

UMD Voice



Leadership Feature: George Atanasoski



*Sally McNamara:
It Is Past Time for
Macedonia to Join
NATO*



*A Conversation
with Carlos Flores
Juberias*

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ОБЕДИНЕТА МАКЕДОНСКА ДИЈАСПОРА

Founded in 2004, United Macedonian Diaspora (UMD) is the leading international non-governmental organization addressing the interests and needs of Macedonians and Macedonian communities throughout the world.

Headquartered in Washington, D.C., UMD has an office in Melbourne, Australia and Toronto, Canada and representatives in Paris, London, Brussels, Vienna, Kiev, St. Petersburg, and Stuttgart.

UMD is a 501 (c) (3) charitable organization.

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Letter from the President



Dear Reader:

Welcome to the 6th issue of UMD Voice! I cannot believe we've gotten to this point – can you? The last issue was downloaded close to 19,000 times in the first month! And not only that, readers like you continually download not only the last issue but past issued as well. In addition, for the first time, we printed 1,000 full-color copies of UMD Voice. Our goal is to increase this number to 1,500. Because it is free and not a subscription-based magazine, UMD is limited in resources. However, that is not stopping us!

Gathering and writing articles, editing, laying out a magazine, designing are not easy tasks! Again our UMD Voice team has done a fantastic job in producing a magazine that you will enjoy and share with your family and friends. The majority of the team are volunteers, using their spare time to give you the 6th issue of UMD Voice. UMD is so grateful for their hard work!

Are you coming to the 2nd Annual UMD Global Conference (UMD GC2010)? The UMD GC2010 Planning Committee has been very busy getting ready to welcome you to Toronto on June 3-6, 2010. Over 1,000 Macedonians and friends of Macedonia from close to 25 countries are expected to converge at the Sheraton Centre Toronto Hotel! Full details, information about the program and speakers can be viewed at www.UMDGlobalConference.org, however, here are some highlights:

- **Discover** Macedonia and It's Amazing Tourism Potentials
- **Learn** How and Why to Do Business in Macedonia
- **Watch** a Screening of A Name is A Name and chat 1-on-1 with the Director and Producer
- **Hear** Experts Discuss the Role of UN in Macedonia and Human Rights in Southeast Europe
- **Enjoy** aLIVE – A Macedonian Cultural Celebration Featuring Macedonians Artists like Synthesis and 16-year-old violinist Ema Nikolovska
- **Help** Preserve the Macedonian Identity and Language in Today's Modern Global Community

The 2nd Annual UMD Global Conference is the place to be on June 3-6, 2010! **Don't Miss this Opportunity – Register Today by visiting www.UMDGlobalConference.org!**

In the last 5 months, I have had the privilege of visiting Macedonian communities in Australia, Canada, Europe, New Zealand, and the United States – **it has definitely been a busy time for UMD!** In speaking to so many Macedonians of all different backgrounds, especially our youth, I sensed a strong yearning to help Macedonia become a more prosperous and secure nation in Southeast Europe. UMD is developing more and more ways for Macedonians throughout the world to help Macedonia, whether that be in advocacy, economic development, cultural awareness or charitable activities. **Join UMD Today and Help Macedonia Every Day!**

Enjoy the 6th issue of UMD Voice and we look forward to hearing your comments and ideas for the 7th issue!

Sincerely yours,

Metodija A. Koloski

Editorial



Greece Eats, the World Pays the Bill

By Mark Branov

"Greece should know by now how to deal with a debt crisis that threatens to end in sovereign default. It has had two centuries of experience. It defaulted in 1826 in a distress episode - measured from debt crisis to final settlement with creditors - that lasted 17 years. It defaulted in 1843, only one year later, in an episode that lasted another 17 years. It defaulted in 1860 in an episode that lasted four years. It defaulted once again in 1932, this time in its most protracted experience as a deadbeat country. This episode, lasting 33 years, ended in 1965. Europe can't say it wasn't warned."

– Neil Reynolds, *Globe and Mail*, March 24, 2010

In the context of a globalized economy, the debt nightmare now facing Greek Prime Minister George Papandreou has played out on the international stage like never before, and the entire world is taking notice. Rattling currency and bond markets, the crisis has also managed to create a new political rift between Greece and the rest of Europe, especially Germany. The long-term consequences are hard to predict, but optimism is in short supply.

We now know that, since before Greece's entry into the Eurozone in 2001, successive conservative and socialist Greek governments have colluded in massive fraud against the EU. The Greek Finance Ministry – with help from shady consultants at the disgraced U.S. firm Goldman Sachs – used an arcane technique to hide their massive debt in the derivative markets. While recently claiming a deficit of only 3.7% of GDP, only slightly beyond EU regulations, Greece's real budget deficit is now being estimated at more than 12.7%. Its sovereign debt is in excess of €216 billion, leaving it with a debt-to-GDP ratio of 123% - an entirely unsustainable figure.

Market speculation that Greece would default on bond payments in January caused the Euro to sink dramatically against the U.S. dollar. By late March, the politicians in Brussels began hastily endorsing a bailout plan, though economists scoffed at the initial offer, calling it a band-aid solution at best.

The details of the crisis are still unfolding, but by early May there was a tentative agreement for a €110 billion bailout package. With the IMF providing a large portion of the money, it shows that Europe is unable to handle the crisis on its own. And, despite the bailout talks, some are seriously questioning whether Greece should be allowed to remain in the Eurozone at all. Indeed, a return to the drachma may be the best way to ease the pain, especially if the EU proves unwilling to eventually increase the bailout into the €180b - €200b range. Either way, the crisis has raised fundamental questions about a European Central Bank managing monetary policy, but no corresponding European body to manage fiscal policy of member states.

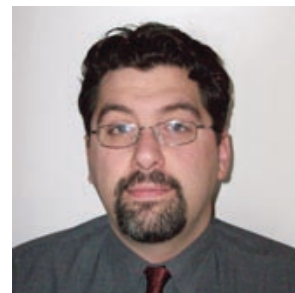
Meanwhile, Papandreou's planned austerity measures seem to please no one. Economists see them as woefully

insufficient to deal with the root problem of endemic corruption, since Brussels is demanding an immediate deficit reduction of almost €5 billion. In response, Papandreou has proposed an increase in sales tax and new duties on fuel, alcohol, tobacco and luxury goods, along with a freeze on pensions and deep cuts to public service salaries. Domestically, these ideas have been fiercely unpopular, resulting in general strikes and rioting. The unrest has also fuelled an increase in ethnic xenophobia and racist incidents, with bombings from radical left-wing groups, one of which killed a 15-year old boy in Athens. On May 5th, three innocent people were killed, including a pregnant woman, when violent protestors set fire to a bank with Molotov cocktails.

The political damage to Greece's reputation seems particularly intense in Germany, with polls showing 70% opposition to a bailout. Most Germans are furious that Greece knowingly borrowed four times the limit, leading two German MPs to joke that Greece should sell off a few of its islands, or even the Acropolis. In response, Greek Deputy Prime Minister Theodoros Pangalos complained about how, in WWII, the German Army stole Greek gold, "and never paid it back," a comment that only angered the Germans further. The Berlin-based newspaper *Bild* suggested Greeks "wake up earlier", and added: "No one here has to pay thousands of euros in bribes to get a hospital bed. We don't give pensions to generals' daughters who can't find a husband ... Taxi drivers give receipts and farmers don't get billions of euros in EU subsidies for non-existent olive trees." Ridiculously, about half of Greek workers claim less than €12,000 in income, and therefore pay no income tax whatsoever. The anticorruption group Transparency International estimated that Greeks paid €750 million in bribes in 2008, often to tax auditors. Even the usually diplomatic German Chancellor Angela Merkel wondered aloud to reporters about why German workers must work until 67, but Greek workers can retire at 61.

With such a miserable economic outlook, it is no wonder that Greek politicians have spent such an enormous amount of effort and fortune on waging petty and demeaning propaganda warfare against neighbors Turkey, Albania and especially Macedonia. Every inch of Greek newspaper column used to discuss "F.Y.R.O.M." is one less inch to devote to Greece's economic meltdown. Every minute of TV news explaining how the Macedonians "threaten" Greece is one less minute devoted to the real threat, which is from within.

The entire drama puts Greece's farcical 19-year dispute with Macedonia over its constitutional name into stark relief, by illustrating the EU's bias and hypocrisy. Greece breaks every rule in the book and enjoys preferential treatment, whereas Macedonia meets or exceeds every EU requirement for accession, and is denied membership indefinitely. The Greeks must be wondering how long they can get away with obstructing European expansion in the Balkans. The Macedonians must be struggling to justify their costly courtship of an organization that does not respect its own rules. And, the Germans must be thinking: with friends like Greece, who needs enemies?



Never Again: Remembering the Holocaust in Macedonia

By Ana Kulevanova

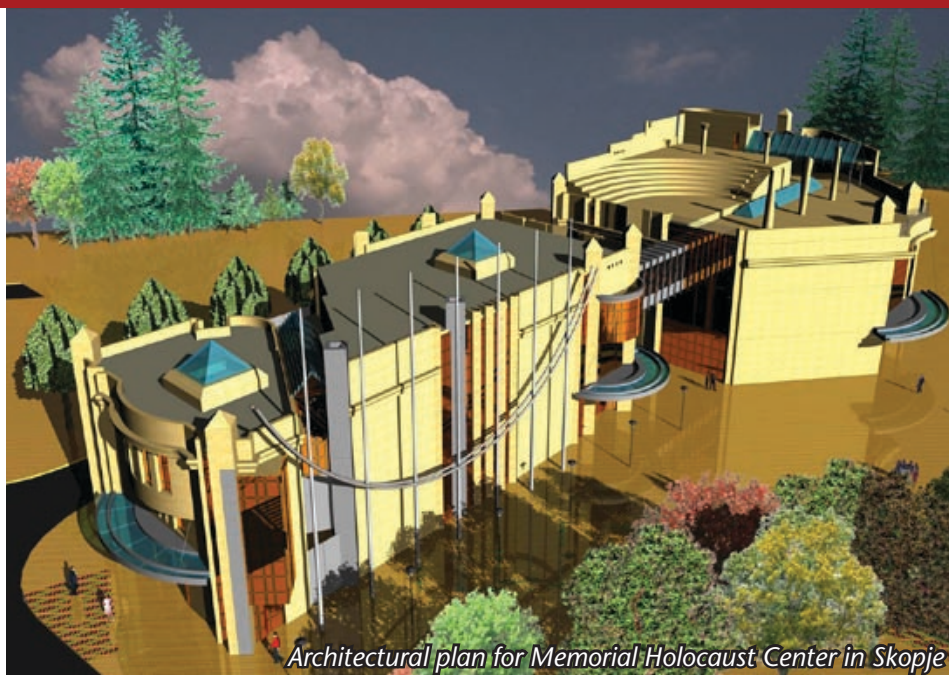
On March 11th 1943, at five o'clock, before dawn, the collecting of the Jews from Macedonia began. 7,200 people were collected and forced into the Tobacco Monopoly transit camp, where they waited for their future, not knowing that there was, in fact, no future. In three turns, they were taken, and immediately exterminated upon arrival at Treblinka. Today, the Holocaust Fund of the Jews from Macedonia exists to tell their story. It also aims to promote Jewish life, culture, tradition, and music.

According to the Law on Denationalization enacted in 2000, the properties of Jews, victims of the holocaust without legal heirs, are to be transferred to the Holocaust Fund of the Jews from Macedonia. The Fund exists as a unique legal solution in Europe for the protection of property rights of those deported Jews who have no living heirs. The Macedonian Government and the Jewish Community share the Board, and the premises are located in the Hana Building, which used to be a department store of the Jewish family Aroesti. The family was forcefully deported to the fascist camps and did not survive the pogrom, so they have no living heirs.

