had the Macedonian Brotherhood, which later joined the MPO; Springfield had a group called Solun (also known as Machenik); Canton had a group called Boris Sarafov; Akron had the Pelister Club; Kingstown formed the Todor Aleksandrov Club; Lorain Macedonians formed the Alexander the Great Society,



which mostly consisted of immigrants from Prespa; Cleveland Macedonians created the Vardar Club; Mansfield Macedonians formed the Ohrid Society; and the Bistrica Club was formed in Cincinnati, which had its own school and drama club.<sup>771</sup>

As a matter of fact, each state with a large concentration of Macedonians had several different groups and clubs. In the early 1970s, United Macedonians Organization of Canada established a Detroit branch. Throughout the next three decades, several small village and regional clubs popped up in Detroit, such as: the Shar Cultural Club, Belovishte Club, Mladost Staro Selo Society, Ilinden Society of Rogachevo, Kiril Pejcinovich Society of Tearce, Polog Cultural Society, Prespa Society, Pelister Society, Ljubojno Society and the Skopje Club.<sup>772</sup>

But those were Michigan's groups formed by Macedonians after the new wave of Macedonian immigrants. The first waves of immigrants had formed several organizations in the 1920s and 1930s and not just in Detroit. In 1918, Jackson's Macedonians from Armensko (near Lerin) formed a group called Progress; immigrants from Bouf (also near Lerin) formed their own society in 1924 in Detroit; the SS. Cyril and Methody Mutual Aid and Educational Society was formed in Battle Creek by 1926; in 1927, Tetovo immigrants formed the Shar Planina Society (eventually reestablished as Polog);

and three MPO branches were formed in Jackson, Lansing and Detroit.<sup>773</sup>

In New York City, in 1906, the Macedonian-Bulgarian society *Priselec* was formed. In Syracuse in 1912, the *Bitola Charitable Society* was created. Then in 1917, immigrants from *Gornichevo* (near *Lerin*) founded *Orel*, which had two branches in Syracuse and Rochester. The *Ilinden Organization* was founded in New York City in 1922, and in 1923, MPO established a branch called *Independent Macedonia* in Syracuse. The MPO also established a section in Lackawanna in 1928 called the *Prespa Society*. Lackawanna Macedonians then created the *Jordan Gjurov Society* by 1931; in 1932, *Bapchor* immigrants in Rochester formed their own branch of *Vich*, which had originated in Fort Wayne Indiana; and in Rochester in 1933, there was the *Simeon Eftimov society*.<sup>774</sup> Several more groups were created throughout the decades in New York, including the *Macedonian Arts Council* based in New York City and founded by *Pavlina Proevska* in the early 1990s.<sup>775</sup>

In Indiana, several village-based groups also formed by 1930, such as by villagers from the following villages: *Chereshnica*, *Bapchor*, *Kuratica*, *Velogshti* and *Tiloishta*. The MPO also established several societies.<sup>776</sup> It was a similar scenario across the border in Illinois, but the organizing there started much earlier in 1906 because of *Granite City's* large Macedonian colony. Immigrants from *Dumbeni*,

Smrdesh, Oshchima, Aposkep, Bitola and Setoma all had their own societies within ten years, and other types of groups popped up throughout the 1920s.<sup>777</sup> An active and important Diaspora organization was even formed in Florida in 1992: the Macedonian World Congress. Its first congress was held in in 1993 in Dearborn, just outside Detroit.<sup>778</sup>

While clubs and associations were great for enhancing the social and cultural lives of Macedonians, the media – especially newspapers and radio programs – were used to connect the Macedonians from different regions and ideologies. In Granite City by 1908, there were two separate Macedonian newspapers: one edited by Christo Nedelkoff and another by Dr. J.S. Shoomkoff.<sup>779</sup> One was issued weekly and the other was issued semi-weekly. *Macedonia* was edited by Shoomkoff and published from 1907 to 1910, and the *People's Voice* was edited by Nedelkoff and lasted from 1907 until 1944.<sup>780</sup> The two editors had a bitter rivalry against one another. For example, in 1908, Nedelkoff published an article that accused Shoomkoff of wearing stolen shoes at a speech he had given. Shoomkoff took Nedelkoff to court, and Nedelkoff was found guilty of libel and was fined \$25.<sup>781</sup>

Shoomkoff had a B.S. from University of Chicago and a Ph.D. from University of Pennsylvania. His newspaper was created in partnership with a mercantile house in Granite City. It was printed in

both Bulgarian and English, with Macedonians doing the presswork and composition. The combined circulation of his newspaper and Nedelkoff's paper had peaked at about 3,000 copies. The main motives for the newspapers, however, were to control local public opinion and to sneak in advertising for their partners' products and goods.<sup>782</sup>

While Shoomkoff's newspaper had a Bulgarian bent and a Macedonian right-wing tilt (he was involved with the Supreme Macedonian-Adrianople Committee<sup>783</sup> established in Bulgaria), newspapers by Macedonian left-wing organizations also sprouted in the early decades. In Detroit in 1930, for example, IMRO (United) (an opposing faction of the right-wing IMRO in Macedonia) published the *Macedonian Bulletin*, which eventually became the *Balkan Association*. Another progressive newspaper was established in Detroit from 1932 to 1937 called *Labor Macedonia*, with the motto: "For the rights of self-determination of the Macedonian people, including the right to separate into an independent political unit; for a liberated Macedonia of the laborers!" In 1938, *Labor Macedonia* evolved into the *People's Will*, which was released once a week in Cyrillic and the Macedonian dialects, and eventually in the Macedonian literary tongue after the language was codified.<sup>784</sup>

In 1954, the first Macedonian radio program sprouted in Gary, Indiana and was called the

American-Macedonian Radio Hour.<sup>785</sup> Several years later in Detroit, during the early 1970s, a Macedonian woman by the name of Lepa became the host of the “Yugoslavian Radio” hour. This instilled pride and awareness in the local Macedonian community, who for the first time heard something on the radio in their own language, instead of in Bulgarian or Serbian. Eventually, Bosko Rajcovski took over the radio hour and his talking points only helped to increase ethnic pride and awareness among the Macedonians. By the 1980s, there were a total of four radio programs in Detroit in the Macedonian language.<sup>786</sup> By 1980, there was also a one-hour Macedonian Television program. In the 1990s, as Yugoslavia fell apart, the Macedonian Radio program changed its name to “Oro Makedonsko.”<sup>787</sup> And while Detroit’s Macedonians were using the radio and television to connect Macedonians, the Macedonian Radio Hour in New York started in 1971 and persisted for several decades. New York also had a Macedonian and Serbo-Croatian television program that would run for 30 minutes a week.<sup>788</sup>

These Macedonian clubs and societies, newspapers and media outlets helped the Macedonians create a stronger community and foster an unshakeable Macedonian identity. But no Macedonian organization could wholly unite the Macedonians on political issues related to Macedonian affairs. The Macedonians were deeply divided on ideological lines

and grouped into separate left and right factions; and they were divided on matters of identity and affinity toward other Balkan peoples. These divides were a difficult obstacle for Macedonians to overcome both in America and in Macedonia.

## **9. MPO and the Macedonian Right**

Political activism was a crucial element of the Macedonian community in the United States. This activism did not revolve around local or national American issues – though those issues certainly had an impact on Macedonians. Rather, Macedonians were deeply invested in Macedonian affairs in the Balkans, and with good reason. When the early immigrants came to America, Macedonia was still attached to the Ottoman Empire and several movements were afloat to free Macedonia from Turkey. During this period, up until 1913, Macedonian immigrants were more-or-less united in seeing a Macedonia freed from Turkey. However, in 1913, Macedonia was divided by her Balkan neighbors, and Macedonians in America began to fracture – many were still advocating for an independent Macedonia, but others had moved over to the Bulgarian, Greek or Serbian side.

After World War I, Macedonian immigrants began another push to see an independent Macedonia, but two main divides were established that lasted through much of the century: a right-wing faction that leaned on Bulgaria, and a left-wing faction that wanted to see a united Macedonia as part of a larger Balkan confederation. Smaller left-wing and moderate factions wanted simply a united and independent Macedonia to stand by itself. By the end of the century, an independent Macedonia was achieved, but the country faced many problems from its neighbors, especially regarding the recognition of the Macedonian people, name, language and identity. The following two chapters describe the efforts by early Macedonians to advocate for their Macedonian homeland, and they examine the activities of two of the largest Macedonian political organizations in America.

Although there were not many Macedonians in America before 1903, there were already a few Macedonian Societies in existence (generally called Macedono-Bulgarian societies). Some of the founders and leaders of this small community of Macedonians during this early period were Marko Kaludoff, and S.J. Shoomkoff and C. Nedelkoff (the two eventual editors of the Granite City Macedonian newspapers).<sup>789</sup>

Macedonians started flooding America in 1903, however. In September of that year, the Chicago



Macedonian Society organized a company of 75 Macedonian men to fight the Turks in Macedonia. The group was led by Boris S. Tsvetkoff and they joined a regiment of Macedonians already in New York.<sup>790</sup> Prior to arriving in New York, many of them drilled in Chicago's Jefferson Park. While most were unarmed, they had intended to buy their weapons in New York before they boarded their ship.<sup>791</sup>

Constantine Stephanove, whose early American life was outlined in Chapter One, was a key individual who helped create a Macedonian-American Junta in 1904. The junta was organized with the help of a Supreme Macedonian-Adrianople Committee agent in the U.S., named Mr. Radanloff.<sup>792</sup> Their first meeting was held at the Cooper Institute (now Cooper Union) in New York City on April 18<sup>th</sup>, 1904. Stephanove served as their president<sup>793</sup> and a month after their formation, the Macedonian-American Junta circulated a petition throughout the United States in which they gathered thousands of signatures urging the U.S. government to intervene on the behalf of Macedonians against the Ottoman Empire. In part, it read:

*"We, the undersigned, citizens of the United States, desire to express our indignation, at the conduct of the leading Christian nations in permitting the extermination of an entire race of people in Macedonia, by the forces of a Government with which they all hold diplomatic relations. It is almost a year since the Austro-Russian Reform plan for Macedonia was inaugurated, yet no change for the better has occurred. Ten thousand*

*Macedonians are still in prison. 50,000 exiles dare not return to their homes, and those people still in Macedonia are daily being persecuted by the soldiery and the Mohammedan population. Macedonian women are daily suffering from the same outrages for which negroes are lynched with public approval in our Southern States, but in Macedonia such hideous crimes are perpetrated with impunity.*"<sup>794</sup>

By 1906, the Greeks of St. Louis claimed that the Macedonians had a secret organization that would frequently meet at the American Steel Foundry Company in Granite City and would plan schemes "to force the St. Louis Greeks to pay money as the price of peace." The Greeks stated that in the Balkans, "the Macedonians and the Hellenes, or native Greeks, engage in constant reprisals which sometimes amount to border warfare." One Greek gave his perception of how the wars in the Balkans had spilled over into the States, with the Macedonians employing blackmailing schemes against the Greeks:

*"We have told the Consul all about it, and none of us cares to have his name used. It is a deep, dark, dangerous business. We know that there is a secret organization in Granite City. It has harassed us so much that we have selected A.D. Papas of 118 South Sixth Street as our representative to treat with this society.*

*"Mr. Papas has been going over there every day, but nothing we can do seems to satisfy them. They always want more money. They tell us that if we do not pay them, our people in Greece will be slaughtered by Macedonian raiders, who will rush across*

*the border and kill our fathers and mothers and brothers and burn our towns... [But] we are sure that they mean to use our money to buy arms with which to kill our people.*"<sup>795</sup>

The Macedonians denied the blackmailing scheme. They said that they were indeed raising funds, but voluntarily; and further, the money was being put toward peaceful activities, such as creating libraries and helping villages rebuild. This way, said the Macedonians, the people "will think of something else besides fighting their dear neighbors, the Greeks."<sup>796</sup>