Ms Ljiljana Mizrahi, the president of the Board Committee of the Fund, says that Macedonian Jews "... are proud of the manner by which Macedonia, through the Law on Denationalization, solved this issue. The community lost 98% of its members in Treblinka, a uniquely tragic precedent."

By cherishing the memories of the Jews from Macedonia killed in the Holocaust, and presenting the Jewish history and tradition in Macedonia and other parts of South Eastern Europe, the HFJM is confident that the centuries old cordial relations between Jews and Macedonians will continue to develop successfully, and benefit both Israel and Macedonia. There is both national and local governmental support in Macedonia to preserve their memories, and to enhance the relationships between the ethnic groups.

The essential task of the Fund is to build a memorial, the Memorial Holocaust Center of the Jews from Macedonia. The idea for such a memorial arises from the vision of the great scientist and humanist Ivan Dejanov, former president of the first Macedonian-Israeli Association of



Architectural plan for Memorial Holocaust Center in Skopje

Friendship. The Memorial Center is founded with the goal of presenting, educating and researching multiethnic societies, and freeing them from the danger of intolerance and anti-Semitism.

The Memorial Center is currently being built on a very specific piece of land. The location of it is on the grounds of the Old Jewish Quarter, on the left bank of the river Vardar. It is an extremely important location; the toponyms such as David Street and Amarova Street are integral to the story. In that way, our Memorial will stand on the place where 98% of the Jewish population in Macedonia disappeared. The memory of our people is not dead; the Memorial Center will bear witness to this great tragedy.

The Fund is facing challenges with locating, identifying and acquiring documents and artifacts that could be relevant for the museum and is calling on Jews of Macedonian origin whose families left the country to contact them and provide them with personal stories or documents that could be used in the museum. An International Advisory Board has been founded, whose goal is to work out the most appropriate solution for the collection of museum artifacts. The Board members are some of the most eminent people regarding this issue: Rabbi Andrew Baker, Chairman, J.D. Bindenagel (Chicago), Heather Conley (Washington), Dr. Radu Ioanid (Washington), Stephan Kramer (Berlin), Dr. Abraham Milgram

(Jerusalem), Edward Serotta (Vienna), Dr. Walter Schwimmer (Vienna) and Dr. Juergen Wickert (Brussels). The Board had their first meeting in Skopje, in October 2009. It was an extremely constructive meeting where ideas and suggestions were shared and meticulously reviewed. Working together, their expertise will be essential to telling the story of our parents, siblings, relatives, neighbors and fellow citizens.

We honestly hope that this article will interest the Macedonian Diaspora and will enhance the relationships that have been established previously. Furthermore, we believe that it will help locating Jews of Macedonian origin and contacting them. Building a strong, powerful and friendly relationship will lead us to our ultimate goal – supporting each other, retelling the past, ensuring that our history is never forgotten, and preventing it from happening ever again. ✨

Contact Ana at the Holocaust Fund of the Jews from Macedonia
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Email: holocaustfund@gmail.com

The Importance of the U.S. Census

By *Trajko Papuckoski*



The 2000 U.S. Census reported that only 38,051 Macedonians live in the USA. Does this sound realistic to you? How many Americans with Macedonian ancestry simply

overlooked the census or didn't bother to return the form?

The truth is that we don't know, but we do know is that the Census Bureau has simplified the 2010 Census form to only 10 questions. This should help increase participation, but unfortunately for Macedonian-Americans and other ethnic groups, it leaves out any questions regarding ancestry and second languages spoken at home. However, other ethnic groups in the United States are using "Some other race" under Question 9 "What is your race?" to fill in their ethnicity.

My hope is that 2010 will be the year that Macedonian-Americans stand up together to be counted in the Census. On December 14th of 2009, various Macedonian groups throughout the country formed a coalition to make our fellow Macedonian-Americans aware of the Census and increase our participation to be accurately counted. Members of the coalition are the Macedonian American Cultural Organization of New England, the Macedonian American Friendship Association, the Macedonian Arts Council, the Macedonian Mission for Humanity, the Macedonian Orthodox Philanthropic Society of Columbus, Ohio, and the United Macedonian Diaspora.

What is the census and why is it important?

Since 1790, when Thomas Jefferson oversaw the first United States Census that asked a mere 6 questions, the Census and America have changed dramatically over time. The Census is used to determine the number of representatives in Congress as well as the

building of roads, schools, and hospitals by federal and local governments. Many corporations use Census data to make investment decisions. In order to protect the privacy of individuals, Title 13 of the U.S. code has placed strict privacy controls on the Census Bureau. The Census cannot share information with the police, immigration, or any other authority. The records are only made public after 72 years, which help genealogists and academics in their research.

Macedonians have a history of being undercounted

Since migrant workers known as "pechalbari" began leaving Macedonia in the late 1800s, Macedonians have taken part in the U.S. Census. Until 1913, they traveled with Ottoman Turkish passports. After the Treaty of Bucharest divided Macedonia between Greece, the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes (later to renamed Yugoslavia), and Bulgaria, many Macedonians were recorded by the country that issued their passport, not by their ethnicity.

However, a growing number of patriotic Macedonians in the early 1900s began to write Macedonia as their place of birth and their mother tongue. Many of these "pechalbari" whose family and friends were being forcibly assimilated and denied their right to self-determination stood up and proudly wrote Macedonian on their census. Today, you can find these old census records online at various genealogical sites.

Stand up and be counted in 2010!

Under the leadership of retired U.S. Army Lieutenant Colonel Vladimir Atseff, the coalition members have made significant strides in building awareness amongst Macedonian-Americans.

For the first time in the U.S. Census' history, Macedonian is one of the instructional languages. Danijela Wilson translated a language guide in Macedonian to help non-English speakers properly fill out the Census form. At

the beginning of the March 2010, when Census forms were mailed out, the coalition members sent over 85,000 emails to Macedonians worldwide to spread the importance of declaring their identity on the forms. Even outside of the United States, Macedonians have pitched in to help the coalition. Anthony Laskovski of Australia used his creative audio-visual skills to create promotional and instructional videos that can be viewed on UMD's YouTube page. Tom Hristovski of MOP Society of Columbus, Ohio recognized the importance of the Census by inviting guest speakers from the Census Bureau to talk to parishioners and distribute information in English and Macedonian. Vasil Babamov also brought the Census to the attention of MAFA members by posting instructions on the MAFA website and mass emailing.

Knowing that many Macedonians in the Diaspora read and watch Macedonian media over the internet, Vesna Palmer of the Macedonian Mission for Humanity, based in Colorado, used her connections at Bitola's Tera television to promote the Coalition's activities.

Outside the coalition, many other Macedonians have spread the word about the census. One group in particular, the Macedonian Outreach Society of Sts Peter and Paul Macedonian Orthodox Church, Crown Point, Indiana, has created an example of a completed census form and provided free Macedonian language guides to its Parishioners. Each Sunday after service, church members can find information about the census. To reach younger Macedonian they also created a Facebook page which received a large number of questions that kept them busy. Vlade Naumovski, who hosts a Macedonian radio program in the New York City/New Jersey region, has also made his listeners aware of the importance of the U.S. Census.

Will more than 38,051 Macedonian-Americans stand up in 2010? If the passion that the coalition members is any indication, I have no doubt! ✨

France, Belgium, Macedonia, Albania, and Italy – UMD Advances European Operations

By Stojan Nikolov



UMD Paris Representative Claude Zoran Spasevski, MEP Dr. Charles Tannock, and Meto Koloski

UMD President Metodija A. Koloski went on an official trip to Europe in December 2009. He embarked on December 5, and his first stop was Paris. Together with UMD's Representative for France, Claude Zoran Spasevski, Koloski first met with Macedonia's newly appointed Ambassador to France, Ambassador Agron Budxaku. Spasevski informed the Ambassador's of UMD's goals to open up its European office in Paris and looks forward to working closing with the Ambassador to strengthen French-Macedonian relations. Koloski and Spasevski also met with members of the most prominent French think-tank IFRI - Institut Francais des Relations Internationales.

On the evening of December 7, Koloski and Spasevski headed to Brussels for two days of meetings to advocate for stronger EU-Macedonian relations, and for the EU to grant Macedonia a date for accession negotiations. They met with members of the European Parliament, MEP Heide Ruhle, Dr. Charles Tannock, Annemie Neyts-Uyttebroeck, and the staff of MEP Adrian Severin. Koloski and Spasevski also visited NATO where they met with officers responsible for the Macedonia desk, and Macedonia's Ambassador to NATO Kire Ilioski. They also met with the office of the EU High Commissioner for Foreign Affairs, where UMD urged EU policymakers to not let bilateral disputes such as Greece's issue with Macedonia's name impede Macedonian aspirations to join the EU.

Following Brussels, Koloski headed to Macedonia where he met with

the President of Macedonia Gjorge Ivanov, as well as Minister of Education Nikola Todorov, MP Radmila Sekerinska, MP Tito Petkovski, Viktor Mizo of the Agency for Foreign Direct Investment, and staff at the Foreign Affairs Ministry, Sector for European Integration, and the Agency of Emigration. He also met with U.S.

Ambassador Philip Reeker, EU Ambassador Erwan Fouere, and U.S. Embassy personnel. Koloski also reached out to NGOs and institutions, such as the American Chamber of Commerce, Macedonian Center for International Cooperation, EuroBalkan, and the Institute of National History.

On December 17-18, Koloski participated and spoke at an International Symposium on the 60th Anniversary of the End of the Greek Civil War, hosted by the Institute of National History at the Macedonian Academy of Arts and Sciences. At the opening press conference, Koloski reiterated UMD's strong support for the restitution of private properties confiscated from ethnic Macedonians by the Greek Government during the Greek Civil War. On December 18, Koloski participated in another press conference for the launch of the first-ever Macedonian Diaspora Address Book, published by the Macedonian Center for International Cooperation.

Koloski also visited the Macedonian Community in Mala Prespa, which is in the southeast portion of present-day Albania, on the banks of Lake Prespa. Koloski met with the Mayor of Mala

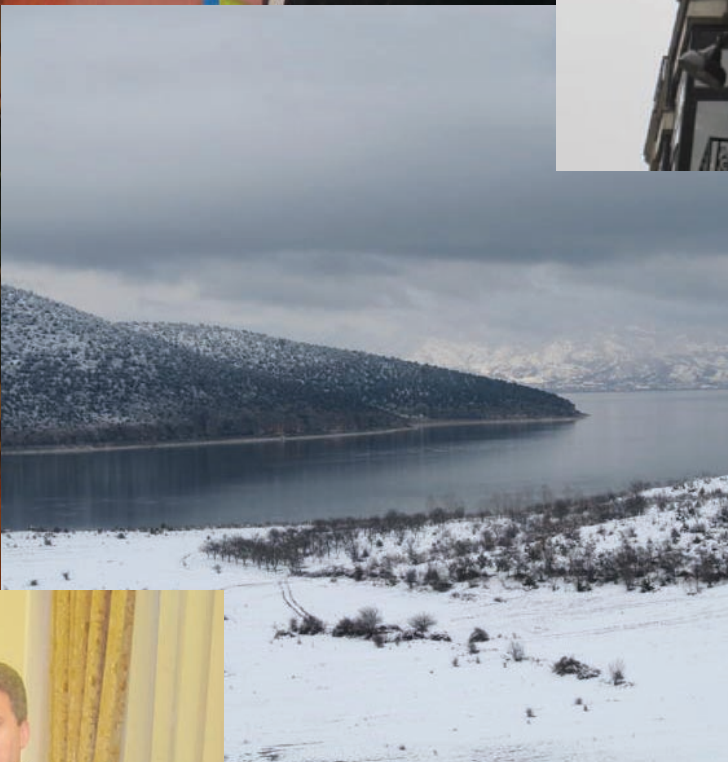
Prespa, Edmond Temelko, as well as the Deputy Mayor Vasil Sterjovski among other leaders of the community. Mayor Temelko and Deputy Mayor Sterjovski briefed Koloski on the developments of the community in Mala Prespa, in particular the preservation of the Macedonian identity and language, as well as efforts for economic development in Pustec and the surrounding villages.