As a matter of fact, in 1907, Shoomkoff iterated that no such Macedonian blackmailing committee existed in Granite City and that it was in the imagination of the Greeks. Rather, he said, the Macedonians and Greeks were engaging in a "labor dispute" that bothered the Greeks. Shoomkoff wrote:

*"Stephen Roucheff was active in a strike of Bulgarians and Macedonians at Granite City, Illinois last year. The Greeks took the places of the strikers, but their work was found to be unsatisfactory and the Macedonians and Bulgarians were returned to their jobs at an advance over what they had received before the strike. The Greeks swore vengeance...Unfortunately for the Greeks they did not figure that Macedonians who are American citizens would...come to the aid of the Bulgarians. We...have the evidence to prove that our men are innocent and that it is the Greeks who are blackmailing. They extort money from our people with threats, and our men are entirely innocent of any crime."*<sup>797</sup>

Regardless of the truth about blackmailing, the Macedonians managed to form powerful and impressive organizations. For example, one year later in 1908, “10,000 Macedonians...met in a natural amphitheater near the bank of the Mississippi River at Granite City” to send a message to President Theodore Roosevelt and other world leaders on the situation in Macedonia. They wanted Roosevelt to “intercede in behalf of Macedonian autonomy” and to thank him for the hospitality shown to the Macedonians in America. Shoomkoff and Reverend Vasileff addressed the crowd with stirring speeches.<sup>798</sup>

In 1912, during the prelude to the First Balkan War, a Macedonian organization issued a message to all Macedonians in New York: “Send all Bulgarians and Macedonians to Bulgaria.” It was a message sent from the Macedonian committee based in Sofia.<sup>799</sup> A few days later, on October 6<sup>th</sup>, 1912, over 600 Macedonians of Granite City and the surrounding towns listened to speeches by Chris Nedelkoff, Mr. Capidoncheff, and Reverend Tsvetko S. Bagranoff. The men were soliciting donations to pay the expenses of 500 Macedonians who were traveling back to the Balkans to fight against the Turks. They collected \$900 that day.<sup>800</sup>

After the Balkan Wars and before World War I, “the Macedono-Bulgarian People’s Union” was formed in Chicago. It was initiated by Zheko Baneff and Marko Kaludoff.<sup>801</sup> Around the same time, the

Macedonian-Bulgarian Society resumed its activities in Steelton with the aim of organizing such committees throughout the country in order to support the Macedonians back in the Balkans due to the warring environment. Jordan Stankoff was elected president, Milan Kumanoff was elected vice president, Dimitri Minoff was elected secretary and George Krsteff was elected treasurer.<sup>802</sup>

World War I hit the Balkans in 1915 like a hurricane after the two tornadoes (the First and Second Balkan Wars) ripped through Macedonia in 1912 and 1913. Thus, in December of 1918, during the months leading up to the peace conferences in Europe, Macedonians held a convention of 200 delegates in Chicago. David Nakoff was the president of the convention and Alex Belieff was the secretary. The week-long conference cumulated into a resolution sent to the President Wilson that demanded an independent Macedonia. While it had shades of Bulgarian leanings, the resolution made clear that they in no means were working on behalf of the Bulgarian government.<sup>803</sup>

David Nakoff became president of the Macedono-Bulgarian Central Committee and in 1919 spoke to a crowd of Macedonians in Cincinnati. He insisted that they should all work for the independence of Macedonia and put the views of having an autonomous Macedonia before the people. This was just one stop in his speaking tour to Macedonians in

Dayton, Detroit, Indianapolis, Chicago and other cities around the country. Nakoff told the people that Macedonia had been “divided between Greece, Bulgaria and Serbia” and needed “spiritual and political liberty”. Further, he stated: “*Attempts are being made to arouse the interest of the people of the United States and Europe in hopes that arrangements will be made at the peace conference to establish Macedonia under the guidance of a large nation. The United States or Great Britain would be preferred by Macedonians. In case Macedonians are successful they will have a country comprising 40,000 square miles of land and containing approximately 2,000,000 inhabitants.*”<sup>804</sup>

Several months later, in September of 1919 and on the eve of the Paris Peace Conference, Nakoff penned a letter to the editor in the Harrisburg Telegraph where he demanded independence for Macedonia. “If the Peace Conference,” he said, “decides the Macedonian Question without consulting the will of the people, there can by no means be established peace in the Balkans. It will not be long before my countrymen, realizing the new slavery to Serbia and Greece, will start a new revolutionary movement, which will be a menace to the peace of the world.”<sup>805</sup> Indeed, the revolutionary movement was reignited as soon as Macedonia was denied unity and independence, which saw thousands of assassinations, skirmishes with armies, and another war in the Balkans. This stage of revolutionary activity in

Macedonia cemented Macedonians in several different right-wing and left-wing factions.

In 1919, the right-wing IMRO sent two representatives to the United States “to advocate on behalf of the Macedonian independence movement.” They were Jordan Shkatroff and Srebren Poppetrov. Poppetrov himself traveled to 30 cities in America and Canada to gather Macedonian support, giving speeches in 16 of those cities. Out of that movement, he and Shkatroff found a leader in Anastas Stefanoff, and in 1921 they and 20 others began efforts to create the Macedonian Political Organization with Stefanoff serving as its first president.<sup>806</sup> (The Macedonian Patriotic Organization – as it is known today, nicknamed the MPO – was not always called that. In 1921, it started out as the “Union of the Macedonian Political Organizations of the United States of America and Canada” and was incorporated in Indiana. In 1932, it changed its name to the “Macedonian Political Organization of the United States and Canada”.<sup>807</sup> Finally, it became the Macedonian Patriotic Organization to clarify that it was not an organization involved in American political activities.)

The MPO was a large Macedonian organization in the United States (likely the largest in the first half of the century). Despite its size and influence, its support among Macedonian-Americans never got above half of the entire Macedonian population in America.

There were other organizations to fill the void and many joined opposing political organizations. Others didn't join for several reasons: some were only in America on a temporary basis because they were here only to make some money; others had no interest in politics; others were cautious of MPO's ties to the dangerous right-wing faction of IMRO; and others some simply detested MPO's bourgeois right-wing politics.<sup>808</sup> Another problem with the MPO leadership (from an ethnic Macedonian point of view) is that they never viewed the Macedonian people as a distinct ethnic group. A note in their bylaws stated: "The terms 'Macedonians' and 'Macedonian immigrants' used in these by-laws [sic] pertain equally to all nationality groups in Macedonia – Bulgarians, Arumanians, Turks, Albanians and others."<sup>809</sup>

While many MPO members and event attendees did feel that Macedonians were a separate group, their leaders were tied to Bulgarian and pro-Bulgarian Macedonian factions in the Balkans. Throughout the decades they wavered with regards to "how Macedonian" and "how Bulgarian" they portrayed themselves depending on their leadership. For example, Ivan Lebamoff (MPO's president in 1990) compared the Macedonians to the Swiss: "The Swiss, just as the Macedonians, are a Volk because geography, history, political structures, and linguistic diversity have made them one. The Swiss, whether French, German, or Italian in language, participate in



one national entity...Such will be the case in a free and independent Macedonia. The Macedonians are one because their venerable history makes them one.”<sup>810</sup> While some ethnic Macedonians saw this as the gradual alignment of MPO leaders with ethnic Macedonians, others saw a subtle but dangerous implication of not expressly recognizing the Macedonian ethnic identity, which neither Bulgaria nor Greece recognizes.

Despite its aims and leadership, the MPO was the largest Macedonian organization for several years. The first MPO convention, called the organizing convention, took place on October 1<sup>st</sup>, 1922 in Fort Wayne. Several different Macedonian groups from across the country had decided to meet to form this national Macedonian American organization: Prilep of Steelton; Independence of Duquesne; Ilinden of New York City; Kostur of Fort Wayne; and other groups from Youngstown, Dayton, Indianapolis, Gary, and Detroit. Springfield and Cincinnati delegates were unable to attend but expressed their wishes to be a part of the organization. Stefanoff, the president of Fort Wayne’s group, called the meeting to order and explained the situation in Macedonia and the need for a union of America and Canada’s Macedonian groups. Stefanoff became president of the entire organization; Trayan Nicoloff from Indianapolis became vice-president; Mihail Nicoloff from Fort Wayne was

elected secretary; and Atanas Lebamoff of Fort Wayne was the treasurer.<sup>811</sup>

The MPO's second convention was held in Indianapolis and its membership had grown to over 500 people. At that convention they passed a resolution, translated in several languages, which demanded a "revision of treaties" that would allow Macedonia to be an independent state. Their resolution read as follows:

*"Whereas, never before in the history of the world has there been a time when men have dared so unblushingly to defy the principles of justice and human reason and seriously attempt to create, protect and support chaos as a social and political institution as have the great and victorious powers and their abominable lackeys – Serbia, Roumania, Greece and Bulgaria, in the case of the Balkans since the year 1912.*

*"Whereas a careful study of the post-war map of the Balkan peninsula in general, the map of Macedonia in particular, reveals magnificently the skillfully woven web of evil genius, dooming to bondage, privation and servitude millions of human beings, by turning back the hands of the clock of progress and culture, decreeing that in this part of the world, even the most elementary civil rights and liberties, not alone the sacred right of self-determination, shall be denied to the people.*

*"Whereas Macedonia, like Croatia, Ireland, Switzerland, etc., has been for centuries considered, even by its most terrible and ill-tutored rulers, a geographic, economic and historic unit, it has now been divided and dismembered in almost insane*

*manner by allotting to Greece the entire water front along the Aegean.*

*“Now, therefore, be it resolved –*

*“That a revision of the treaties of Bucharest, Neuilly and Versailles, dealing with the fate of the Macedonian people and their liberty, happiness and future, be demanded of the powers, signatories of these treaties, so that Macedonia may again belong to its own people, by becoming an autonomous and independent state, if peace in the Balkans is to be attained and the recurrence of further devostory debacles be avoided.”<sup>812</sup>*

At the 3<sup>rd</sup> convention, Shkatroff – who was from Prilep but had worked with the Macedonian National Committee in Bulgaria and was also a prominent member of the right-wing IMRO faction – returned to America to speak at the convention by order of Todor Aleksandrov, the then leader of IMRO. He was elected secretary of the MPO, while Pandil Shaneff became president and Tashe Popcheff became treasurer.<sup>813</sup> In the summer of 1925, to a crowd of 200 Macedonians at the Macedono-Bulgarian church in Indianapolis, Shkatroff, delivered a speech on the conditions in Macedonia. He stated that “the situation in Macedonia is characterized by constant anarchy instigated from the highest to the lowest organs of the governing authorities and be a ceaseless tendency to denationalize and uproot the local population.” He highlighted and blasted a deal between Greece and Bulgaria to exchange populations between those two countries.<sup>814</sup>

However, when MPO became incorporated the following week, its Board of Directors had a completely different view than Shkatroff on the Macedonian identity. Shkatroff was of the view that Macedonians were really either Bulgarians, Aromanians, Albanians or Greeks. The incorporation statement of the MPO, however, insisted that the purpose of their organization was “for the mutual assistance and protection of people of the Macedonian race.” The three Board Directors at the time were Theodore Vasiloff, Stanley Georgioff, and Gil Sarbinoff.<sup>815</sup> These conflicting statements are a testament to the different beliefs and allegiances among the Macedonian members and leadership within the MPO.

After their fourth convention, president Shaneff and L. Kisselintcheff wrote a letter mentioning the Macedonian people and population, but nowhere mentioning the supposed Bulgarian character of Macedonians. In that year, Greece and Bulgaria were on the verge of another war. In the letter, Shaneff and Kisselintcheff claimed to be speaking on “behalf of 45,000 Macedonians” in the U.S. and Canada. They claimed that it was the European Powers and the Balkan states that were responsible for destroying Macedonia’s “economic unity” and causing the “exodus of hundreds of thousands of Macedonia’s most brilliant sons.” They said that “the national consciousness of the Macedonian people” was being

eliminated due to the “lack of their most elementary human rights in using their own language, in having their own churches, schools, libraries and cultural institutions.” They demanded that the international powers act to protect the Macedonians, “a small and unfortunate nation, which, during the last decades has been drowned in the blood of its own sons and has become a toy of the Balkan state governments and the European powers in their continual struggles, intrigues, and competitions.”<sup>816</sup>

At their sixth convention in Akron in 1927, Akron Mayor D.C. Rybolt gave the opening address that welcomed the over 1,000 visitors and delegates. At the convention, a rendition of the play “Macedonian Bloody Wedding” was performed, which was a very famous Macedonian production in five parts, portraying “the suffering of the Macedonians at the hands of other Balkan states.”<sup>817</sup> Later that year, the Steelton Chapter of MPO issued a statement that highlighted how the Serbian government was severely depriving Macedonians of their rights. In their statement, they referred to how “Bulgarian schools and churches are closed” and how Bulgarian language and literature was prohibited. They also lambasted the Serbian government for arresting 50 Macedonians students for having Bulgarian literature on them, and for being “tortured by the severest of inquisition methods, flogging, burning by red-hot iron rods,

twisting of limbs, placing of hot eggs under the arms, etc.”<sup>818</sup>

Their brethren in Indianapolis took a more pro-Macedonian view of situation in response to Serbian-Americans accusing the MPO of being a secret Bulgarian organization. P.G. Sirmin of the Indianapolis MPO chapter, snapped back: “I am a Macedonian and a member of this Macedonian political organization in Indianapolis, but the organization is not a secret one...We are, as citizens of the United States, loyal to the government.” In response to specific situation in Macedonia, Sirmin wrote: “Macedonians in this country do not like the Serbian king...There is no crime to organize in order to expose the inhuman tortures which the Macedonians suffer. In Serbia, this crime is perhaps punishable with death. But thank God,” he concluded, “we are not living in Serbia.”<sup>819</sup>

Also in 1927, five years after the MPO was created, they established a newspaper called the Macedonian Tribune. The original editor, Boris Zograffoff, was requested by MPO Central Committee to come over from Bulgaria. He lasted three years until Luben Dimitroff took over in 1930.<sup>820</sup> Published in both Bulgarian and English, its main goals were to “advocate making Macedonia an independent state as a first step toward a Balkan federation” and to keep Macedonians around the world in touch with each other. During and after World War II and when

Communism and Socialism began flourishing in Yugoslavia and other Balkan states, the Tribune began assuming heavy anti-Communist tones.<sup>821</sup> However, throughout the decades, they continued publishing their newspaper in the Bulgarian language, despite Macedonia having codified the Macedonian language after the Second World War. The Macedonian Tribune editors and MPO leaders would even mislead Americans about the reality of Macedonia and the Macedonians. For example, in 1969, its editor Christo Nizamoff, claimed that Macedonia was still not its own political unit, despite Macedonia being a republic within federal Yugoslavia; and he further stated that Bulgarian was the language of most Macedonians, even though Macedonia was the official language of the Republic of Macedonia.<sup>822</sup> (This, of course, is because Bulgaria and pro-Bulgarians don't recognize the Macedonian language as a separate language.)

MPO's seventh convention was held in Detroit on Labor Day weekend in 1928 (all of their conventions were held on Labor Day weekend). This convention caused quite an ethnic stir in the area. The Macedonians met at the Romanian Hall on Russell Street and Farnsworth Avenue. They called for an open revolution in Macedonia to unite the three divided parts and create an independent Macedonian state. Meanwhile, in protest, the Serbs staged a "peace rally" at Ravanica Serbian Orthodox Church on Van Dyke (a church which several Macedonian immigrants

in the 1960s and 1970s would attend). Kisselintcheff had warned: "So long as Macedonia is not free and independent," the Macedonians "will continue their struggle to liberate their fatherland." The main speaker at the Serbian rally, Drake Alles Manduschich, countered: "To lie, bluff and parade in the United States about an independent Macedonia is absurd," he said. "Such acts are only invitation to a forced war against Serbia." Being that the MPO was affiliated with the IMRO in the Balkans, with complete control having been transferred to Ivan Mihailov, Manduschich stressed that "this revolutionary gang abuses the hospitality of America and is creating disturbances, murders and robberies in southern Serbia [Macedonia]." But Manduschich continued his assault on the Macedonians and their identity. "There is no such thing as a Macedonian race," he shouted. "There is no such country as Macedonia. They are Serbs in Macedonia. Macedonia is not an administrative unit that ever had a political or social order."<sup>823</sup> This undoubtedly upset many Macedonians.

When John Chokreff, Kosta Gedoff and Dimitri Popoff returned to Mansfield, Ohio from the Detroit convention, they said that the Macedonians in Geneva, Switzerland were now tasked with looking over Macedonian interests, per agreements at the MPO meeting.<sup>824</sup> In Steelton, H.E. Yanchuleff asked the local newspaper to reprint the speech given at the MPO convention by T. Anastasoff. It read, in part:



*“We come here, in the city of Detroit, on our seventh annual convention, called to do noble work, in spirit and in deed, true to the humane principles incorporated in the liberal laws of the United States of America, guided by the spirit of democracy, liberty and brotherhood...”*

*“But we have on the other side of the Atlantic folks of our own blood, who are victims of a cruel rule and suffer under the tyrannical yoke of foreign government, which has reduced them to common slaves. It hurts to hear the cries of our parents, brothers, sisters, friends and relatives struggling not only for their cultural, religious and political rights, but for their very existence...”*

*“Macedonia, the land of our birth, is now divided among Bulgaria, Serbia and Greece without the consent of the people...The government and their agents are able to rule only by force and despotism which seeks to destroy the rights of the Macedonians to choose their government...All the suppressing measures used by Serbia and Greece aim at but one thing: to force Macedonia to undeserved submission and capitulation. What is the result? The country is in an open revolution, the people is fighting to remove from its throat the criminal grip that chokes the defenseless and misfortunate folks...”*

*“Mrs. Anna O’Hare McCormick, correspondent of the New York Times says: ‘Macedonia is the most unhappy of all the countries I have seen in my travels.’ We know this statement is true...Macedonian will be free and happy when the truth is known.”*<sup>825</sup>

The 10<sup>th</sup> MPO convention in Gary in 1931 saw about 2,000 people attend. One of their aims was to

continue creating a sentiment “for the freeing of Macedonia from Bulgaria, Greece and Serbia, and setting it up as a member of a federation of Balkan states.” Several American professors spoke on the Macedonian question at the event, which of course included a parade and dance.<sup>826</sup> In August of the following year, two MPO members penned separate letters to the editor of an Indianapolis newspaper in response to a Serbian opinion article by A.M. Nikolin that defended Serbia’s cause in Macedonia and considered Macedonians to simply be Serbs. Nizamoff said that, unlike Nikolin’s claim that Yugoslavia was “one great and independent country”, the Macedonians consider the current Yugoslavian regime to be a “farce”. Nizamoff further stated that Macedonians would never accept the merging of Macedonians into a Yugoslavian identity, and that the Macedonian people would continue struggling for a free and independent Macedonian state that would one day join the other Balkan countries in a federation.<sup>827</sup>

Mr. Sirmin of the MPO also wrote a direct and unambiguous response to Mr. Nikolin: “The Macedonians have nothing in common with the Serbians. They were never Serbians, are not now and never will be.” Sirmin said that the Macedonians themselves determine and know their national consciousness, and that is why torture and death would not even turn the Macedonians into Serbians.

He said that the MPO was ready to fund an international investigation to get to the truth of the matter in Macedonia to see how “Serbian” the Macedonians felt, as well as to document the abuse against Macedonians. “The Macedonians demand,” he concluded, “natural and God-given rights for themselves and all other nations. They ask for nothing that does not belong to them.”<sup>828</sup>

Another MPO magazine, the monthly *Macedonia*, appeared in 1932 and had up to 5,000 subscribers. It was an English magazine with articles by Macedonians, as well as by American professors and journalists. The editors stated that “the monthly *Macedonia* will endeavor to answer such inquiries” about the Macedonian question and “its national aspirations” by disseminating “substantial facts regarding the political upheavals in the Balkan peninsula.” They insisted that the standard of the monthly magazine would be “freedom, the peaceful cultural development of Macedonia, and its economic prosperity.”<sup>829</sup>

At the thirteenth convention in Fort Wayne in 1934, declarations of the convention’s resolution, as described by T. Anastasoff of MPO’S Detroit chapter, insisted that Macedonians were now facing persecution under the current Bulgarian regime and forced assimilation under the Greek and Yugoslavian regimes. In addition to repeating similar accusations of Greek and Serbian cruelty against the Macedonians,

this resolution shifted much blame to Bulgaria. The resolution pointed out “the grave conditions” in the “part of Macedonia under Bulgarian jurisdiction, which is inhabited by 200,000 Macedonians.” The MPO resolution highlighted how Bulgaria was suppressing the Macedonian cause and persecuting Macedonians in the Pirin part of Macedonia, as well as the 500,000 Macedonian immigrants in other parts of Bulgaria. The resolution once again called for an international investigation to visit the Balkans.<sup>830</sup>

The 14<sup>th</sup> convention was held in Akron. The topics were similar – freedom and independence for Macedonians, as well as respect of basic human rights for Macedonians. The MPO also focused on how to achieve such measures through “legal manners.” Stoyan Christowe was supposed to attend and speak, but he cancelled at the last minute, stating that he was busy writing a book. Many Macedonian-Americans spoke, as well as Akron city officials and American professors familiar with Macedonia and the Balkans, such as Edgar J. Fisher. Fisher stated that for 50 years before the Great World War, Macedonia was “one of the saddest zones in all of the world due to the clash of conflicting religious and nationalist propaganda that centered in the bleeding heart of the Balkans.” A parade followed the speeches, with 6,000 Macedonians participating as well as 300 Croat-Americans from Ohio and Pennsylvania.<sup>831</sup>

By the late 1930s, the MPO was finding itself in a peculiar position. For many years, its Macedonian leadership had been aligned with the right-wing Macedonian IMRO and right-wing Bulgarian leaders. However, as Bulgaria sided with Nazi Germany in the European war theater, many Macedonians became concerned on two fronts: first, they were worried about what such an alliance would mean for Macedonians in Macedonia and the Macedonian Cause; and second, they were uneasy about how such an alliance would affect both Macedonians' and MPO's image in America.

In 1941, a few weeks prior to MPO's 20<sup>th</sup> convention, MPO leader Nick Dosheff insisted that Macedonian-Americans were against the Nazi actions in the Balkans. He said that the "Balkans today represent a virtual powder keg of discontent against axis powers and when Hitler suffers his first setback the Balkan nations will stab him right in the back." Dosheff insisted that IMRO rebels, the right-wing faction, even turned against Hitler and his coconspirators, "causing a great deal of uneasiness among the army of occupations." He stated: "We Macedonian-Americans strongly condemn the Nazi regime and Nazi domination of Balkans and as true Americans pledge our support to our government and its foreign policy in trying to stop the spread of what is perhaps the worst plague in the world today."<sup>832</sup> The 20<sup>th</sup> convention was held in Akron, and the MPO

delegates pledged support to America's war efforts and "to defend it against all enemies."<sup>833</sup>

The 22<sup>nd</sup> MPO convention was held in Cincinnati in 1943 and the MPO was at its peak, with about 4,000 members in 45 US cities. During this year, Christ Anastasoff was national vice-president of the organization. In addition to his MPO activities, he was a St. Louis history teacher, journalist and author. He led a war bond rally to raise more money than the previous year's convention of \$10,000.<sup>834</sup> After the convention, long-time MPO leader John Mitseff of Akron wrote a song for the war efforts on behalf of Macedonians. It was called "The World Will Be Free" and President Roosevelt and General John Pershing praised the song.<sup>835</sup>

After the war, the MPO began lambasting Yugoslavia as an occupier of Macedonia. While conditions in Yugoslavia were not great for Macedonians, Macedonia was a recognized republic, and its language, people and eventually church became officially recognized. But MPO's leaders hammered away at the terribleness of Yugoslavia. While many ethnic Macedonians agreed that Yugoslavia wasn't the greatest thing to happen for Macedonia, this MPO attitude toward Yugoslavia cemented the belief in most Macedonians' minds that MPO was working for the Bulgarian cause in Macedonia, and many soon started to abandon the organization.