Rome was the final stop on Koloski's itinerary. There, he attended the celebrations at the Vatican marking the 15th Anniversary of Italian-Macedonian relations, at which opera baritone Blagoj Nacoski held a concert. On the sidelines, Koloski met with Macedonian Minister of Culture Elizabeta Kancevska-Milevska, and discussed ways UMD can help Macedonia promote its rich culture abroad.

UMD has plans to grow its European Operations and is actively seeking volunteers and representatives in European capitals. Please contact Claude Zoran Spasevski in Paris at cspasevski@umdiaspora.org or Zlatko Nikolovski in Vienna at znikolovski@umdiaspora.org for more information. ✨



Meto with sections of the old Berlin Wall



Clockwise from top left: Meto Koloski with young Macedonian leaders in Mala Prespa, Albania; Macedonian Flag at Paris Embassy; Claude Zoran Spasevski, Macedonian Ambassador to Paris Agron Budxaku and Meto Koloski; In front of the Pustec Town Hall Building, in Albania; Meto Koloski with Macedonian President Gjorge Ivanov; Meto Koloski with Macedonian MP Tito Petkovski; Lake Prespa from the Albanian side

A Conversation with Carlos Flores Juberias

By Mark Branov

As the long, reluctant courtship between Macedonia and the European Union continues, Macedonians around the world look on, hoping for some kind of breakthrough. To obtain a European perspective on the issue, UMD Voice reached out to Carlos Flores Juberias, a professor of Comparative Constitutional Law at the University of Valencia Law School, and an expert on Macedonian affairs in Spain.

Professor Flores' research has been devoted to analysis of political transitions, democratic consolidation, and European integration in post-communist Europe. As such, he had the opportunity to visit Macedonia several times, and has written a series of academic essays on the Macedonian case. In 2008, he was named Honorary Consul of Macedonia in the region of Valencia, a gesture of thanks for his full support to the cause of Macedonian integration in Europe and his sympathy towards the Macedonian people in their current political struggle with Greece.

In cooperation with the Macedonian Ambassador in Madrid, H. E. Metodija Belevski, Professor Flores has strived to properly portray Macedonia in the Spanish media, so that its role in the stabilization of the Balkans is given due consideration. He has also promoted commercial relations between Spain and Macedonia, in hopes that Macedonia's cultural richness and national identity would become better known.

MB: Since independence in 1991, what has been Macedonia's greatest political success story? On the other hand, what has been Macedonia's greatest political failure?

CFJ: For Macedonia, to exist is in itself a major success. What I mean is that not many political analysts believed, back in 1991, that almost two decades later Macedonia would still be an independent, sovereign and democratic state. Even less of these observers thought it would keep its borders safe, while avoiding most of the bloody conflict in the former Yugoslav states. As a legal scholar, I am quite eager to point out that Macedonia was able to pass a rather inclusive constitutional text back in 1991, and that Macedonian leaders of all parties and ethnic communities proved to be smart enough – and humble enough – to introduce the necessary changes in 2001, in order to make it even more consensual and inclusive, and therefore more acceptable for everyone. As for major failures, what may come to one's mind is the failure to complete Macedonia's Euro-Atlantic integration. But I don't believe this has been due to Macedonia's lack of preparation or commitment. Rather, it is largely due to external factors, over which little or no influence could be exerted from the Macedonian side. It should be recognized that the country has made an enormous effort, the best proof of which is the fact that, despite the Greek veto, Macedonia is still way ahead other Western Balkan countries on its route towards



the EU, and it is regarded as having fulfilled all conditions for NATO membership.

MB: Worldwide, 129 nations have recognized Macedonia under its constitutional name, including 4 of 5 permanent members of the UN Security Council. The political battle continues, but have the Macedonians already won the de facto "culture war" over the name?

CFJ: Definitely, yes. Whatever might happen with the name controversy at the diplomatic level, what you call "the culture war over the name" has already been won by Macedonia. Over the years I have met very few institutions, and even fewer people who feel comfortable referring to Macedonia by anything but its constitutional name. Even among those who for some reason have found themselves legally obliged to use the acronym "FYROM," I have been able to perceive they were doing so with a certain sense of embarrassment. And never, ever, have I met any person who, after having learned about the origin and the reasons for the controversy, and having listened to the arguments of both parties involved, has not ended up sympathizing with the Macedonian side, and supporting the right of the Macedonian people to choose the name they want to be called by.

MB: In 2008 and 2009, Greece vetoed Macedonia's accession to the EU and to NATO, despite Macedonia's fulfillment of all requirements. In response, Macedonia has taken Greece to the International Court of Justice, as Article 11 of the 1995 Interim Accord prohibits Greece from interfering in Macedonia's accession to international organizations. How do you see this process evolving over the coming year?

CFJ: I am confident in a positive response from the International Court of Justice regarding the claim that Greek interference in Macedonia's plans to join NATO and start negotiations with the EU is in clear violation of the 1995 Interim Accord. This would surely provide Macedonian diplomacy with a powerful argument to defend its position, while weakening the thesis that the name issue should be regarded as relevant enough as to block the debate of any other question until it has been satisfactorily resolved. However, one should not rule out the possibility of a less one-sided ruling, in which a decision favorable in principle for Macedonia is matched by some nominal compensation for Greece, or an intentionally obscure legal reasoning that may lead to contradictory interpretations.

MB: Macedonia's EU accession talks were effectively vetoed during Sweden's rotating presidency, and the matter was deferred until Spain took over. What significance, if any, does a Spanish presidency have over this process?

CFJ: I don't believe there are grounds for much optimism regarding the Spanish Presidency of the EU in this, or for that matter, in any other area. At this point, Spain is in the middle of a major economic crisis and suffering from a dramatic rise in unemployment. It has put the socialist government in a very delicate situation; meanwhile, other problems – like regional tensions, confrontation with the church, or public deficit – have also been growing in intensity. Some believed that the Spanish government would benefit from the international visibility and the press coverage that the rotating EU Presidency usually brings. However, the perception now is that the leadership crisis in Spain will dramatically reduce its effectiveness in Europe. I would expect a discreet Spanish presidency, at the most – or even a failed one. Anyway, we ought to keep an eye on the summit planned for May between the EU and the Western Balkans states, and hope for the best.

MB: Popular support for Euro-Atlantic integration remains high among Macedonians, despite the status quo. At what point do you think Macedonian patience will begin to run out, and what are the possible consequences?

CFJ: Experience drawn from previous enlargement processes shows that most of them start with almost unanimous popular support, since incorporation to the European Union is seen as a guarantee of political stability, economic development, international influence, and security. But whenever the negotiating process goes at a slower pace than predicted, or when the social and political costs of adjusting to EU demands become more evident, people begin to feel disillusioned or even betrayed by European institutions, and support for integration begins to fade. In my opinion, Macedonia is getting to this point right now, so it is important that the Macedonian institutions tell the people with absolute clarity that the process ahead will be a lengthy and tough one, that there will be difficult decisions to take, and that there will be no shortcuts. In candidate countries, popular support for European integration is a must. The people should understand that dwindling support would only make things more complicated for their negotiators, helping those who argue that Macedonia is not ready for Europe yet.

MB: In December 2009, the EU's Lisbon Treaty was approved, promising significant changes in how the EU will be run. Will this reduce the ability of individual EU member states to "wag the dog" as it were, and dictate European policy over clearly bilateral issues?

CFJ: It is true that the Lisbon Treaty has introduced substantial changes in the EU decision-making process, and that from now on many decisions will be taken by qualified majority, rather than by unanimity as before. However, it should not be forgotten that these new formulas only enter into force in 2014, or in some cases in 2017. Nor should it be forgotten that for a candidate state to join the EU, unanimity is still the rule, since at the end of the negotiating process, all member states must agree on a new member, and all of them maintain the right to refuse it. On the other hand, it should not be forgotten that EU policies are always the result of extremely complex power

games, in which every position and every decision of a member state has consequences and costs. In this context, there are only two possible strategies for Macedonia: the easy one consists in unquestioningly giving Greece whatever Greece demands, now and in the future, thus becoming a totally subservient state. The tough one requires fulfilling EU and NATO's requirements for administrative modernization, economic liberalization, and adoption of European law, while at the same time building a coalition of supportive member states, which, at any given moment, could make Greece's next veto attempt too costly. In my opinion, this tough strategy is right now the only way of accessing NATO and the EU, in a manner that is compatible with the preservation of Macedonia's national dignity.

MB: Which European Union member states do you see as most sympathetic to Macedonia, and which are seen as more sympathetic to Athens?

CFJ: In the EU politics, sympathy and encouraging gestures are always easy to find. But what a country like Macedonia needs is support, and commitment, and not everybody is ready to move from good words to sound policies. Regarding my own country, I am sad to admit that Spain counts among the countries that will follow, but not lead, any position adopted by a majority of EU member states regarding the Skopje-Athens political conflict. In fact, the only occasion in the recent years when Spain has stubbornly refused to follow the majority of EU member states has been the case of Kosovo. Spain is one of the few EU countries that have refused to recognize Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence, in part because this decision had been taken in violation of international law, in part out of fear that this might encourage separatist parties in Spain itself. Had Macedonia stuck to its initial position of not recognizing Kosovo, it might have helped build a better understanding with Spain.

MB: As you know, Greece does not recognize any ethnic minorities, despite large communities of ethnic Macedonians, Albanians, Turks, Roma, and others. The religious rights are similarly oppressed, in a country where Greek Orthodox Church clergy are government employees. Minorities in Bulgaria suffer similar problems. What is it going to take for minority rights to be taken seriously in ally EU member states, including ones like Greece and Bulgaria?

CFJ: I believe that a generous, and fully guaranteed recognition of individual freedoms - including religious freedom, freedom of speech, the right to express yourself in your mother tongue, freedom of assembly and association, and freedom of the press - should be counted first, rather than this notion of "collective rights." When individual rights are guaranteed, it also provides the sufficient margin of liberty for people to engage in collective action as well, based on a common ethnic identity, a common language or a common set of religious beliefs. EU member states such as Greece and Bulgaria should fully guarantee individual rights to all of their citizens, regardless of their ethnic background. ✨

Macedonia's Ancient Distinct Identity

By Aleksandar Donski

Josephus Flavius, considered the greatest ancient Hebrew historian, was born in Jerusalem, in 36 AD, only years after the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. His original name is Josephus Ben Matatias. The genealogy of Josephus goes back to both royal and ecclesiastic Judean origin. He belonged to the Pharisees and held a high position in Hebrew society. Although having friendly connections with the Romans, he took part in the Hebrew uprising against the Roman rule, which led to his arrest and imprisonment. The Roman emperor Vespasian freed Josephus, after which, as a sign of gratitude, Josephus took on his family name – Flavius. Josephus spent his last years in Rome, writing the history of the Jews. He wrote the “Jewish Antiquities”, in 20 volumes, “The Jewish War”, in 7 volumes, and “Flavius Josephus Against Appion”.

The last one defies the Hellenic historians of his time who wrote in a derogatory manner against the Jews. Josephus Flavius also wrote his autobiography. Although a Jew and a Pharisee, as a historian he produced historic data of great importance - related to the deeds of Jesus Christ and St. John the Baptist. Josephus Flavius has left exceptionally valuable written records about the life and work of the Macedonians living in the Holy Land, not only from the period of their absolute rule over all of Palestine (when Alexander of Macedonia had conquered it), but also about the Macedonians remaining to live there in much later times.