For example, at its 35<sup>th</sup> convention, the MPO passed resolutions that were strongly anti-Tito and anti-Yugoslavian. They claimed that Macedonians had never had it worse than under Tito and the new Yugoslavia. It called on America to stop aid, especially military aid, to Tito. But it also called for economic aid to Macedonians in Yugoslavia, only if American representatives were the ones distributing the aid on the spot.<sup>836</sup>

The Detroit chapter of the MPO then held a day of mourning in 1959 in observation of the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Yugoslavian “political tyranny” in Macedonia. The protest was held at the St. Clement of Ohrid Macedono-Bulgarian Church.<sup>837</sup> Ethnic Macedonians regarded this date as the day they chased out occupying Bulgarian soldiers from Macedonia. Similarly, in 1962, the MPO Cincinnati chapter observed a Day of Mourning for Macedonia on the 18<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The chapter president, Chris Chachoff, claimed that Macedonians had been forced to celebrate October 11 as a liberation day as opposed to a Yugoslav occupation day.<sup>838</sup> While certainly many Macedonians had originally wanted independence from Yugoslavia and unification with the other parts of Macedonia, the MPO implication was that Macedonia as a federal republic within Yugoslavia and as a constituent nation was a worse outcome than Bulgarian occupation of Macedonia. Most Macedonians disagreed. The MPO leadership was

becoming drastically out of touch with the true feelings and allegiances of Macedonians.

But again, in 1964, the Cincinnati chapter held a protest meeting in the home of Anton and James Popov over the same issue. Their goal was to express their dissatisfaction with Tito's Yugoslavia and American financial and material aid to Yugoslavia. They labeled the day Macedonia became a constituent republic of Yugoslavia as a day that Tito "liberated the people of most of their human rights, their personal security, their privileges and of all justice." Mr. Popov insisted "that someday Tito will fight us with the money we (the U.S.) are giving him." Of course, Tito's Yugoslavia was never aggressive toward the United States and Popov's prediction never panned out.<sup>839</sup>

In 1990, Macedonia was about to seek independence from Yugoslavia. MPO's president, Ivan Lebamoff sent a copy of the MPO resolution from the convention in Detroit to world leaders asking for recognition of Macedonia's independence. After Macedonia declared independence, MPO leaders visited Washington, D.C. to meet with U.S. officials, including Indiana's senators and Representatives. They then met in Toronto with the United Macedonians Organization of Canada to strengthen areas in which they agreed, but not to resolve their differences. "They discussed a common goal – a free and independent Macedonia. The result of this meeting was a resolution in which they



demanded the international recognition of the Republic of Macedonia as an independent state. In this petition, they emphasized that the people of Macedonia share a common language, tradition, and history and that the undue influence of Belgrade, Athens, and Sofia is just as undesirable in the Republic of Macedonia as Russification was in the Soviet Union.”<sup>840</sup>

This development of these ties between left-wing Macedonians and right-wing Macedonians was quite unique. As we will see in the next chapter, the left-wing Macedonians had always been adamantly anti-MPO and were extraordinarily attached to a separate Macedonian ethnic identity. To them, the MPO leadership was the enemy and a new organization was needed to counter their influence and attempted Bulgarianization of the Macedonian people.

## **10. MAPL and the Macedonian Left**

The MPO leadership found itself in opposition to communist and liberal policies and ideologies mainly because the Macedonian leadership of IMRO (Ivan Mihailov and his close followers) were aligned with the right-wing politicians in Bulgaria, Croatia and Europe. However, many MPO members and followers were apolitical – to them MPO was an organization that advocated a “Macedonia for the Macedonians,” and they were there as much for the cultural and social benefit as any political activity.

Still, before MPO was even created, many Macedonians were flirting with liberal, socialist and communist ideologies for many reasons. The Macedonians who attached themselves to these

ideologies tended to believe that Macedonia not only deserved its own country, but that Macedonians were their own, distinct people. While many in the MPO felt the same, the main leadership of the MPO almost always had a Bulgarian tilt. Moreover, the old IMRO – the one that was created in 1893 and revolted against the Turks in 1903 – was liberal and socialist, as well as patriotic. Many Macedonians tried to keep up with that original IMRO tradition.

In 1918 and 1919, Sam Christ, a shoemaker from Barberton, Ohio, organized several communist meetings throughout the city. He would organize two meetings a month where he would gather Macedonians and other Slavic-language speakers to discuss socialist and communist principles and ideologies. In late March of 1919, Barberton's mayor and police chief publicly reprimanded Christ and promised to crack down on his meetings. They claimed that Christ was an agitator whose "inflammatory speeches... [were] of no particular value to Barberton or its citizens." As part of the crackdown, they ordered that future speeches by such communists in Barberton be given only in English and that radical statements be barred in public gatherings of such communists.<sup>841</sup>

However, socialist and left-wing Macedonians were not to be quieted throughout the following decades. One of the best-known Macedonian leftist advocates was George Pirinsky. He cofounded the Macedonian

American People's League (or the Macedonian People's League) and it existed until 1949.<sup>842</sup>

The first conference of MAPL was held in March of 1930 in Toledo, after group was organized the previous year outside of Detroit in Pontiac. The resolution adopted at the conference "obligated every Macedonian independent progressive group to coordinate their activities among themselves and to provide conditions for a most successful expansion of their ideas among the Macedonian immigrants." Further, the resolution also highlighted "the battle that was to be fought against the MPO organization" which they considered to be "a weapon of the Great Bulgarian State."<sup>843</sup> MAPL felt that Macedonians had been deceived by the MPO, and they strived to help create a "Balkan federation which would guarantee wide national, political, and social rights and freedoms for the Balkan peoples, including the Macedonian people of all three parts of Macedonia." MAPL eventually spread their message through many publications, such as the *Macedonian Bulletin*, *Macedonian Association*, *Labor Macedonia*, and the *People's Will*.<sup>844</sup> These newspapers often "criticized the MPO for its conservative politics and for opposing the establishment of a sovereign Macedonia."<sup>845</sup>

In 1934, a member of MAPL sent an anonymous letter to the editor of the Akron Beacon Journal shredding an anonymous letter sent earlier by a MPO member. The MPO member had written that the

MPO and Mihailov's IMRO were the true defenders of Macedonia and champions against communism. But this MAPL member said that it was IMRO (United) (the left wing IMRO faction) and MAPL that were Macedonians' true defenders. He stated that the MPO was "neither strong, nor effective in scaring these Fascist governments, and furthermore, the parent organization of the MPO in Europe, the so-called 'Interior Macedonian Revolutionary Organization' under the leadership of Evan Mihailoff, is helping the Bulgarian King and his government kill Macedonian progressives ... creating a misunderstanding in the Macedonian revolutionary movement." He further stated that most Macedonians in America would deny that the MPO and Mihailov's IMRO represent the Macedonians' wishes, and that "the real fight against the governments and its helpers is undertaken by IMRO (United) in Macedonia itself and the Macedonian People's League of United States and Canada."<sup>846</sup>

In 1935, MAPL continued its fight against the MPO. During MPO's 14<sup>th</sup> convention, MAPL circulated a statement accusing the MPO of misleading the Macedonian people, specifically stating that the MPO's leaders did not represent "the heroic struggle of the Macedonian people for national liberty." It further stated that "those Macedonians who are members of the Macedonian Political Organization are being misled; that their leaders are

Macedonian fascist agents of Bulgarian imperialism and that two of its leaders, Peter Atseff, general secretary, and L. Dimitroff, editor of the Macedonian Tribune, were imported from fascist Bulgaria.” MAPL appealed to MPO members to “throw out of your ranks the fascist leaders and murderers of your brothers, friends and sisters and unite with us in a joint struggle against the tyrants of Macedonia.” Christo Nazimoff of the MPO, who was the official spokesmen of the organization, denied all charges and dismissed MAPL as a communist organization.<sup>847</sup>

The 1938 convention of MAPL was held in Madison, Illinois on Labor Day Weekend. At the convention, the MAPL Mansfield branch secretary, Carl Stevens, said that the Macedonians were divided between three countries which were either fascist or semi-fascist. He highlighted that under the leadership of Metaxas in Greece, the Macedonians weren’t even allowed to even speak in Macedonian, and that letters written “to relatives in Greece in the Macedonian language” were either returned to the United States or destroyed.<sup>848</sup>

With the start of World War II, Smile Voydanoff, president of MAPL in the spring of 1941, iterated that Macedonians did not support the Nazis. He strongly protested the call by the Bulgarian government and Bulgarians that Macedonians align with Nazis and the Bulgarian government, to fight against Yugoslavia and Greece. Voydanoff said that “Macedonians expect

nothing but enslavement from the Nazi invader. That is the reason why from the very outbreak of hostilities in the Balkans, the Macedonians backed Greece and Yugoslavia in their resistance to aggression.” He further stated that “a democratic federation of nations as the only acceptable basis for a durable peace in the Balkans.”<sup>849</sup>

In the summer of 1941, the MAPL chapter in Akron held an Ilinden celebration, with members from the Lorain, Cleveland, Massillon, Canton and Mansfield chapters of the organizations also joining them in the celebration. Pirinsky said that one of the results of the meeting would be to “condemn the present Nazi policy” and “pledge support to their kinsmen in the Balkans in the fight against German, Italian and Bulgarian oppressors.”<sup>850</sup> The next month, in Detroit, the MAPL held a large gathering to hash out their policy and opinion on the Nazi and Bulgarian occupation of Macedonia. Speakers included admired and acclaimed Macedonian-American author and journalist, Stoyan Christowe, as well as Vasil Dicoff, president of the Macedonian Citizens Committee, Smile Voydanoff, president of MAPL, Boch Mirtcheff of the Bulgarian-Macedonian Educational Club, and George Pirinsky. They made an appeal to Macedonians and Bulgarians in America to unite behind President Roosevelt’s policy against Nazism. “Many of our fellow Americans,” said Pirinsky, “are inclined to believe that because the Sofia government

sided with Nazi Germany, most Bulgarians and Macedonians in America, too, are pro-Nazi. Nothing is more untrue.”<sup>851</sup>

Also in the summer of 1941, the MAPL Akron branch hosted a special radio hour on August 30<sup>th</sup> to discuss the situation in the Balkans. The special talk was called “Macedonian-Americans in the Fight for the Final Destruction of Nazi Tyranny.”<sup>852</sup> Thousands of people tuned in to listen. In January of 1942, the same MAPL chapter, held a conference and concert, where they resolved to send a telegram to Roosevelt in support of the American war efforts. In part, the Macedonians told Roosevelt that MAPL was “against the axis gangsters and their satellites” and “as Americans of Macedonian origin, we stand ready to serve our great adopted country.” The \$70 in proceeds from the concert was donated to the American Red Cross. The officers of this branch at the time were Mike George and Vangel Vulkanoff.