Detailed writings of Josephus Flavius about the life of the Macedonians in ancient Palestine are included in the book “Jesus Christ and the Macedonians” (Stip, 2001) After writing with a positive connotation about Alexander’s conquest of the Holy Land, Flavius describes events that took place after Alexander’s death. It is well known that the Macedonian Seleucid dynasty retained control, established by Alexander’s general Seleucus. Due to the less successful rule of Antiochus IV, who belonged to this Macedonian dynasty, the Jews eventually organized a successful uprising that led to the foundation of their



independent state in the middle of the 2nd century BC.

A very important fact; when writing about the Jewish uprising against the Seleucid dynasty, Josephus Flavius writes very clearly that the Jews actually fought for their independence against the slavery imposed on them by the Macedonians. When describing the death of the Jewish leader Juda Macabeus, Flavius writes: “Juda left behind a great reputation and a lasting memory, fighting for the freedom of his people and liberating it from the Macedonians”, (“Jewish Antiquities”, XII, 11,2).

In regards to Juda Macabeus, the leader of the uprising against the Macedonian Seleucids, Josephus Flavius writes: “The Jewish people reestablished its freedom after the Macedonians. However, the number of those (Jews), who, because of lack of their basic existential needs and because of their economic deprivation, and starvation hanging over their heads, fled from their own country and went to Macedonia, was not small.” (Jewish Antiquities XIII, 1,1). Here the term Macedonians again refers to the Seleucids, who despite of losing their conquered territory of Judea, continued to rule over a vast territory of Palestine and other areas.

Flavius also writes about the

concern of the Macedonian warrior Backid expressed when hearing about the murder of the Hebrew leader Juda Macabeus, and the succession of his brother Yonathan. Here again, Flavius refers to the Seleucids as “The Macedonians”. It reads: “When Backid learned about this, his fear grew because Yonathan was able to create many troubles for the Macedonian king, the same done by Juda, prior to his rule...” (Jewish Antiquities, XIII, 1,2).

This data presents important facts particularly because in many world encyclopedias and other books, it is improperly written that the Seleucids were spreading in their own land “Greek language and culture”, that they built “Greek cities”, etc. It is acceptable that within the culture that the Seleucids expanded at that time, elements of many cultures, including the Greek, were found, but it does not mean that the Seleucids were Greeks. According to Josephus, the Hebrews themselves were fully aware that they were under Macedonian, and not Greek rule. He also refers to the Seleucids as Macedonians, in his book “Wars of the Jews”. Here he writes about the battle of Simon Macabeus against the Seleucids, stating: “Simon... liberated the Jews from the Macedonian rule, a hundred and seventy years after the Seleucids empire ended” (“War of the Jews”, 1,2,2).

The establishment of the independent Jewish state by Simon Macabeus had been described by Flavius in the following passage: “Simon won the majority vote for his high priest position, and during the first year of his rule he freed his people from the Macedonian rule” (“Jewish Antiquities”, XIII, 6,7). This is another statement of Flavius about the ethnic Macedonian identity of the Seleucids, confirmed only twenty years after the first settlement of the Macedonians in the Holy Land!

Josephus Flavius treated the Macedonians as a distinctly separate people in contrast to the Greeks. In his book “Flavius against Appion”, Flavius mentions the Macedonians as citizens of the Egyptian city of Alexandria. In its part two (6), he writes that “The Greeks and the Macedonians possess the city”,

and further in the same text he blames the Egyptians that because of their racial hatred and intolerance towards the Jews, the Egyptians turned the Macedonians, and the Greeks, against the Jews who lived in Alexandria. By this statement it is obvious that Flavius makes distinction between the Macedonians and the Greeks.

In his other works Josephus Flavius writes that the Macedonian population had been the majority among the citizens of Alexandria. When writing about the Macedonian ruler Ptolemy the I, and his settlement of the Jews in Alexandria, Flavius states that this ruler,

to the Jews "...in Alexandria, had given the same privileges as citizens, as shared by the Macedonians themselves" ("Jewish Antiquities", XI,12,1).

Flavius also mentions a speech by the Judean king Agrippa II (I c. after Christ), where the Macedonians are very clearly referred to as the dominant population of Alexandria, and of other regions in Egypt. ("War of the Jews", II, 16,4). In the same speech, Agrippa II tried to convince the Jews not to fight against the Romans for the reason that other people had been under their rule as shared the same issues. Here he also made a clear distinction between the Macedonians

and the Greeks (written about this king in the separate chapter of the book "Jesus Christ and the Macedonians".)

Josephus Flavius is just one more of the countless ancient historians whose writings contradict the contemporary Greek propaganda that the ancient Macedonians considered themselves to be Greek. In fact, the writing of Josephus Flavius not only proves that the Ancient Macedonians did not consider themselves to be Greek, but it also proves that everyone else in the ancient world considered the Macedonians and the Greeks as people of two distinct ethnic groups. ✨

Gala Premiere of "Macedonian Michelangelo" Documentary

By Mark Branov

March 13 marked an exclusive world premiere and gala dinner to celebrate the new documentary film "Georgi Danevski: Confessions of the Heart." Various dignitaries, including Macedonian Consul General Martin Trenevski and UMD Director of Canadian Operations Jim Daikos, were present at the event, which was held in the Great Hall of Sveti Kliment Ohridski Macedonian Orthodox Cathedral, Toronto.

This film beautifully portrays the life and art of Danevski, who some have nicknamed "the Macedonian Michelangelo." An accomplished and versatile painter with a special passion for horses, Georgi Danevski is perhaps best known for his stunning iconography and

massive ceiling and wall murals that grace Macedonian Orthodox churches.

Created by Bill Yancoff, the long-time producer of the nationally-broadcast Macedonian Heritage show in Canada, "Confessions of the Heart" is very special because of its personal and intimate insight into the artist's life. It traces Danevski's life from childhood in his hometown of Vinica, where he played with his friends at an ancient archeological site, and frequently visited the beautiful Orthodox church in Berovo, where he was first fascinated by magnificent Orthodox icons and frescoes. The film follows Danevski through his university life in Ljubljana, Slovenia, where his professors were quick to recognize his emerging

talent, to marriage with his loving wife Ljubica and the birth of his two daughters. It also shows how the entire family's life was changed dramatically after a visit from two Macedonians from Canada, which resulted in moving to Toronto to adorn Saint Clement of Ohrid Cathedral in Toronto, and then Saint Dimitrija of Solun, in nearby Markham, Ontario.

Throughout the film, Bill Yancoff skillfully depicts the humanity of Georgi Danevski, from his warm relationship with his daughter Darinka, who works with him side by side, to a father's obvious pride when attending his daughter Sara's wedding ceremony in Macedonia. ✨

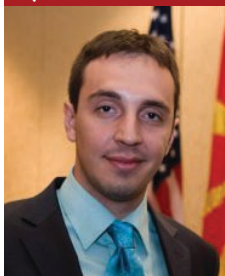


Mark Branov and Georgi Danevski



UMD Board Member Profile: Denis Manevski

By *Meto Koloski, UMD President*



Many people know the names of the UMD Board members but how many know anything about them? UMD Voice would like to profile the Board members in this issue and future issues. Our first profile is Denis Manevski, one of the founders of UMD, and Treasurer since February 2008.

Denis Manevski was born and raised in Kumanovo, Macedonia. Denis came to the United States to attend high school and stayed on to attend college at Texas Lutheran University where he

graduated as Cum Laude with a Bachelor of Arts in Business Administration specializing in International Business. He also did an extensive study semester program in International Trade and Business at American University. During college, Manevski spent a summer as a financial consultant to the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in Skopje, Macedonia.

Manevski has worked in various financial capacities with the American Red Cross and United Bank in Washington, D.C. Currently, he is a part of Corporate Strategy department at the Advisory Board Company, a best-practice research and consulting firm, where he manages new business revenue flow of more than

\$100 million U.S. per year.

Denis Manevski has been instrumental in ensuring UMD's financial health. He manages the UMD budget that has grown substantially in the last 5 years. Manevski also ensures that UMD stays up-to-date on all IRS laws and regulations affecting 501 (c)(3) charitable organizations. "It's an honor to be a co-founder and a treasurer of an organization that is becoming a vital part of the Macedonian community in the last 5 years," says Manevski. "I know that many Macedonians are proud to be part of UMD and I promise that we will continue to serve the Macedonian community and Macedonians around the world." ✨

Photos courtesy of: UMD, D. Klein

South Florida's "Meet the Macedonians" a great success

By *Dana Klein, Honorary Consul of the Republic of Macedonia in the United States*

For the first time, the Macedonian community united in Southeast Florida to celebrate the country's rich cultural heritage at the "Meet the Macedonians" program held earlier this month. The public event was hosted by the St. Dimitrija Macedonian Orthodox Church from Palm Beach Gardens, its Board, and the Macedonian Honorary Consul in Florida, Dana Klein.

The program took place at Hollywood's famous ArtsPark, located in the center of the downtown area. Celebrations included Macedonian dancing, Macedonian cuisine, a video presentation of the country, authentic costumes and crafts, and stories of the country by Steve Pliakes. Music was provided by the ever popular "Balkan Band," who played all the traditional favorites. A special art and iconography display provided by Dragan Pacinovski presented a vibrant visual history.

The event began with a small parade as Macedonians carried the national flag up and down Hollywood Boulevard. Youths and their parents heard historic stories of Alexander the Great during the city program called Fun Fest. As storefront owners cheered them on, curious passersby had to stop



and look. Inevitably, the onlookers followed the parade into the park, where the celebrations continued.

Ambassador Zoran Jolevski joined the festivities and spoke about good things to come and the potential for a strong future relationship with South Florida. A special letter was delivered from U.S. Congressman Alcee Hastings, and read half in Macedonian and half in English by staff assistant Dan Liftman,

who later joined the crowd in dancing, drink, food, and exciting conversation. City of Hollywood Commissioner Linda Sherwood presented a special gift. Off stage, members of the press, consultants to the U.N. and members of the international community greeted the Ambassador.

Some notable guests in attendance included Vice Consul of Monaco Tomas Abreu, Honorary Consul of Austria Werner Stemer, Honorary Consul of Denmark John Rosenthal, Former Honorary Consul of Finland Cami Green, State Representative Elaine Schwartz, representative Woody Fisher, City of Hollywood Commissioners Richard Blattner, Beam Furr, Patty Asseff, Broward County Farm Bureau President Fred Segal, U.N. Consultant and President of Natural Energy Consultants JC Nadeau, U.N. Economic and Social Council Representative Dr. Linda Bolitho, President of the American Israeli Chamber of Commerce Linda Chase, Research Analyst of Florida International University Moises Caballero, among others. ✨

A special thanks to Lena Gogovska, the Event Chair. For more information, please contact: 954-632-0059

U.S.-Macedonian Art Studio Collaboration Grand Opening in Miami

By Irena Gapkovska, NGO Art Studio Founder and President

The Grand Opening of NGO Art Studio Miami was held in on April 9th, a collaboration between the Bakehouse Art Complex of Miami, and NGO Art Studio in Skopje, Macedonia. Many dignitaries were in attendance, including Honorary Macedonian Consuls Dana Klein from Florida and Tommy Taneff from Ohio, His Excellency Gligor Tashkovich, Former Macedonian Minister of Foreign Investment, Robert Starnes, Regional Director of the Office of Foreign Missions - U.S. Department of State, Arlys Raymond, Executive Director of Bakehouse Art Complex, and Lauren

Wagner, Associate Director of Exhibitions, as well as other notables from the world of art and culture in Macedonia and the United States.

The artists of NGO Art Studio have come together through expression, choosing a variety of different techniques, leading towards one common message. Their artwork is a result of captured moods in different moments that mirror our reality and our existence. Their work reveals a pristine and intimate response to that subconscious reality, expressed spontaneously through visual impressions - a "realism" of some sort,

but also independent from this reality at the same time. The truth can only be processed through the simplicity and freedom of the "first impression," the beginning of an endless journey.

For NGO Art Studio, a presence in cosmopolitan Miami represents the next step for their member's artistic growth. Its 300 members are graduates of respected Fine Arts Academies in the Balkans who wish to further their artistic development in America. Artists whose work has recently been exhibited include Ivan Trajcev, Bisera Krckovska, Filip Velkovski, Nikola

Angjelkovski, Nikola Radulovic, and Jordan Kicovski. NGO Art Studio artists, individually or in groups of two or three, will visit the Bakehouse Art Complex for approximately six weeks at a time; young, talented, brave, and open-minded artists, eager to nourish the vibrant art scene in Miami with their experience. Interacting with the public and other artists is life changing experience for these Macedonian artists, who bring a fresh spirit that bridges the 21st century and the ancient world, preserving the signature of Macedonia's ancient Byzantine heritage.

NGO Art Studio Miami extends special thanks to the Cultural Information Center "KIC" Skopje; the United Macedonian Diaspora, the Macedonian Arts Council, Prima Center Berlin, the Faculty of Fine Arts at the University of St. Cyril & Methodius and Art Hostel Skopje. Additional support comes from the Ministries of Culture of Kosovo and Albania; the International Music and Art Foundation, the Miami Dade County Department of Cultural Affairs; the City of Miami; the Cultural Affairs Council; the Miami-Dade Mayor and Board of County Commissioners; Greater Miami, Florida, the Department of State Division of Cultural Affairs; the Florida Arts Council; and MiamiArtZine. The cumulative effect of this broad coalition of stakeholders will be to increase public engagement with cultural institutions and improve economic development, while also enriching cultural diversity. ✨



NGO Art Studio Founder Irena Gapkovska with Honorary Consuls Tommy Taneff and Dana Klein at the Grand Opening of NGO Art Studio Miami at Bakehouse Art Complex.

20th annual Macedonian Ethnic Festival – Buffalo, New York - July 9-11, 2010



Sts. Cyril & Methody Macedonian Church in Buffalo, New York invites you to its 20th annual Macedonian Festival, an international celebration of Macedonian Culture and Heritage. The Festival features traditional Music, Dance, open-pit prepared Food, and sweets to die for...

Traditional bands and dance groups entertain attendees throughout the event, which is held on the Church grounds. Over 3,000 Macedonians and friends of Macedonia from all over the US and Canada are expected to attend the 3 day Festival. We look forward to having you join us, "site ste Dobro Dojdeni"....



Friday, July 9: 4 PM- 1 AM | Saturday, July 10: 1 PM – 12 PM | Sunday, July 11: 1 PM – 11 PM
Sts. Cyril & Methody Macedonian American Church | 4785 Lake Avenue, Buffalo, NY 14213 | 716. 823.9292

Trposki Recognized For Long Career of Community Leadership

By Mark Branov

On March 21st, 2010, in front of 500 guests at the Sydney Recital Hall, Ivan Trposki was awarded the Senior Citizen of the Year Award for his achievements in Community Service and Volunteering. The ceremony was part of New South Wales Seniors Week, an event to honour the seniors of the state of NSW in Australia for the valuable contribution they have made in their communities. The Premier of NSW Kristina Keneally congratulated the recipients, and Trposki was formally presented with his award by the Minister for Ageing, Paul Lynch.

Ivan Trposki is a well-known figure in the Macedonian Community in Sydney. Having migrated to Australia from Volino, Ohrid region, in 1968, he has for more than 30 years been actively involved in many organisations where he passionately and tirelessly volunteers



Minister Paul Lynch
Presenting Award to Trposki

his own time to support the Macedonian Community and its causes.

He is one of the most recognised Macedonian writers in the Diaspora; author of 10 collections of poetry, 4 travel journals and memoirs. He is a committed member of the Macedonian Literary Association 'Grigor Prlicev', as well as the

Writers Association of Macedonia, the Journalists Association of Macedonia and the World Congress of Poets.

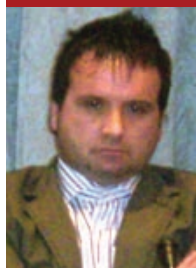
Along with his activism with the Literary Association 'Grigor Prlicev', Ivan has been a member of many committees including the Board of Education for Macedonian Language Schools of NSW, the Cultural Days festival and the Ohrid-Struga Association, where his efforts were recognised with an award from the Mayor of Ohrid in 2008.

Trposki has also received the 'Zlatno Sonce' (Golden Sun) award for achievements in literature and culture, the 'Iselenicka Gramota' a prestigious award for poetry book of the year, and the Australia Day award for Community Achievement in 2010, presented by the Mayor of Canterbury. ✨

Photos courtesy of: Trposki family, M. Jovanov

German Views on the Balkans After World War I

By Mitko Jovanov - Translated from Macedonian to English by Zlatko Nikolovski



After World War I (1914-1918), the Balkans remained a region able to throw Europe into war, due to the reconfirmed partition of Macedonia at the Paris peace conference, where new borders in the Balkans and Europe were defined. Berlin was particularly interested in the original VMRO (Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization) as it was one of the biggest forces fighting against the Versailles system in the region, and had managed to rope Bulgaria into WWI at the side of the central forces. VMRO remained a loyal ally of the Kaiser till the end of the war.

In the numerous analyses made by the foreign affairs office in Berlin during the 1920s regarding the Balkans, intensification of the "Macedonian problem" included the following: The activities of VMRO were initiated by the terror spread by Serb authorities in

northern Macedonia. For this Macedonian organization, the freedom of Macedonia as a whole was the sacred aim, because the Macedonians fought for this ideal together with Bulgaria in WWI, and then after continued the fight alone.

"The politicians in Berlin were convinced that no Bulgarian government could take efficient steps to neutralize VMRO, because the Macedonians had no respect for the Bulgarian interests."

The Macedonians are even ready to fight against Bulgaria to accomplish the aim – the liberation of all of Macedonia.

According to German authorities,

the rivalry between Serbia and Bulgaria is not the only problem in the Balkans following WWI, but it is the biggest one, which can destabilize the region by initiating another Balkan War, which would have incalculable effects on stability in Europe. German diplomats in the Balkan states often stated that any commonalities in ancestry and language between Balkan peoples were not the basis for unity, but rather were a cause of discord and an obstacle to cooperation and peaceful relations. The Germans did not blame the Macedonians, because it is improper and unjustifiable to build good relations amongst the Balkan states based on the enslavement of Macedonian people. In fact, it was Serbian treatment of the Macedonians that triggered hostilities for the Macedonian activities in the Vardar region, with VMRO using the Pirin region of Macedonia as a staging ground, which lies within the borders of Bulgaria to this day.

By their fight against Serbian authorities in Vardar Macedonia, VMRO

was winning favor in Bulgarian society, so no Bulgarian government was able to take efficient measures against the organization, despite of their promises to England and France that they could neutralize the Macedonian rebels. Thus, VMRO had a strong influence on the Bulgarian state's institutions, making it almost impossible to sue high-ranking members of the organization, especially since because Bulgarian judges' lives were threatened. Many Bulgarian judges would resign rather than conduct a lawsuit against the Macedonian activists of VMRO. One report prepared for the German Minister of Foreign Affairs in 1926 detailed how a Bulgarian minister was forced to resign for fear of his life.

The Serbs were misled when thinking that they might be able to annihilate the Macedonians unilaterally. German diplomats in political circles in Sofia insisted the solution for Macedonia should be sought within the League of Nations. This was seen as objective way to find a solution, but it depended on the good will of the government in Belgrade. According to the German diplomatic mission in Belgrade, the Serbs showed absolutely no interest in the internationalization of the "Macedonian Question". In one of the reports of the German diplomatic mission there, one can read: *"The Serbs consider it enough*

to suppress the Macedonian population for about 10 years in order to annihilate 'Macedonism'. To what extent the government in Belgrade is interested in a fair solution of the 'Macedonian problem' became quite clear after their refusal to accept foreign aid following the strong and devastating earthquake Vardar Macedonia was hit by. The motive behind the refusal of foreign aid is the fear of a possible uncovering of the terror the Serb regime is committing against the Macedonians".

Germany considered it impossible to maintain a stable peace between Serbia and Bulgaria, and therefore in the Balkans, without a realistic and sustainable solution for Macedonia. Whenever there was a chance to harmonize and improve the relations between Bulgaria and Serbia, VMRO would take military steps which would undermine it and inhibit the establishment of good relations between these countries, as this kind of peace was against Macedonian interests.

The politicians in Berlin were convinced that no Bulgarian government could take efficient steps to neutralize VMRO, because the Macedonians have no respect for the Bulgarian interests. The statement of one of the leaders of VMRO is an evidence for that: "After the failure of each attempt in Geneva to improve the rights of the Macedonians in Vardar Macedonia, we, with our activities, follow

only one idea: never let the 'Macedonian question' be neglected. No possible treaty between Bulgaria and Yugoslavia can stop us in our pursuit of this aim".

After the end of WWI, the "Macedonian problem" is the biggest challenge for Bulgarian foreign policy because it is closely connected to internal affairs and forces a strong internal political shift. A further excerpt from the 1926 German report continued: "... the Macedonians stand out against (the Bulgarians) ... An indicator for this situation is the fact that the head of the Bulgarian government is Macedonian (a reference to Andrey Lyapchev, Bulgarian Prime Minister, 1926-1931). Macedonians hold most of the diplomatic positions, and many important positions within the internal administration as well. Their political positions are so strong that they can easily oppose every possible solution to the 'Macedonian question' that is against their will".

Because of this internal situation of the Bulgarian state, Germany considered it impossible to establish friendly relations between Bulgaria and Serbia, as evidenced by the assassination of Prime Minister Aleksandar Stamboliski. According to officials in Berlin, any Balkan alliance that was against the interests of the Macedonians would evoke dangerous internal political conflicts in Bulgaria. ✨



Macedonian komitadjii during WWI era, in Lerin, Aegean Macedonia

Diaspora Leadership Feature: George Atanasoski

By Aleksandar Mitreski, UMD Vice President, Chairman of the Board

AM: Mr. Atanasoski, thank you for agreeing to do an exclusive interview for UMD Voice. Can you tell us about your background, and why you decided to move to the United States?

GA: I was born in 1952, in the center of Macedonia, in the village of Marul, near Prilep. In 1970, I left for America to pursue my career as an engineer working for New York University. After five years, together with my brother Josif, I founded the industrial complex Microflex Inc., located in Ormond Beach, Florida. But, I never left Macedonia completely. My heart is there and I spend a lot of time in Macedonia. My son also recently moved there so one might say that, thanks to modern transportation, I truly am a Macedonian and an American.

AM: Microflex, Inc. has become a global provider of high quality flexible metal products, serving the automotive, petrochemical, and power generation industries. Where do you see the future of Microflex?

GA: So far we have obtained all the highest certifications in the industry and have as clients major world corporations like: Ford, Chrysler, General Motors, General Electric, NASA, Siemens, ABB, Bechtel, Rolls Royce and many others. We expanded by building a special production facility for the automotive industry, and we strive to become a world leader in the field. We are constantly looking for new opportunities, including the European markets, which we can service through Macedonia.

AM: Whenever someone mentions the importance of the Diaspora investing in Macedonia, your name comes up. You have been termed as the largest Diaspora-based investor in Macedonia. What types of business are you involved in Macedonia?

GA: It is true that I'm the largest investor from the Diaspora. So far, I have opened several hotels, restaurants, a gas station, a large mill and bakery, a publishing house and a TV station. I constantly look for more opportunities although I have to say that the investment climate in Macedonia is not the best. There are a lot of problems facing potential investors, as many who



have tried could testify. My love for Macedonia, however, drives me to continue and I will never cease to try and help my country.