The next year, in July of 1943, MAPL members held an outing at Welcome Park in the suburbs of Detroit in order to convince more Macedonians to unite with the American government on the Balkan policy in the war. Pirinsky and Peter Grigoreff were speakers at the event organized by Boris Kolchagoff.<sup>853</sup> Later that summer, MAPL hailed the death of King Boris of Bulgaria in hopes it was a step toward the end of Bulgarian and Nazi occupation of Macedonia.<sup>854</sup>



A few months later, in September, MAPL held their 13<sup>th</sup> annual convention in Cleveland.<sup>855</sup> One of their main goals at the convention was to “draft an extensive program for all chapters in support of the Nation’s Third War Loan campaign,” said Nicholas Kovacheff, one of Detroit’s two delegates to the convention. Their other aims were to increase unity “among Americans of Macedonian origin and speed arrangements for material aid to Macedonian refugees in Europe.”<sup>856</sup> Kovacheff said that the MAPL had pledged \$1,000,000 from its members nationally, with the largest share coming from Detroit Macedonians.<sup>857</sup> Detroit’s MAPL chapter leaders at this time were George Naumoff, Nick Poporavsky, Naum Lazaroff, Naum Pouroff, and Mike Dimitroff.<sup>858</sup>

In 1945, three of MAPL’s representatives hand-delivered a letter to the Greek Embassy in Washington, D.C. The three men were George Pirinsky, Alexander Rizov and Anatole Philipoff. The Greek ambassador was in New York at the time, so the Greek First Secretary, Alexis Liatis, let them in his office and began listening to them read the letter, which was a protest against the persecution of Macedonians in Greece by the fascist Greek government. But Liatis quieted them after the first paragraph, brushing them off as lies and Yugoslavian propaganda. The MAPL delegation dropped the letter onto his desk and walked out, leaving Liatis to read in private the atrocities of the Greeks against the

Macedonians, and how MAPL had “always stood for friendship and close co-operation among the Balkan peoples. Greeks and Macedonians, fighting shoulder to shoulder with Yugoslav, Albanian, and Bulgarian partisans against Nazi oppressors and Bulgarian [occupiers].”<sup>859</sup> Having been refused by the Greeks, the Macedonians took to the press to issue a statement: “The tragic civil war in Greece last December ended in the complete victory of reaction and fascism. They very same elements which had collaborated with the Germans, reinforced by discredited foreign agents, are today subjecting the whole Greek population to the most outrageous terror.”<sup>860</sup>

With the war over, Macedonians focused on the Macedonian plight in Greece. Pirinsky wrote a 24-page pamphlet called “For a Free Macedonia” with the purpose, as he put it, “to increase the knowledge of the American people on the real situation of the people in Macedonia.” He wrote that the defeat of Turkey in 1912 by the Balkan peoples only exchanged one persecutor with three others; that finally in 1944 the Macedonians set up their own free government within Yugoslavia; that once Bulgaria defeated the Nazis, they withdrew territorial claims on Macedonia; and that the “only uncertain element at the present time is that regarding the attitude of Greece, which has thus far shown itself unfriendly toward Macedonian aspirations.”<sup>861</sup> At the time, President Truman was

leader of the United States and Pirinsky also blasted him for his policy towards Macedonians. He said that “America’s intervention in the Balkans and Greece is destroying the good will of the Balkan people for the United States.” He also stated that 51,000,000 American Slavic-speakers were “disturbed by the Truman doctrine of power and politics... By aiding the enemies of the people America is driving them toward Russia.”<sup>862</sup>

In the summer of 1946, the Democratic nominee for Michigan governor, Murray Van Wagoner, made a “stirring” speech at a MAPL picnic, pleading for MAPL’s labor votes and to fight the urge to return to the Republican policies that would result in staggering “bread lines” like those of the era of President Hoover.<sup>863</sup> This was a tense time in America, which saw a right-left divide just as in Macedonia, the Balkans and Europe. With the war over, the Americans started turning their sights onto Russians, communists and socialists as the new enemies that were threatening the freedoms of the American capitalist society. An American debate was raging on whether people who held Communist views should be allowed to join the army; and Pirinsky, as the leader of the American Slav Congress, signed onto a statement (also signed by scores of other national leaders) stating that the only policy that made sense was the current one of whether an individual is loyal to the United

States, “not the propriety of the individual’s opinions.”<sup>864</sup>

Pirinsky’s connection with the American Slav Congress had severe implications for him and the left-wing Macedonian movement, especially MAPL, because he was a central figure of both organizations. The first meeting of the ASC was held in Detroit in 1942 and it gathered over 10,000 Detroiters of Macedonian, Bulgarian, Serbian, Croatian, Ukrainian, Russian, Slovenian, Czech, Slovak, and Montenegrin descent. The first meeting condemned Hitler’s war on Europe and hosted Michigan Governor Murray Van Wagoner as a speaker.<sup>865</sup> At their Second Congress in Hamtramck, Michigan, Mayor Skrzycki was the guest speaker, and Pirinsky iterated that the two primary goals of the Congress were to get ASC members to sell bonds in support of the war and to donate blood for American soldiers.<sup>866</sup> Another important Macedonian to attend this Congress was Reverend David Nakoff of the Macedonian-American Orthodox Church in Steelton.<sup>867</sup> Nakoff would eventually make speeches on the situation, such as when he gave a speech to The Lions Club in Harrisburg after being elected to Harrisburg’s South Slavic Americans Committee.<sup>868</sup>

But this activity caused Pirinsky and MAPL to have a target placed on their backs, especially because the two organizations were left-wing and were associated with communist and socialist groups. For example, in

the summer of 1946, Republican Congressman George Dondero criticized the National Citizens Political Action Committee for letting George Pirinsky lecture to 500 students on communist ideas and views. He said Pirinsky had been the editor of a communist Macedonian newspaper in Detroit and that in 1937, U.S. immigration held Pirinsky under a deportation warrant for illegal entry, and that his real name was George Zaikoff and that he wrote under the name of George Nicoloff.<sup>869</sup>

Because Pirinsky, as national secretary of the ASC, started supporting Wallace as a presidential candidate (Wallace was a Democrat with socialist leanings), the media and politicians ramped up their attacks on him. John Troan even wrote that Pirinsky's ties with the Macedonian-American People's League jeopardized the integrity of the ASC. Why? Because in late 1947, the U.S. government condemned MAPL for being 'disloyal' to America for its support of Macedonian communist freedom fighters in Greece. Specifically, the U.S. Attorney General classified MAPL as "subversive, or as having adopted a policy of advancing or approving the commission of acts of force or violence to deny others their rights under the Constitution of the United States."<sup>870</sup>

At the age of 48, in September of 1948, Pirinsky was briefly detained by U.S. officials for being a foreign alien that belonged to an organization advocating for the violent overthrow of the United States. The Justice

Department concluded this much because “he affiliated with the Communist party after his entry into this country, in violation of immigration statutes” in 1926.<sup>871</sup> While he was at trial, the ASC president urged people to support Pirinsky. “We owe it to those 12 in court in New York,” said Leo Krzycki at the ASC festival in Cleveland to a crowd of 1,000, “and especially to George Pirinsky...to rally around and give our support so that no harm come to him.”<sup>872</sup> But not all Macedonians did. At one of his deportation hearings, an Indiana Macedonian, George Christoff, testified that he met Pirinsky at a coffee house in Gary in 1933. Christoff said Pirinsky told Macedonians there to join the Communist party because it was “the only party that could overthrow the government and gain power.”<sup>873</sup>

Pirinsky was now becoming a well-known figure not just in Macedonian circles. In the spring of 1949, Pirinsky attended a congressional hearing on the proposed North American security pact with European countries (today’s NATO) as a witness because of the way Greece was treating the Macedonians. Chairman Connally, a Democrat of Texas, barred Pirinsky from speaking, shouting “you’re a foreigner!” Afterwards, Pirinsky told reporters that he had lived in America for 23 years and that he had been refused citizenship because of his “labor activities.”<sup>874</sup>

In the same year, the House of Representative then established an “Un-American Activities Committee” to essentially investigate communists and progressives and shut them down. Pirinsky and the ASC, of course, were a few of their prime targets. Speaking of the investigation into him, Pirinsky lambasted them as a “ridiculous” committee. “The committee,” he said, “paralyzes the people politically and poisons their minds. The record of the American Slav Congress is so outstanding, we don’t care particularly what the committee says about us. But its charges are baseless and not founded on facts.” He further iterated that the ASC was “purely an American organization.”<sup>875</sup>

Regardless, the House Un-American Activities Committee published a report citing the MAPL weekly newspaper, (*People’s Will*) as “pan-Slav propaganda”. It viewed the creation of a united Macedonia out of the Macedonian parts in Yugoslavia, Greece and Bulgaria as Russian and communist propaganda. The U.S. Attorney General, Tom Clark, again labeled MAPL as a subversive organization, and the House committee said the following about the reality of the situation in Macedonia: “Communist Russia has now taken over the free-Macedonia movement, American arms have been sent to Greece to put down guerrillas in the Macedonian hills and Pirinsky faces deportation from this country as an undesirable alien.”<sup>876</sup>

Thus, in the summer of 1949, Pirinsky was again arrested by immigration officials and taken to Ellis Island for deportation. They declared that he was a communist organizer and lecturer, who “agitated for two decades for a revolution in the Balkans to create a Macedonian state composed of parts of Greece, Bulgaria and Yugoslavia.”<sup>877</sup> But Pirinsky won a writ of habeas corpus that allowed him to fight his deportation. He argued that his arrest resulted “solely from an evident desire to harass and otherwise injure” him for political motives.<sup>878</sup> Attorney General Tom Clark then recommended that Pirinsky’s bond be raised from \$1,000 to \$25,000, and a three-judge Federal Appeals Court began weighing the issue of the bond.<sup>879</sup> Mr. Clark stated that the reason for the bond increase was because after Pirinsky was released on \$1,000 bond, he “continued his activity full blast” by going on communist speaking tours to 18 cities in five weeks. The high bond kept Pirinsky in detention for several months.<sup>880</sup> The Appeals Court ruled in Pirinsky’s favor, however, stating that bail was five times as high as it should be. “Bail in excess of \$5,000 would seem unreasonable,” said the court.<sup>881</sup>

But the battle wasn’t over. By the spring of 1950, an undercover FBI agent of Yugoslav origins, Matt Cvetic, testified on Pirinsky’s involvement in Communist activities. Cvetic, who had infiltrated the Communist Party for seven years, said that Pirinsky was a member of the Nationality Commission, which



was created to obtain control of Slavic-speaking American groups “and rally them behind the communist line.” Cvetic included Pirinsky’s wife, Mary, as someone who was conspiring to infiltrate American organizations with communism.<sup>882</sup> Pirinsky responded to Cvetic by calling him a “poison peddler.”<sup>883</sup>

The MAPL also became split on whether Macedonians should remain in Yugoslavia or should strive for unity with other parts of Macedonia and then join a Balkan confederation. Smile Voydanoff and his brother, Velko, traveled from Pontiac to Macedonia in Yugoslavia in 1949 for four months. When Smile came back, he said that all he saw while there was a population in “misery, hunger, terror and [many] murders.” Velko responded that, while in Yugoslavia, Smile had “made statements expressing full support of the policy of the Communist party in Yugoslavia.” “My brother’s statement in America is so childish and untrue,” he continued, “my honor compels me to write disagreement.” The newspaper *New Macedonia* accused Smile of saying those statements so he could launch a campaign among Macedonians in America that was anti-Yugoslavian.<sup>884</sup>

As accusations of communism were being hurled at MAPL, eventually resulting in its unfortunate undoing, the MPO was receiving similar accusations. Many people confused the two Macedonian groups.