AM: Macedonia's economy has had its ups and downs. What potential do you see there? What industries should they focus on developing? What advice would you offer, to strengthen the Macedonian economy?

GA: Many successful countries in the world rely heavily on Diaspora foreign investments. It is my belief that this is exactly what Macedonia needs. Instead of looking for and wooing foreign investors, Macedonia should concentrate on attracting the Diaspora to invest in Macedonia. The Diaspora is emotionally involved with Macedonia, and they may see potential for investment where others can't. I am an example of this concept. Of course, the Macedonian state must create a healthy investment atmosphere by completing necessary reforms. So far, there are still too many horror stories of failed Diaspora investors, so we need to change that. Let's not forget that the Diaspora already contributes heavily to

the Macedonian economy, with close to \$2 billion annually in private money transfers. It is estimated that more than 160,000 Macedonian families live from these transfers. Macedonia needs to create the conditions for many in the Diaspora to return, as well. The Macedonian Alliance has specific plans for achieving this goal. Finally, the world needs healthy, good tasting foods and Macedonia has the best tasting tomatoes and peppers in the world. I believe that agriculture needs further improvement.

AM: For close to 20 years, you have owned and operated the international magazine Makedonsko Sonce. And two years ago, you founded a TV station in Macedonia called TV Sonce. What is mission behind these media outlets?

GA: Together with several other patriots, I founded Makedonsko Sonce to be a vehicle where the truth about Macedonia is written and spread. We gave space to countless Macedonian historians, writers and journalists to write about Macedonia, about our links with Ancient Macedonia, about the



activities of Macedonians around the world and especially those in our neighborhood. Gradually, Makedonsko Sonce became a center for debate on Macedonian matters. In time, I realized that television is a much more powerful medium that can reach a wider audience, so I decided to transform Makedonsko Sonce into TV Sonce. The goal remains the same: to spread the word about Macedonia to all corners of the world. At the same time, we are the leader in assisting Macedonian organizations in neighboring countries, and we invite others to do the same.

AM: Your name has become synonymous with protecting Macedonia's rightful, ancestral and constitutional name, and protection of Macedonian human rights in Southeast Europe.

What would you recommend for the future of these causes?

GA: Let me say immediately that I'm totally against changing our name. I'm also against negotiations about our name, because that sends a wrong message to the world. If you negotiate, then you must be ready to make a compromise. We simply cannot make a compromise about our name or our identity. We had them for thousands of years and our next generations surely need them to remain untarnished as well. The Macedonian Alliance has actively been involved in lobbying around the world to that effect.

AM: Many people know you as a presidential candidate in the Republic of Macedonia. Why have you become involved in Macedonian politics?

GA: I believe that it is time for a change in Macedonian politics. So far we have seen politicians coming to power in order to get rich. I don't need to do that since I'm already rich. As a sincere Macedonian patriot with vast business experience, I'm confident I can lead Macedonia toward prosperity and fulfillment of our national goals.

AM: In May 2005, you were honored with the Ellis Island Medal of Honor in New York. What does this mean for you?

GA: It was a great honor for me, of course, but also for all Macedonians. The medal's significance is great as it symbolizes the opportunities our people have had in this great country of America, and the great success we have achieved. All Macedonians greatly appreciate American support, but we also have to double and triple our efforts to lobby the government to continue this policy. ✨



15 Years Later, and Greece's Minorities Are Still Waiting

By Boban Jovanovski, UMD Director of U.S. Operations

On February 8, 1995, 22 member states of the Council of Europe signed the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. As with most international treaties, the framework was not perfect. It was the latest in a series of precedents aimed at avoiding the conflicts related to the denial of recognition and human rights to ethnic minorities among the members states of the Council of Europe, which includes all members of the European Union, as well as the former communist states of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union.

The Greek government signed this framework, despite the fact that sizable unrecognized minorities exist in Greece. These minorities include: ethnic Albanians, ethnic Turks, ethnic Bulgarians (and their Muslim Pomak cousins), ethnic Aromanians-Vlachs, and, of most concern to United Macedonian Diaspora, ethnic Macedonians.

Since the original 22 member states signed the framework, another 21 have acceded to the agreement, and 39 of the total have ratified it, binding those states to nurture and further the rights of their ethnic minorities. Sadly, Greece is a signatory but not a ratifying member of the framework.

Today, Greece is unique among European countries, when it denies the

most basic of human rights to any citizens who identify as something other than ethnic Greeks. If your heroes are Solon, Socrates, and Pericles, then perhaps Greece appears to be a democracy. But for millions of other Greek citizens, democracy is just a word. For Muslims living in Greece, proper ethnic monikers are verboten. Turks and Pomaks within

These are hardly the conditions one would expect in a member-state of NATO and the European Union such as Greece.

Why, in the 21st Century, does a modern democracy resort to methods of the 20th Century Interwar Era to ensure the "loyalty" of its citizens? Rather than hinder and hide its ethnic diversity, Greece's own national interest would be much better served embracing, encouraging, and recognizing that diversity. As countless countries have learned, diversity is something to be cherished and nurtured. Greece need only look to its partner states in the European Union to understand that ethnic minorities need not be feared. Rather, ethnic minorities often serve as a bridge to with foreign societies, furthering cooperation and, where necessary, aiding in conflict resolution.

Fifteen years is a short time in terms of international diplomacy, but it seems like a lifetime for those living under state oppression. Greece must swallow its pride, and allow its ethnic minorities to live in peace. These minorities wish to develop their identity within the framework of their home state (Greece), and to contribute constructively to Greek society. Anything less only further diminishes Greek pretensions that it is open, democratic society. ✨



Dialects of the Macedonian Language

Greece must resign themselves to being "Slavophone or Turkophone Muslims of Greek extraction." Indigenous ethnic Albanians, also known as Chams, have long faced expulsion from ancestral properties. Ethnic Macedonians are denied education in their own language, speak their language under fear of reprisal, and are not allowed to celebrate their ethnicity, like their minority counterparts in European regions such as Catalonia, Brittany, Cornwall, or even Chechnya.

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UMD President's Speaking Tour of Australia and New Zealand: A Major Success

By **Ordan Andreevski**, Director of Australian Operations

From February 3rd through March 3rd, 2010, UMD President Metodija A. Koloski visited Australia and New Zealand as part of UMD's 'United for Macedonia's Future' campaign. He traveled approximately 40,000 kilometers in one month; Adelaide, Auckland, Brisbane, Canberra, Gold Coast, Melbourne, Newcastle, Perth, Sydney, Wellington, Wollongong, and Queanbeyen. Months went into planning this tour, but by the end, Koloski and the UMD Australia team were pleased with the success and productiveness of the tour. The tour began with a visit in Adelaide just when the issue with the South Australian Premier Mike Rann began to boil. A video began circulating on YouTube of the South Australian Premier Mike Rann attacking the Macedonian community and claiming that Macedonians are stealing the "history" of Greeks. Countless calls and letters by outraged Macedonians lead to every mainstream newspaper in Australia reporting on the issue. Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs Julie Bishop urged the Rudd government to demand an apology by Mr. Rann in The Australian newspaper, MP Luke Simpkins gave a speech in Parliament about Mr. Rann's slanderous comments, and Macedonian Ambassador Pero Stojanovski in Canberra conveyed a formal complaint to the Australian Foreign Ministry – all this in just one week!

On February 6, Koloski spoke before an audience of close to 100

people at the Migrant Resource Center in Adelaide. Steve Kostoff and Vasko Tanevski of the Macedonian Community Council of Adelaide and South Australia hosted a dinner in honor of Koloski later that evening, the next day, all three were interviewed in The Adelaide Advertiser newspaper regarding the Rann matter. Following this, they met with South Australia's Attorney General Michael Atkinson to convey the Australian-Macedonian community's disappointment over Rann's comments. Later in the day, Koloski spoke before a group of young Macedonians about youth activism and promoting Macedonia's culture and heritage to the wider South Australian public.

The next stop was Canberra, where UMD spent three days educating federal members about issues concerning Macedonians. Meetings were held with a diverse range of influential policy makers from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Foreign Minister's Office; The Hon. Brendan O'Connor, Minister of Home Affairs; The Hon. Harry Jenkins, Speaker of the House of Representatives (who is the highest ranking Australian politician to ever visit Macedonia – December 2009); Senator Russell Trood; The Hon. Julie Bishop, Deputy Leader of the Opposition and Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs; The Hon. Philip Ruddock, former Minister for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs; The Hon. Bill

Shorten, Parliamentary Secretary for Bushfire Recovery; Darren Cheeseman MP, Member for Corangamite; Luke Simpkins MP, Member for Cowan; Sharon Bird MP, Member for Cunningham; and Graham Perrett MP representing Moreton, Queensland. All welcomed the visit as friends of Macedonia, interested in strengthening Australian-Macedonian relations.

On February 8th, a UMD delegation met with the Macedonian Ambassador Pero Stojanovski, Mayor Tim Overall and City Councilor Velice Trajanoski of Queanbeyen, NSW. Mayor Overall and Councilor Trajanoski expressed their gratitude for UMD's interest in developing a sister-city partnership between Queanbeyen and a Macedonian city, which Koloski also discussed again later, in a meeting at the Macedonian Cultural Centre.

On February 9th, Koloski gave a feature interview with the Canberra Times on UMD's role in building closer relations with Australia. In the evening, Koloski spoke at the Australian Institute of International Affairs on the topic of Integrating Macedonia in to Global Institutions and Markets before an audience of Australian policymakers, federal MPs, the diplomatic community and leaders of the Australian-Macedonian community. Macedonia's Ambassador to Canberra, Ambassador Pero Stojanovski, Bill Shorten MP, and Luke Simpkins



Left: UMD Delegation with Mayor of Queanbeyen
Right: Adelaide community listening to Meto Koloski's Speech





Young Australian-Macedonians with Speaker of Australia's Parliament MP Harry Jenkins

MP greeted the audience. Following the formal program, guests enjoyed a reception and wine-tasting courtesy of the Macedonian-Australian Peos family, of the award-winning Peos Estate Winery, in Manjimup, Western Australia.

The next morning, it was back in Parliament for the Advancing Australian-Macedonian Relations Forum, co-hosted by the Australian-Macedonian Parliamentary Friendship Group Co-Chairs Mr. Cheeseman, Mr. Simpkins and UMD. UMD presented an overview of the significant progress made in the last six months in the implementation of the Roadmap for Advancing Australia-Macedonia Relations. Mr. Jenkins and Mr. Ruddock delivered remarks, and Macedonia's Consul General to Melbourne, Mr. Savo Sibinoski greeted the forum. Representatives of several Australian-Macedonian organizations and communities were present, including the Australian-Macedonian Business Association; the Macedonian Community Welfare Association; the Macedonian Community Council of Adelaide and South Australia; the Macedonian Community Council of Victoria; and the Macedonian Honorary Consul to Perth, Mr. Zoran Coseski.

Professor Peter Hill from the Australian National University, author of *The Macedonians in Australia*, spoke on linguistic preservation. Professor Danny Ben-Moshe from Victoria University gave a progress report on the Australian Research Council Linkage Project on Comparative Diasporas, which involves the Macedonian diaspora in Australia and the Australian diaspora in Macedonia. Sponsored by the Macedonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

in partnership with UMD, the project will inform Australian and Macedonian public policy, and is expected to be completed in the coming weeks.

Next stop was Wollongong, Sydney, and Newcastle, and meetings with professionals, businesspeople, artists, writers, long-time community activists and activist newcomers – all looking to help Macedonia. Amazingly, in Wollongong, 10% of the population has some degree of Macedonian heritage, and the city has a sister-city relationship with Ohrid. On February 11, Koloski spoke to the community at St. Dimitrija Macedonian Orthodox Church. The next day, Koloski traveled to Sydney and was joined by prominent Australian-Macedonian attorney Chris Balalovski for meetings with Igor Aleksandrov of the Macedonian Orthodox Community of Sydney and Robert Despotovski, who gave Koloski and Balalovski a tour of the New South Wales Parliament. That evening, before an audience of close to 300 people, Koloski spoke at the center of the Sydney Macedonian community, the Ilinden Cultural Centre in Rockdale. Rockdale is like a Little Macedonia, with Macedonian shops all down the main street.

On Sunday, February 14, UMD hosted a Macedonian Students and Young Professionals Happy Hour at the Opera Bar under the Sydney Opera House, and a group of young Macedonians mingled on Valentine's Day. The next day, Koloski went back to Rockdale to meet with

the Mayor Bill Saravinovski and a group of Australian-Macedonian Rockdale Community leaders. During the evening, Victor Bivell of Pollitecon Publications organized a dinner with Sydney community leaders. Koloski traveled to Newcastle on February 16, where he spoke at the St. Mary Macedonian Orthodox Church before an audience of around 70 people.

In Melbourne, Koloski spoke before an audience of close to 300 at the famous Preston Makedonija Social Club on February 17. The following day, he held a public lecture at Victoria University. On February 19, he held a seminar at the University of Melbourne, hosted by Associate Professor Mile Terziovski. (The Greek Student Association protested the lecture and urged the University to prevent the event.) On February 20, UMD held a Gala Banquet at Sheldon Reception, hosted by Lidija and Ivan Neskovski, bringing together 200 people. Mr. Jenkins, Mr. Shorten, and former MP Bob Sercombe attended, as well as the Consul General Sibinovski. It was great to see Mr. Jenkins leading the Macedonia oro!

Next stop: New Zealand. The event was an open forum for the Macedonian community in Auckland, organized by Club MakedoNZ, Inc. An academic seminar was delivered at Victoria University in Wellington, hosted by the Antipodean-East European Study Group. Koloski along with UMD member Srecko Cvetanov from Christchurch, met with George Troupe, Director of Europe Division, New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

From New Zealand, Koloski flew to Perth, starting with meetings in the Western Australian Parliament, organized by Macedonia's Honorary Consul Coseski. The meetings were



joined by Dame Krcoski of MAC FM radio, which interviewed Koloski the night before, as well as Lidija Neskovski, and Vic and Chris Peos. The delegation met with Minister John Castrilli, MP Tony Krsticevic, MP John Hyde, MP Liz Behjat, and MP John Kobelke – all members of the parliamentary Macedonia Friendship Group.

That evening, the UMD delegation visited the Saint Nedela Macedonian Orthodox Church and Ilinden Cultural Center, where Koloski laid a wreath to fallen Macedonian soldiers who fought throughout Macedonian history. Meetings followed with leaders from the Macedonian Community Council of Western Australia, and a community forum, attended MP Alison Xamon. Western Australia is home to one of the oldest Macedonian communities, arriving on Australia's shores more than 100 years ago.

On February 26, Koloski flew to Sydney to attend the Australian premiere of the famous documentary "A Name is a Name," attended by 2,000 people! The next day, Koloski flew to Melbourne for a Community Planning Forum organized by the Macedonian Community Council of Victoria.

On February 28, Koloski flew to the Gold Coast where he met with the local Macedonian community and the Management Committee the Macedonian Church, lead by Mr. Donco Jazevski. In the



Meto Koloski with long-time Sydney Activists

afternoon, Koloski travelled to Brisbane, his last stop, and met with Macedonian community leaders including Dr. Trajce Cvetkovski and parishioners at St Mary Macedonian Orthodox Church.

There is an amazing potential in the Australian Macedonian communities, especially among the youth. Koloski was very pleased to meet so many enthusiastic, dedicated, energetic and passionate Macedonians. Future UMD projects include:

- Establishing regional representatives in

Canberra, Perth, Sydney, and Wellington;

- Offering scholarships to Australian- and New Zealand-Macedonian students;
- Providing grants to community organizations promoting Macedonia's cultural heritage
- Opening an office in Canberra with a full-time staff, dedicated towards building a professional, sustainable, united voice for the Australian-Macedonian community

Educating Australian and New Zealand policymakers on the importance of recognizing Macedonia by her constitutional name will be top priority. This will only be possible through a united effort with other Australian-Macedonian organizations.

The speaking tour of Australia and New Zealand enabled the United Macedonian Diaspora to reach out and build solid relations with important stakeholders in both countries, establishing links with the Australian Macedonian community and engaging with state and federal MPs, nurturing relations with the mainstream and ethnic media, and strengthening relations with leading universities, research centers, foreign policy institutes and donors. Koloski did a great job in communicating the role of the United Macedonian Diaspora, always focusing on the need for unity to make a sustainable social, economic and advocacy impact in Australia and New Zealand. ✨



Meto visiting a local Macedonian Orthodox church

UMD Australia: Luke Simpkins

By Zoran Coseski, Macedonian Honorary Consul to Western Australia

Luke Simpkins, the Member of the Australian Parliament and Deputy Chairman of the Australian-Macedonian Parliamentary Friendship group was recently bestowed the prestigious title of "Honorary Member of the Macedonian Community of Western Australia" for his extraordinary contribution to the advancement of bilateral relations with the Republic of Macedonia, and the improvement of the social well being of the Macedonian community in Western Australia.

The reception in honor of Simpkins' lifelong contribution to the strengthening of Australian Macedonian relations was held at the Macedonian Community Centre in North Perth. It was attended by various special guests, including the Ambassador of the

Republic of Macedonia to Australia, His Excellency Pero Stojanovski, Chairman of the Western Australian-Macedonian Parliamentary friendship group, Mr Tony Krsticevic, MP John Kobelke, Deputy Speaker of Parliament, Michael Sutherland, and representatives of various Macedonian community and business associations.

The ceremony was officially opened by the well-known Macedonian activist in Australia Chris Angelkov, who presented a brief overview of the support Simpkins has provided to the Macedonian Community in Australia over the years, including the formation of the historic first Australian-Macedonian Parliamentary friendship group, The President of the Macedonian community in Western Australia Sam

Novackov, also commended Simpkins for his tireless effort in the development of parliamentary relations with the Macedonian community.

Macedonian youth were also active during the evening, organizing the catering and official welcome for Simpkins with traditional Macedonian foods. ✨



Photos courtesy of: UMD

A Very Memorable Day in Vienna

By Zlatko Nikolovski, UMD Regional Representative in Austria

In January this year, Macedonia was represented at the annual tourism fair in Vienna, Austria, at the stand of an Austrian travel agency successfully offering tours through Macedonia. UMD representative, Zlatko Nikolovski, attended the press conference followed by a book presentation on Saturday (January 16th).

One of the highlights was "Fotobuch Mazedonien", by Mr. and Mrs. Sieckmeyer of neighboring Germany.

With text in Macedonian, German and English, it is indeed a unique and wonderful work. It represents a current image of Macedonia, and all it has to offer to international visitors.

"This, actually, is not a travelers book, nor a marketing folder intended to stimulate foreign investments ... it is nothing like that. My wife and I, we love Macedonia and travelled the country many times. We wanted to draw a picture of the country as-is, to create an image

book presenting all the sites worth visiting, old and new things, interesting people and places, and all this seen through the eyes of a foreigner, without prejudice, but with so much love for the country!", said Juergen Sieckmeyer in an interview for a local TV program.

U M D introduced the book

and the authors to representatives of Sv. Naum Ohridski Macedonian Orthodox Church, Dimce Lazovski and Boris Kiselovski. The Macedonian ambassador to Austria, Dr. Vesna Borozan, was very impressed and congratulated the authors for their work. She also gave some interviews for the press, pointing out what Macedonia has to offer to international travelers.

In the afternoon a very special moment occurred for Macedonia, when the country took center stage for a presentation before a large audience. The presenter was an Austrian of Greek heritage, who several times, freely, called the country by its one and only name "Macedonia"; a refreshing touch from an open-minded and respectful Greek, who was brave enough to say this before many of his fellow Greeks in the audience. A few of the typical Greek nationalists made their discontent obvious, but most of the Greek attendees listened peacefully. It was a great day for the Macedonians in Austria, and a great day for intercultural understanding between the Macedonian and Greek communities. ✨



It Is Past Time for Macedonia to Join NATO

By Sally McNamara

At the Bucharest Summit in April 2008, NATO affirmed that Macedonia would become a fully fledged member of the alliance once its bilateral name dispute with Greece is resolved. Nearly two years later, Greece continues to block Macedonia's NATO membership and has extended its obstructionism to Skopje's ambitions to accede to the European Union, despite widespread support in the region and from the broader Euro-Atlantic community.

The Adriatic-3 countries--Albania, Croatia, and Macedonia--have successfully completed their Membership Action Plans, and as a result, Albania and Croatia have taken their seats at the alliance's table. It is well past time for Macedonia to join them. The United States must work with Macedonia's allies within NATO to push their accession up the agenda and pressure Greece to abide by NATO's long-standing precedent that one country does not block another's membership on a purely bilateral matter.

Greek Obstructionism

Despite the fact that more than 120 countries have recognized Macedonia by its constitutional name, Greece asserts that the Republic of Macedonia gives the nation a territorial claim over Greece's northern region of the same name. Under Article 10 of the North Atlantic Treaty, all decisions on NATO enlargement must be made by unanimous consent, so Greek opposition alone is enough to block Macedonia's entry to NATO. However, bilateral disputes have traditionally been resolved outside of the alliance (such as Slovenia's border dispute with Croatia) so that one member alone does not block the consensus decisions of the others.

Greece undoubtedly has the upper hand, unashamedly wielding its veto power over Macedonia's accession despite a 1995 interim accord between the two nations agreeing not to do so. Instead of using its power to advance the stability of the transatlantic alliance, Greece is abusing its dominant position to advance its own narrow aims, which will invariably impact regional security.



Macedonia's patience is not inexhaustible, and it continues to bear the costs of courting NATO without enjoying the full benefits of membership. It will inevitably become costlier politically for Skopje to justify the time and expense of chasing NATO accession as well as its increased commitment to NATO missions such as Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Iraq. Further, Macedonia--having recently increased its troop commitment to 250--currently has more troops serving under NATO in Afghanistan than does Greece.

The Way Forward

The U.N.-mediated talks, supporting bilateral negotiations, should continue separately from the issue of Macedonia's accession to NATO. Therefore significant diplomatic pressure will have to be applied to Athens to overcome their opposition. Macedonia has a number of powerful advocates within the alliance to push the issue, including Austrian Minister for European and International Affairs Michael Spindelegger, Slovenian Prime Minister Borut Pahor, and NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen. Significantly, the Supreme Allied Commander Europe's political advisor, Ambassador Lawrence Butler, is

a former U.S. ambassador to Macedonia. And American leadership on this matter is essential.

Both U.S. Ambassador to NATO Ivo Daalder and President Obama have also been vocal supporters of NATO enlargement. NATO expansion has traditionally enjoyed strong bipartisan support in the United States, and the Obama Administration should rally congressional support for NATO's Open Door Policy, specifically pushing for the accession of Macedonia in time for the 2010 Lisbon Summit at the end of the year. Ambassador Daalder should also use the U.S.'s diplomatic channels in Europe, in concert with his colleagues in Athens, to increase international pressure on Greece to resolve this matter expeditiously.

A Fair Solution

NATO expansion has been a major success story for the alliance and has played a crucial role in stabilizing and reforming large parts of Europe. Greece was itself brought into the alliance in 1952 on the first wave of enlargement to advance Europe's strategic reach in southern Europe. Macedonia has chosen a Euro-Atlantic path for its future and met its obligations to qualify for future membership, liberalizing its economy and professionalizing its military. It has shown itself to be capable of providing--not just consuming--security and has constitutionally mandated that it has no territorial aspirations against its neighbors. Its membership prospects must finally be advanced before the window of opportunity closes.