The Greek-American group, AHEPA, accused MPO of also being communistic. George Mushuros, president of AHEPA's Cincinnati Chapter, said that it was up to MPO to prove that they were not communist, and not up to him to prove that they were. Mushuros said there was enough evidence based on the FBI's statements, as well as the statements of U.S. Attorney General, Tom Clark, on how Macedonians were communists. Mushuros was confused, of course, as he claimed MPO was a new name for the Macedonian American People's League. He charged them with being Bulgarians and not real Macedonians,<sup>885</sup> something the Greeks increasingly iterated throughout the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Luben Dimitroff, the National Secretary of MPO, responded to the accusations, stating that the MPO was founded in 1921 with its headquarters in Indianapolis and that the MAPL was a separate group. As he put it, "that's another bunch with headquarters up in Detroit." Reverend George Nicoloff of the Macedono-Bulgarian church in Detroit, echoed those statements. "They accuse us of being that other group, yet we've had this same name of Macedonian Political Organization for 27 years!"<sup>886</sup> Dimitroff further stated that the MPO believed that "Macedonians constitute a separate nation in the Balkans and are entitled to recognition from the United Nations as such." Mushuros said that was impossible, since "95 per cent

of the Macedonian people are Greek and belong to the family of Hellas.”<sup>887</sup>

The MPO and MAPL indeed had differences, as Dimitroff and Nicoloff stressed. One disagreement took place in Philadelphia, when the U.S. Progressive party was hashing out their national platform in 1948. At that meeting, they decided to eliminate Macedonians as a traditionally oppressed people. They took Macedonians out of the preamble, which had originally stated: “We support the aspirations for unified homelands of traditionally oppressed and dispersed people as the Irish, the Armenians and the Macedonians.” Rumors flew that it was because the Macedonians supported Tito in the break with Stalin and as such they didn’t deserve the support of Wallace’s party. But Louis Adamic, a noted Slovenian-American, and member of the progressive party, cleared the air, stating “there were some disagreements among the Macedonian-Americans and we weren’t much interested in it.”<sup>888</sup> Further, by the 1950s there was so much confusion regarding the separate Macedonian groups that the MPO pulled out an advertisement in the Mansfield News Journal that stated the MPO was “no way connected to, or associated with any other Macedonian organization in this town.”<sup>889</sup>

Macedonian churches in post-World War II era also felt the divide between the MPO and left-wing Macedonians. At the Steelton Macedonian-Bulgarian

Orthodox Church, in the spring of 1948, one man was killed and another wounded by gunshots because of these ideological feuds. A riot had broken out at a meeting of church members while George Patoff was reading a letter from a Bulgarian-Macedonian priest who had been invited to become the pastor of the church. The priest was associated with the MPO and the right-wing IMOR; and many in the congregation blamed the MPO and the right-wing IMRO for helping “pave the way for Bulgaria’s joining with Hitler in World War II.” The local church had been without a pastor for two years and they made a bid to get the priest here, thinking he’d be a good fit and not knowing of his connections. However, the letter revealed that a few congregation members knew of the priest’s connection with MPO and the right-wing IMRO but purposely did not disclose those connections. The Macedonians who had no idea were embarrassed and upset, and a brawl broke up amongst 50 Macedonians. Koche Atzeff, aged 24 of Steelton, was killed, while Boris Mioff, 30 of Harrisburg, was injured. George Minoff, a bartender,<sup>890</sup> was the one who shot at them claiming he used his gun as a last resort in order to break up the fight. Minoff was arrested.<sup>891</sup>

Meanwhile, Pirinsky’s future in America was about to end. At a congressional hearing, he described his activities and why MAPL was necessary to oppose MPO:

*“The main objective of that organization – it was founded in reaction against a situation that existed among Macedonian Americans here. Some Fascist leaders, Macedonians who were living in Bulgaria, came to this country and founded the Macedonian Political Organization, with headquarters in Indianapolis. These people were telling our Americans of Macedonian descent that Hitler will be the one to liberate Macedonia...”*

*“[Fascist leaders] were carrying on assassinations of Macedonian progressive leaders. So our organization came into being as a reaction on the part of Macedonian Americans... We formed the Macedonian People’s League to fight against this policy of fascism that was being injected in the minds of our people...”*

*“Generally, we also support the fight of the Macedonian people for freedom. After the two Balkan wars, Macedonia remained oppressed. It was divided between the three Balkan countries and we felt that whatever moral support can be given here to encourage this people to continue to work for their national independence should be done by us.”<sup>892</sup>*

Despite Pirinsky’s reasoned and eloquent defense, he was deported in the summer of 1951.

The scene was not always as simple as MPO versus MAPL. MPO, however, attempted to portray that it represented all Macedonians, or that it was the most patriotic Macedonian organization. Even though they certainly were the best organized, Helen V. Christoff noted that in Rochester, New York, there were at least four different Macedonian organizations with

different aims. Christoff partially put the blame on the MPO. “Only recently,” she said, “when the Macedonian political convention was held in Buffalo, Macedonians of the Progressive organization were not allowed to take part in the convention.” She wondered how the Macedonian people in Macedonia could unite and form a stable government if the Macedonians in a free and stable country like America couldn’t.<sup>893</sup>

There were other progressive organizations aside from MAPL. The Bulgarian-Macedonian Educational Federation was a nationwide progressive Macedonian organization. In 1943, the Detroit chapter held a convention on how to fight fascism at home and support the American war effort. Speakers included Victor Sharenkoff, chairman of the Detroit chapter; Dr. W.T. Osowoff, chairman of the Michigan Slav Congress; Nicola Kovacheff, executive secretary of the Detroit chapter; and David Nakoff of the Pennsylvania chapter.<sup>894</sup>

Macedonians were increasingly aware of the divisions in their community and that there were many Macedonians who leaned more toward the Greek identity than a Macedonian, Serbian or Bulgarian identity. In 1956, Philip Chacoff, described the situation of Macedonians in Cincinnati. “In a strict Macedonian family here,” he said, “fellow Macedonians are counted by their politics, by their loyalty to the homeland. Thus, one Macedonian family will say there are only two dozen families in Cincinnati

who are ‘good Macedonians.’” He said if the pro-Greeks were counted, you could get to 250 Macedonian families. Another Macedonian echoed his comments. “We’re not Greek,” he exclaimed. “We don’t know how to speak Greek – it’s a different language. We speak Macedonian.”<sup>895</sup>

But with MAPL gone and MPO’s influence decreasing, another left-wing Macedonian organization came into existence: the United Macedonians Organization of Canada, organized in the 1950s. In 1972, the group invited Bosko Rajcovski from Detroit to preside over one of their meetings. Along with him came other Detroit Macedonians. To them, the UMO was an impressive organization with a huge membership and an aggressive agenda.<sup>896</sup>

Rajcovski was invited there as an outsider to run the meeting because there were some internal disagreements and a neutral party was needed to keep things fair and smooth. At that meeting, they decided to start a branch in Detroit. Boris Petkov was elected president of the Detroit chapter and Dusan Sinadinovski was elected secretary. For some, this was controversial, because Petkov was known to be an MPO member and a close associate of Ivan Mihailov. While the Detroit chapter didn’t last long, the group made some important strides with the Macedonian community.<sup>897</sup>

By the 1990s, after Macedonia’s independence from Yugoslavia, political activism of the Macedonians in

America primarily revolved around Greece's treatment of its Macedonian minority and its refusal to recognize Macedonia. This aggressive Greek stance infuriated and motivated many Macedonians to speak out. In the *Baltimore Sun* on June 3, 1995, for example, a second-generation Macedonian by the name of Mary A. Burkholder responded to Greek-American views that Macedonians were not a separate ethnic people and that Macedonia did not have the right to be called Macedonia. Burkholder wrote that her grandparents from Bitola always had always said they spoke the Macedonian language, and that they were always called Macedonians, not Bulgarians. She also said, of Greece's claim to ownership of Alexander the Great, that "the location of their [her grandparents] home in Bitola is closer to the home of Alexander the Great than the towns from which many Greek Macedonian Americans Hail." She labeled Greece's stance on Macedonia's name and identity as "offensive to myself, my family, and interestingly enough, to most Eastern Europeans...It is time to move forward from ancient history."<sup>898</sup>

Chris Elinchev with the Macedonian-American Federation of Wisconsin also responded to Greeks in the *Chicago Tribune* in November of 1995. He said that the "real issue behind Greece's response over the name issue with the Republic of Macedonia" was "the lack of basic human rights for minorities." He wrote of the ethnic cleansing of Macedonians "has been so



brutal and forced assimilation so complete that many if not most remaining ethnic Macedonians in northern Greece are afraid to speak up.” He concluded by saying that “it is the ethnocentric policies of Greece that are the true source of any problems.”<sup>899</sup>

Macedonian-Americans, whether working alone or together in organizations, were starting to reorganize and reprioritize their interests. With the independence of Macedonia came a resurgence in Macedonian pride and awareness, and Macedonians were becoming more connected to their homeland. The future was looking brighter for both Macedonia and Macedonian-Americans; and at the dawn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the Macedonian-Americans were approaching their relationship to Macedonia and America with new perspectives and attitudes. The next chapter in the history of Macedonian-Americans was about to begin and the Macedonians were prepared to handle the upcoming obstacles with pride and determination. The story of Macedonians in America was still only in its infancy.

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<sup>153</sup> "United States World War II Draft Registration Cards, 1942," database with images, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:QVJT-LJFP> : 9 April 2016), Jordan George Pop Davidoff, 1942; citing NARA microfilm publication M1936, M1937, M1939, M1951, M1962, M1964, M1986, M2090, and M2097 (Washington D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.).

<sup>154</sup> "United States World War II Draft Registration Cards, 1942," database with images, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:QVJT-YH68> : 9 April 2016), Richard Sykes, 1942; citing NARA microfilm publication M1936, M1937, M1939, M1951, M1962, M1964, M1986, M2090, and M2097 (Washington D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.).

<sup>155</sup> "United States World War II Draft Registration Cards, 1942," database with images, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:QVJT-248M> : 9 April 2016), Sam Bozenoff, 1942; citing NARA microfilm publication M1936,

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M1937, M1939, M1951, M1962, M1964, M1986, M2090, and M2097  
(Washington D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.).

<sup>156</sup> "United States World War II Draft Registration Cards, 1942," database with images, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:QVJT-YS8X> : 9 April 2016), Simon Spassov, 1942; citing NARA microfilm publication M1936, M1937, M1939, M1951, M1962, M1964, M1986, M2090, and M2097 (Washington D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.).

<sup>157</sup> "Illinois, Cook County, Birth Certificates, 1871-1940," database, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:QKDZ-QBRR> : 18 May 2016), Christ Ilieff in entry for Mary Ilieff, 09 Apr 1909; citing Chicago, Cook, Illinois, United States, reference/certificate 45397, Cook County Courthouse, Chicago; FHL.

<sup>158</sup> "Vermont, St. Albans Canadian Border Crossings, 1895-1954," database with images, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:QK31-8QD1> : 9 October 2015), Dimitar Diamantieff, 1895-1924; citing M1461, Soundex Index to Canadian Border Entries through the St. Albans, Vermont, District, 1895-1924, 128, NARA microfilm publications M1461, M1463, M1464, and M1465 (Washington D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, publication year); FHL microfilm 1,472,928.

<sup>159</sup> "United States World War I Draft Registration Cards, 1917-1918," database with images, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:K6N9-QGD> : 12 December 2014), Vain C Koramzoff, 1917-1918; citing Montgomery County, Ohio, United States, NARA microfilm publication M1509 (Washington D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.); FHL microfilm 1,832,622.

<sup>160</sup> Lubomir Todorov, MPO – 90 Years Struggle for a Macedonian State, Speech on Sep. 2, 2012.

<sup>161</sup> Gregory Michaelidis, *Salvation Abroad: Macedonian Migration to North America and the Making of Modern Macedonia, 1870-1970*, Dissertation, University of Maryland – College Park, 2005: Pg. 96.

<sup>162</sup> "Macedono-Bulgarians Ask Self-Determination", *Star Tribune* (Minneapolis, Minnesota) · Tue, Dec 3, 1918 · Page 2.

<sup>163</sup> Elizabeth Shostak, *Macedonian-Americans*, <http://www.everyculture.com/multi/Le-Pa/Macedonian-Americans.html> . Last accessed 7/21/2017.

<sup>164</sup> Elizabeth Shostak, *Macedonian-Americans*, <http://www.everyculture.com/multi/Le-Pa/Macedonian-Americans.html> . Last accessed 7/21/2017.

<sup>165</sup> <http://saintmaryohio.org/history.aspx> . Last accessed 7/13/2017.

<sup>166</sup> Dusan Sinadinovski, "Proposal for the Research Project 'The Macedonian Americans'", Submitted to the National Endowment for the Humanities, Division of Research Programs, 1981.

<sup>167</sup> Dusan Sinadinovski, "Proposal for the Research Project 'The Macedonian Americans'", Submitted to the National Endowment for the Humanities, Division of Research Programs, 1981, Pg. 6.

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<sup>168</sup> Matjaz Klemencic, *The Reactions of Immigrants from the South Slavic Lands and Their Descendants in the USA to the Dissolution of Yugoslavia (1989–1993)*, COBISS 1.01, Pg. 38.

<sup>169</sup> [https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS\\_10\\_1YR\\_B04003&prodType=table](https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_10_1YR_B04003&prodType=table) . Last accessed 7/19/2017.

<sup>170</sup> Slave Nikolovski-Katin, *The Macedonians in USA and Canada*, translated by Vesna Stevkovska (Makedonska Iskra Publishers, Skopje), 2002, Pg. 28.

<sup>171</sup> Based on a random sample of World War I Draft Cards from 1917-1918. Sample list was 125. [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org) . Last accessed 7/15/2017.

<sup>172</sup> "Want Countrymen to Come Home and Fight", *Daily Capital Journal* (Salem, Oregon) · Thu, Oct 3, 1912 · Page 1.

<sup>173</sup> Data collected on a sampling of 191 people, with Macedonian-sounding names born in the Macedonia, Bulgaria, and Turkey in the 1910 U.S. Census. These proportions correlate with the presence of Macedonians throughout the century and the presence of Macedonian Orthodox churches.

<sup>174</sup> Data collected based on sampling of 239 New York residents in the 1920 US Census that were born in Macedonia and had Macedonian sounding names.

<sup>175</sup> Vijay Prashad, "The Case of the Lackawanna Six", *CounterPunch*, May 2, 2008.

<sup>176</sup> Data collected based on sampling of 163 New York residents in the 1930 US Census that were born in Macedonia and had Macedonian sounding names.

<sup>177</sup> Based off of estimates of the numbers of families involved in each church. There is one Macedonian Orthodox Church in each of those four major centers, today.

<sup>178</sup> [https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS\\_15\\_5YR\\_B04004&prodType=table](https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_15_5YR_B04004&prodType=table) . Macedonian estimates put 150,000 Macedonians in the US, and only 40% declared Macedonian ancestry in these census estimates, which amounts to slightly over 60,000 people. New York state, then, can assumed to have about 10% of US Macedonian population, and that would mean 15,000 people.

<sup>179</sup> "United States Census, 1900," database with images, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:M37N-866> : accessed 15 July 2017), Georda Wassil in household of Staiman Kof, Philadelphia city Ward 14, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, United States; citing enumeration district (ED) 246, sheet 10B, family 238, NARA microfilm publication T623 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1972.); FHL microfilm 1,241,457.

<sup>180</sup> Data collected based on a sampling of 214 Pennsylvania residents in the 1910 US census born in Macedonia.

<sup>181</sup> Estimate based on adding Macedonians who listed Macedonia, Bulgaria and Turkey as birthplace in 1910 US census records. Around 5,600 people had listed Turkey as their birthplace. A random sampling of 500 of them show that about 15% had Macedonian names (Macedonia was still in Turkey at that time; Bulgaria and Serbia were not).

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<sup>182</sup> Eugene N. Borza, *Macedonian Redux*, in *The Eye Expanded: Life and the Arts in Greco-Roman Antiquity*, ed. Frances Titchener and Richard Moorton, (University of California Press, Berkely: 1999), Pg. 250, 251.

<sup>183</sup> Data collected based on a random sampling of 302 Pennsylvania residents from the 1920 US Census that were born in Macedonia.

<sup>184</sup> Eugene N. Borza, *Macedonian Redux*, in *The Eye Expanded: Life and the Arts in Greco-Roman Antiquity*, ed. Frances Titchener and Richard Moorton, (University of California Press, Berkely: 1999), Pg. 250, 251.

<sup>185</sup> "United States Census, 1920," database with images, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:M6TX-5NT> : accessed 20 July 2017), Mike Metro in household of George Christ, Ford, Armstrong, Pennsylvania, United States; citing ED 18, sheet 14B, line 56, family 252, NARA microfilm publication T625 (Washington D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1992), roll 1508; FHL microfilm 1,821,508.

<sup>186</sup> "United States Census, 1920," database with images, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:M613-VMD> : accessed 20 July 2017), John Ivanoff in household of Dimitria Lobate, Ellwood City Ward 3, Lawrence, Pennsylvania, United States; citing ED 79, sheet 16B, line 74, family 315, NARA microfilm publication T625 (Washington D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1992), roll 1585; FHL microfilm 1,821,585.

<sup>187</sup> "United States Census, 1920," database with images, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:MFBF-195> : accessed 20 July 2017), Svetko Ivanoff in household of Kwitoff Traichoff, Johnstown Ward 16, Cambria, Pennsylvania, United States; citing ED 193, sheet 9A, line 34, family 161, NARA microfilm publication T625 (Washington D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1992), roll 1547; FHL microfilm 1,821,547.

<sup>188</sup> "United States Census, 1930," database with images, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:XH3D-MR1> : accessed 20 July 2017), Lewis Stianoff, Mount Union, Huntingdon, Pennsylvania, United States; citing enumeration district (ED) ED 31, sheet 12A, line 22, family 251, NARA microfilm publication T626 (Washington D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 2002), roll 2044; FHL microfilm 2,341,778.

<sup>189</sup> "United States Census, 1940," database with images, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:KQQP-69H> : accessed 20 July 2017), Phillip Stephanoff, Ward 2, Brownsville, Brownsville Borough, Fayette, Pennsylvania, United States; citing enumeration district (ED) 26-3, sheet 2B, line 43, family 39, Sixteenth Census of the United States, 1940, NARA digital publication T627. Records of the Bureau of the Census, 1790 - 2007, RG 29. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 2012, roll 3502.

<sup>190</sup> "United States Census, 1940," database with images, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:KQQL-L8P> : accessed 20 July 2017), Anton Vasco, Ward 1, Steelton, Steelton Borough, Dauphin, Pennsylvania, United States; citing enumeration district (ED) 22-113, sheet 24A, line 20, family 399,

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Sixteenth Census of the United States, 1940, NARA digital publication T627.

Records of the Bureau of the Census, 1790 - 2007, RG 29. Washington, D.C.:

National Archives and Records Administration, 2012, roll 3485.

<sup>191</sup>[https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS\\_15\\_5YR\\_B04004&prodType=table](https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_15_5YR_B04004&prodType=table) . About 1% of Macedonians in

America that declared Macedonian as their only ancestral background lived in Pennsylvania. The estimation combines this statistic with the assumption of 150,000 to 200,000 people with at least partial Macedonian ancestry in the U.S. Further, almost 1000 Pennsylvania residents declared partial Macedonian ancestry while nearly 700 declared only Macedonian ancestry.

[https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS\\_15\\_5YR\\_B04005&prodType=table](https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_15_5YR_B04005&prodType=table) .

<sup>192</sup> Based on 1910 US Census data of Ohioans born in Macedonia, Turkey, and Bulgaria with Macedonian names, along with other estimates showing that a large part of people with Bulgaria as their birthplace actually came from Macedonia.

<sup>193</sup> Based on a random sampling of 95 Ohio residents in the 1910 Census who were listed as being born in Macedonia.

<sup>194</sup> Based on 1920 US Census data of Ohioans born in Macedonia, Greece, Serbia, and Bulgaria with Macedonian names, along with other estimates showing that a large part of people with Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria as their birthplace actually came from Macedonia.

<sup>195</sup> Based on a random sampling of 218 Ohio residents in the 1920 US Census who were listed as being born in Macedonia.

<sup>196</sup> Based on 1930 US Census random sampling of 298 Ohio residents who were listed as being born in Macedonia.

<sup>197</sup> Based on 1930 US Census random sampling of 298 Ohio residents who were listed as being born in Macedonia.

<sup>198</sup> US 1940 Census.

<sup>199</sup> Basil Stephanoff, Macedonians Who Arrived in the Akron Area of Ohio in the Early 1900s, <http://www.pollitecon.com/html/families/Macedonians-Who-Arrived-in-the-Akron-Area-of-Ohio-in-the-Early-1900s.htm> . 2015. Last accessed 7/21/2017.

<sup>200</sup> Basil Stephanoff, Macedonians Who Arrived in the Akron Area of Ohio in the Early 1900s, <http://www.pollitecon.com/html/families/Macedonians-Who-Arrived-in-the-Akron-Area-of-Ohio-in-the-Early-1900s-by-Village.htm> . 2015. Last accessed 7/21/2017.

<sup>201</sup> Based on a combination of American Fact finder statistics, church membership and other community estimates.

<sup>202</sup> Battle Creek Enquirer (Battle Creek, Michigan) · Mon, May 3, 1976 · Other Editions · Page 1.

<sup>203</sup> "United States Census, 1910," database with images, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:MLPK-VYT> : accessed 21 July 2017),

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Louis Dean, Battle Creek Ward 2, Calhoun, Michigan, United States; citing enumeration district (ED) ED 34, sheet 2B, family 63, NARA microfilm publication T624 (Washington D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1982), roll 640; FHL microfilm 1,374,653.

<sup>204</sup> "United States Census, 1910," database with images, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:ML5J-5P1> : accessed 21 July 2017), P Christ in household of I Cote, Grass Lake, Jackson, Michigan, United States; citing enumeration district (ED) ED 4, sheet 8A, family 215, NARA microfilm publication T624 (Washington D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1982), roll 653; FHL microfilm 1,374,666. And see "United States Census, 1910," database with images, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:MLP2-KBK> : accessed 21 July 2017), Terraponi Criste in household of Tony Tassiff, Battle Creek Ward 5, Calhoun, Michigan, United States; citing enumeration district (ED) ED 47, sheet 8B, family 230, NARA microfilm publication T624 (Washington D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1982), roll 640; FHL microfilm 1,374,653.

<sup>205</sup> "United States Census, 1910," database with images, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:MLTN-S6Z> : accessed 21 July 2017), George Geogoff in household of James Glen, Detroit Ward 3, Wayne, Michigan, United States; citing enumeration district (ED) ED 35, sheet 7A, family 115, NARA microfilm publication T624 (Washington D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1982), roll 681; FHL microfilm 1,374,694.

<sup>206</sup> Based on a sampling of 312 residents in Michigan during the 1920 US Census who declared their birthplace to be Macedonia and who had Macedonian surnames.

<sup>207</sup> Based on a sampling of 397 residents in Michigan during the 1930 US Census who declared their birthplace to be Macedonia.

<sup>208</sup> "United States Census, 1940," database with images, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:KHMS-4QS> : accessed 21 July 2017), George Vasu in household of Vasil Yaneff, Tract 839, Dearborn, Dearborn City, Wayne, Michigan, United States; citing enumeration district (ED) 82-38, sheet 6A, line 6, family 81, Sixteenth Census of the United States, 1940, NARA digital publication T627. Records of the Bureau of the Census, 1790 - 2007, RG 29. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 2012, roll 1826.

<sup>209</sup> "United States Census, 1940," database with images, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:KHM8-ZW8> : accessed 21 July 2017), Nickola Paroshkevov, Nankin Township, Wayne, Michigan, United States; citing enumeration district (ED) 82-190A, sheet 20B, line 70, family , Sixteenth Census of the United States, 1940, NARA digital publication T627. Records of the Bureau of the Census, 1790 - 2007, RG 29. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 2012, roll 1834.

<sup>210</sup> "United States Census, 1940," database with images, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:KHMQ-7K5> : accessed 21 July 2017),

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Lazar Chkoreff, Tract 873, Grosse Pointe, Grosse Pointe City, Wayne, Michigan, United States; citing enumeration district (ED) 82-66C, sheet 2A, line 12, family 18, Sixteenth Census of the United States, 1940, NARA digital publication T627.

Records of the Bureau of the Census, 1790 - 2007, RG 29. Washington, D.C.:

National Archives and Records Administration, 2012, roll 1828.

<sup>211</sup> Personal Communication with Dusan Sinadinovski. E-mail dated 7/19/2017.

<sup>212</sup> Detroit Free Press (Detroit, Michigan) · Sun, Jun 29, 1986 · Metro final · Page 361.

<sup>213</sup> Elizabeth Shostak, Macedonian-Americans,

<http://www.everyculture.com/multi/Le-Pa/Macedonian-Americans.html> . Last accessed 7/21/2017.

<sup>214</sup> <http://stmarysterlingheights.com/about-our-church/church-history/> . Last accessed 7/13/2017.

<sup>215</sup> "Found Macedonian Colony", The Indianapolis News (Indianapolis, Indiana) · Fri, Aug 19, 1904 · Page 8.

<sup>216</sup> The Immigration Commission, Senator William Dillingham, Immigrants in Industries (In Twenty-Five Parts), Part 2: Iron and Steel Manufacturing, Vol. II, Presented on June 25, 1910, Washington, D.C., 1911, Pg. 12.

<sup>217</sup> 1910 US Census.

<sup>218</sup> "United States Census, 1910," database with images, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:MK5M-S8L> : accessed 21 July 2017), Tasho Apostoloff in household of George Nicoloff, Indianapolis Ward 12, Marion, Indiana, United States; citing enumeration district (ED) ED 210, sheet 6B, family 134, NARA microfilm publication T624 (Washington D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1982), roll 369; FHL microfilm 1,374,382.

<sup>219</sup> "United States Census, 1910," database with images, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:MKGC-M3F> : accessed 21 July 2017), Pere Stovanoff in household of Coseta Dimofe, Aurora Ward 4, Dearborn, Indiana, United States; citing enumeration district (ED) ED 38, sheet 5A, family 109, NARA microfilm publication T624 (Washington D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1982), roll 345; FHL microfilm 1,374,358.

<sup>220</sup> 1910 US Census.

<sup>221</sup> Based on a sampling of 298 residents of Indiana in the 1920 US Census who listed Macedonia as their birthplace.

<sup>222</sup> "Macedonians Open National Convention Today", The Indianapolis Star (Indianapolis, Indiana) · Sun, Sep 5, 1937 · Page 39.

<sup>223</sup> "Macedonians of City Pay Tribute Today", The Indianapolis Star (Indianapolis, Indiana) · Sun, Aug 1, 1937 · Page 64.

<sup>224</sup> "Macedonians Open National Convention Today", The Indianapolis Star (Indianapolis, Indiana) · Sun, Sep 5, 1937 · Page 39.

<sup>225</sup> Estimates made by drawing from several sources, including American Fact Finder, church membership, and community estimates; "Paper Keeps



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Macedonians' Identity Alive", The Indianapolis Star (Indianapolis, Indiana)29 Apr 1990, Sun Page 23

<sup>226</sup> "Bulgarian Celebration", The Edwardsville Intelligencer (Edwardsville, Illinois) · Mon, Jan 20, 1908 · Page 1.

<sup>227</sup> Grace Abbott, The Bulgarians of Chicago, in The Survey: Volume 21, ed. Edward T. Devine and Paul U. Kellogg, 1909, Pg. 653.

<sup>228</sup> The Immigration Commission, Senator William Dillingham, Immigrants in Industries (In Twenty-Five Party), Part 2: Iron and Steel Manufacturing, Vol. II, Presented on June 25, 1910, Washington, D.C., 1911, Pg. 11.

<sup>229</sup> Grace Abbott, The Bulgarians of Chicago, in The Survey: Volume 21, ed. Edward T. Devine and Paul U. Kellogg, 1909, Pg. 653.

<sup>230</sup> See 1910 US Census for people listing Bulgaria and/or Turkey as their birthplace in Chicago.

<sup>231</sup> The Immigration Commission, Senator William Dillingham, Immigrants in Industries (In Twenty-Five Party), Part 2: Iron and Steel Manufacturing, Vol. II, Presented on June 25, 1910, Washington, D.C., 1911, Pg. 44, 45, 46.

<sup>232</sup> "Civic Poor Relations", Harrisburg Daily Independent (Harrisburg, Pennsylvania) · Fri, Feb 14, 1913 · Page 16.

<sup>233</sup> The Immigration Commission, Senator William Dillingham, Immigrants in Industries (In Twenty-Five Party), Part 2: Iron and Steel Manufacturing, Vol. II, Presented on June 25, 1910, Washington, D.C., 1911, Pg. 44, 45, 46.

<sup>234</sup> The Immigration Commission, Senator William Dillingham, Immigrants in Industries (In Twenty-Five Party), Part 2: Iron and Steel Manufacturing, Vol. II, Presented on June 25, 1910, Washington, D.C., 1911, Pg. 46, 47.

<sup>235</sup> The Immigration Commission, Senator William Dillingham, Immigrants in Industries (In Twenty-Five Party), Part 2: Iron and Steel Manufacturing, Vol. II, Presented on June 25, 1910, Washington, D.C., 1911, Pg. 49, 50.

<sup>236</sup> The Immigration Commission, Senator William Dillingham, Immigrants in Industries (In Twenty-Five Party), Part 2: Iron and Steel Manufacturing, Vol. II, Presented on June 25, 1910, Washington, D.C., 1911, Pg. 57.

<sup>237</sup> "Here in America We Bulgarians...Cannot be Looking Backward", The St. Louis Star and Times (St. Louis, Missouri) · Thu, Nov 20, 1941 · Page 14.

<sup>238</sup> Based on American Fact Finder information reporting single and multiple ancestry, as well as church membership and community estimates.

[https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS\\_15\\_5YR\\_B04006&prodType=table](https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_15_5YR_B04006&prodType=table) .

<sup>239</sup> Based on American Fact Finder data on ancestry as well as other community estimates.[https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS\\_15\\_5YR\\_B04006&prodType=table](https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_15_5YR_B04006&prodType=table) .

<sup>240</sup> Elizabeth Shostak, Macedonian-Americans, <http://www.everyculture.com/multi/Le-Pa/Macedonian-Americans.html> . Last accessed 7/21/2017. (The author says 10,000 Bulgarians and Macedonians...census data would seem to put that number slightly lower,

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although it is impossible to get a good count because Macedonians moved so often in those early years.)

<sup>241</sup> South Dakota State Census, 1905, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org) . Last accessed 7/14/2017.

<sup>242</sup> "United States Census, 1910," database with images, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:MPXH-PQR> : accessed 22 July 2017), Peter Sloyanoff in household of Ben Ternkoff, Canning, Hughes, South Dakota, United States; citing enumeration district (ED) ED 226, sheet 4A, family 33, NARA microfilm publication T624 (Washington D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1982), roll 1482; FHL microfilm 1,375,495.

<sup>243</sup> "United States Census, 1910," database with images, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:MPXL-ZMV> : accessed 22 July 2017), Proicke Mideff in household of Evan Poppoff, Township 19, Corson, South Dakota, United States; citing enumeration district (ED) ED 10, sheet 4A, family 164, NARA microfilm publication T624 (Washington D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1982), roll 1479; FHL microfilm 1,375,492. AND "United States Census, 1910," database with images, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:MPXL-TH6> : accessed 22 July 2017), Mik Motoff in household of Dan Sherlin, McGowan School District 3, Corson, South Dakota, United States; citing enumeration district (ED) ED 9, sheet 3B, family 29, NARA microfilm publication T624 (Washington D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1982), roll 1479; FHL microfilm 1,375,492.

<sup>244</sup> "United States Census, 1910," database with images, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:MPXH-P3T> : accessed 22 July 2017), Kugman Petroff in household of Ben Ternkoff, Canning, Hughes, South Dakota, United States; citing enumeration district (ED) ED 226, sheet 4A, family 33, NARA microfilm publication T624 (Washington D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1982), roll 1482; FHL microfilm 1,375,495.

<sup>245</sup> The South Dakota Census at this time had a space for ancestry. Macedonian was clearly marked for many of the people born in Macedonia, aside from listing Macedonia as their birth place.

<sup>246</sup> "South Dakota State Census, 1915," database with images, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:MMHN-K6G> : 16 November 2014), Lazare Mitroff; citing State Historical Society, Pierre; FHL microfilm 2,283,683.

<sup>247</sup> "South Dakota State Census, 1915," database with images, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:MMH5-DCR> : 16 November 2014), Steve Stoen; citing State Historical Society, Pierre; FHL microfilm 2,283,938.

<sup>248</sup> "South Dakota State Census, 1915," database with images, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:MMHF-C7H> : 16 November 2014), Geo Ivanoff; citing State Historical Society, Pierre; FHL microfilm 2,283,610.

<sup>249</sup> "South Dakota State Census, 1915," database with images, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:MMHR-ZMH> : 16 November 2014), Chris Popoff; citing State Historical Society, Pierre; FHL microfilm 2,368,003.

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- <sup>250</sup> "South Dakota State Census, 1925," database with images, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:MM4S-G33> : 16 November 2014), James Janoff; citing 1220, State Historical Society, Pierre; FHL microfilm 2,368,574.
- <sup>251</sup> "South Dakota State Census, 1925," database with images, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:MM44-KGJ> : 16 November 2014), Carl Nishoff; citing 4666, State Historical Society, Pierre; FHL microfilm 2,368,773.
- <sup>252</sup> "United States Census, 1910," database with images, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:MLGJ-VQ2> : accessed 22 July 2017), Done Vaneff in household of Sam Frosos, Coulee, Ramsey, North Dakota, United States; citing enumeration district (ED) ED 156, sheet 5A, family 74, NARA microfilm publication T624 (Washington D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1982), roll 1146; FHL microfilm 1,375,159.
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<sup>266</sup> See US 1940 Census for residents of California born in Macedonia.

<sup>267</sup> "Macedonians Find Common Ground in Indianapolis-based Newspaper", Anderson Daily Bulletin (Anderson, Indiana) · Thu, May 22, 1969 · Page 20.

<sup>268</sup> Ellen Cooke, "Macedonian Food is not only for Macedonians", Arizona Republic (Phoenix, Arizona) · Sun, Apr 15, 1973 · [First Edition] · Page 298.

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<sup>271</sup> "Vermont Vital Records, 1760-1954," database with images, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:XF32-75M> : 6 December 2014), Basil George Kodjbanoff and Florence Hammond Chapman, 02 Oct 1908, Marriage; State Capitol Building, Montpelier; FHL microfilm 540,110.

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<sup>277</sup> American Fact Finder estimate of people with Macedonian ancestry in Alabama. [https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS\\_15\\_5YR\\_B04006&prodType=table](https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_15_5YR_B04006&prodType=table) . Last accessed 7/21/2017.

<sup>278</sup> See American Fact Finder for estimates of people reporting Macedonian ancestry in Louisiana and Georgia.

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