NATO must send a clear message that it remains open for business and that accession is possible for all free, democratic nations in Europe. ✱

Sally McNamara is Senior Policy Analyst in European Affairs in the Margaret Thatcher Center for Freedom, a division of the Kathryn and Shelby Cullom Davis Institute for International Studies, at The Heritage Foundation. This article was first published on January 29, 2010, and is re-printed here with permission.

The Macedonians of Sweden: An Important Key to Macedonia's European Future

By Mark Branov translated to English by Vera Najdoska

To achieve its mission of advancing the Macedonian cause, UMD has always emphasized the importance of unity. This unity can only be achieved when we reach out to all Macedonian groups wherever they may live, building partnerships and sharing our work. It was with great pleasure that I could catch up with Mr. Ivica Celicovic, Secretary of the Macedonian Union in Sweden.

MB: Please tell us a little bit about the history of the Macedonian community in Sweden – since when does it exist, and in what years did it grow the most?

IC: Mass settlement of Macedonian immigrants in Sweden dates back to the sixties of the last century. The need for workers in the Swedish industry was expanding rapidly at the time. Large groups of immigrants from all the former republics of Yugoslavia were coming to Swedish cities for “temporary” work abroad. The Macedonian community in these areas continued to increase during the 1970s, although with reduced intensity. Macedonians largely settled in Gothenburg, Malmö and Trelleborg where they found employment in large industrial facilities, such as “Volvo” and “SKF”. In recent times, during the time of the wars in former Yugoslavia, there were Macedonian asylum seekers coming to Sweden but not in large numbers. However, in recent years, Swedish universities have a relatively large number of Macedonian graduate students, especially in Stockholm, where some of them are employed and have stayed for a longer period of time. With the coming of the visa liberation, which came into force on January 1st of this year, this trend will probably continue. However, official statistics on the number of Macedonian immigrants in Sweden do not exist, because the majority of immigrants have dual citizenship. Therefore, when they receive Swedish citizenship they are automatically recorded in the Swedish census as Swedish citizens. According to our estimates, the Macedonian community in Sweden consists of approximately 15,000 people of Macedonian origin, and some go back several generations.

MB: Where are the largest concentrations of Macedonians in the country today, and what parts in Macedonia do they come from?



IC: Today Macedonians are mainly concentrated in the western and southern parts of Sweden, where Macedonian societies and clubs are functioning with a large number of members. Also some smaller groups are settled in cities of the eastern regions of the country. Two of the oldest communities are “Goce Delchev” in Gothenburg and “Pelister” in Trelleborg, which this year marks its 40th anniversary. Last year, the same jubilee anniversary was celebrated by the oldest Macedonian Association in Scandinavia, - the cultural and sports society named “Macedonia” in Malmö. Otherwise, the Macedonian immigrants in these areas are organized within two Macedonian Orthodox churches: “Sts. Cyril and Methodius” in Gothenburg, and “St. Naum of Ohrid” in Malmö, where the headquarters of the European Metropolitan Pimen is situated. Members of the Macedonian community in Sweden as well as Denmark and Norway come from all parts of Macedonia, but the majority is from the Bitola and Prespa regions.

MB: What are your feelings about the Swedes and their culture? What are the similarities and differences with Macedonian culture?

IC: Swedish cultural tradition historically has been based on Protestant (Lutheran) Reformation and the Enlightenment that created the fundamentals for economic development. In the 1960s, Sweden became one of the richest countries in the world, and still today it has one of the highest living standards in the world. But in the collective memory of the Swedes, there are still traces left of the hardship of the 1850s when a great number of the population was unemployed. As a consequence of this poverty, alcoholism spread and there was massive emigration. It is believed that, between 1850 and 1910, more than one million Swedes left their homeland and emigrated “across the ocean” to the U.S. Macedonians were also among those people, since their history is interwoven with the great emigration waves from the 1850’s to 1910, but unfortunately, emigration from Macedonia is a process that has never stopped. In any case, Sweden has been an attractive country for immigrants since after the Second World War. Today, about 15 percent of the Swedish population is of foreign origin, therefore gradually changing the national character of Sweden and irreversibly

changing the presentation to the Swedes of their own cultural identity. The multicultural community leaves a notable mark in almost all spheres of social life in this Nordic country. Swedes are descendants of the belligerent Vikings, but the country has largely avoided involvement in major wars for some 200 years. The Macedonians, as well as other major immigrant groups, are loyal citizens to their "new country." They express respect to the Swedish people, because they are aware of the prosperousness of the society in which they live, where they found their new home. Sweden is not only rich with great natural resources, but it is also blessed by the high working morality, ethics and culture of the Swedish people. Macedonians are also aware of the opportunities, and social benefits available in Sweden. For instance, in Sweden special attention is given to the children. All children are guaranteed a place in a public kindergarten. School books are free and for every child there is a child benefit. All Swedish citizens are entitled to generous health insurance and unemployment insurance, as well.

MB: As an ethnic minority, how welcomed and respected do you feel in Swedish society?

IC: Traditionally, Sweden has been known worldwide for accepting many immigrants from various refugee crisis areas. By some estimates, in large urban centers over a hundred different languages are spoken, especially in peripheral urban districts of Stockholm, Gothenburg and Malmö. Sweden has achieved major successes in terms of integration of foreigners into society, but the fact is, in that respect, much remains to be done. Many immigrants feel discriminated against, especially in the labor force. Discrimination is often debated in the media and various studies have been made about that. One of the hundreds of languages spoken in Sweden is Macedonian. We have our own media and also our native Macedonian language is being taught, even though the teaching of our own language is self organized. The number of Macedonians living in some areas is on a smaller scale compared to previous decades, and obviously there is a noticeable trend of stagnation. The process of assimilation among immigrants and their descendants is something that happens in a natural way, and this is no exception to the Macedonian Diaspora. In any case, we feel in the broadest



sense as equal citizens of the Swedish society, although there is always room for improvement. We are pleased to improve our own status. We are pleased with the way the Swedish government distributes grants for activities and immigrant organizations.

MB: How do you see the political ties between Sweden and Macedonia?

IC: The Macedonians of Sweden have positive feelings for high Swedish politicians in relation to the problems facing the Republic of Macedonia internationally. Recently, the head of the Swedish diplomacy Carl Bildt, during the Swedish EU presidency, put great energy and effort into speeding up the integration of the Western Balkans, including of course, Macedonia to the EU. We had the opportunity to talk with the former Swedish Minister for European Affairs Cecilia Malmström, who is now the Swedish commissioner on visa liberalization for Macedonian citizens. She had strong and clear impressions that the Swedish leadership is making efforts to stabilize the situation in the Balkans, and speeding up economic development throughout the region. We should also mention that the Swedish media does not have any problem concerning our country's constitutional name. Sweden and Macedonia in general do not have unresolved issues that would burden bilateral contacts. Swedish support is very important for Macedonia, given that Sweden is one of the countries that clearly, most intensely support the process to further EU enlargement with new members. Through its agencies and NGOs, Sweden implements projects to modernize Macedonia and Macedonian society- improving the situation regarding human rights, improving the status of the women in the country, supporting the new initiatives in agriculture, livestock, and the development of infrastructure facilities. Unfortunately, the trade between these two countries is still very small, almost negligible. Several years ago, Sweden opened its first embassy in Skopje, whose function in the coming years will likely be an incentive for boosting Swedish-Macedonian cooperation in all spheres of mutual interest.



MB: Can you tell us about your organization- The Macedonian Union? What are your objectives, activities, and plans?



In the early nineties, unpleasant things happened in the Balkans that had negative consequences on the Diaspora. People started thinking differently. There was some intolerance and fear among certain people, and gradually it began to adversely affect our organization. People that would rarely attend our clubs began to separate and did not allow young individuals to socialize with other certain people. It is in our best interest, of course, not to compare the past with the present, but the past has left traces that cannot be easily forgotten or erased. Right now, more young people look outside our communities and clubs for entertainment, so there should be some reorientation to address this generational clash. What was once of interest to older Macedonian immigrants is no longer the case when it comes to the young people of Macedonian origin. The younger Macedonians are more integrated

Photos courtesy of: Makedonski Sojuz-Sweden

IC: The Macedonian Union is an organization with a coordinating role at the federal level that unites and articulates the interests of Macedonian societies and clubs here in Sweden. At the moment, we have 12 societies within our association, with our headquarters and offices located in Gothenburg. Two years ago, the Macedonian Union marked its 30th anniversary. At the end of March, we celebrated the 20th anniversary of "Days of Macedonian Poetry in Sweden", one of the most significant of our regular activities, which, by the way, is the only manifestation of its kind within the Macedonian Diaspora in Western Europe. A few years ago, we put together a large cultural event "Days of Macedonian Culture in Sweden", which took place in several different cities with the participation of Macedonian top artists and ensembles. The objectives of our association are mostly aimed at fostering and promoting the Macedonian language and culture on the territory of Sweden. With that, we want to contribute to various initiatives and projects aimed at developing cooperation between Sweden and Macedonia. We have our own Humanitarian Board, which is very active in supplying humanitarian assistance and hospital medical equipment for hospitals in Macedonia. Recently, a Business Consulting Council was formed whose main function is to support cooperation of business entities in both countries.

in Scandinavian culture than the elder ones. Our top priority is the inclusion of the youth in the association's work and activities, so we can give them a greater confidence and sense of independence in the community, to fully undertake one day the planning and the operations of the association. To reverse the negative trend, we realized that the first thing we should improve is the confidence within our frames, starting with the presidency, and hope for positive results. We have also formed a project group that is working on strengthening the cooperation between the association and other societies, along with other Macedonian communities in Europe and Macedonia. Another one of our goals is to get women more involved in activities of our group. On a positive note, the Macedonian government has been putting forth an extra effort recently to develop more active cooperation with the immigrant organizations. ❄️

MB: How can the Macedonians in Sweden cooperate with you, to support the interests of Macedonia and the Macedonians?

IC: Our organization can exist and function only if it represents the interests of the Macedonian community in these areas. As long as our members see us as such an organization we will give back.



The Politics of “Antiquisation”

By Goran Stojanov - Translated From Macedonian to English by Goran Dimovski



The word “antiquisation” (антиквизација) entered the Macedonian language over the past few years as a pejorative term. Current opposition parties have used it to criticize the ruling political party, in reference to the ruling party’s exuberant celebration of Macedonia’s ancient heritage. And yet, an examination of the facts shows this virtue has been attributed to them undeservedly. The first flag of the independent Republic of Macedonia was the sun with sixteen rays, a royal symbol of the ancient Macedonian dynasty. It was passed by a parliament that was then ruled by that political option that now criticizes! Under severe pressure, the flag was changed to the present-day stylized version of the military flag of the Ancient Macedonian Army.

However, the same sun, with the bottom half covered, had been present on the coat of arms of the Socialist Republic of Macedonia since 1945. To this day, fringe elements in Greece desperately try to argue that Josip Broz placed it there, among other magic tricks attributed to Yugoslavia’s Marshall by our southern neighbors...

So the question is: who first remembered that we - the modern inhabitants of Macedonia – did not fall from the sky? Who was the first to remember that, like all modern European nations, we are the product of a long and complex ethno-genesis. This process involved many peoples that inhabited or passed through Macedonia, the strategic land bridge between Europe and Asia Minor. And among these peoples, the most remarkable and the most controversial have been the ancient Macedonians of Philip and Alexander.

In the eighteenth century, the French Revolution brought to light a radical idea: the bearers of state sovereignty were not the kings or aristocracy, but the people, the citizens of that country. This was the birth of the modern idea of nationhood, and it spread across Europe like wildfire. Strong new national movements emerged that shook the great empires of the time to their foundations.

One such shock occurred in the year 1848, with the declaration of Hungarian independence from Austria. In response, the Austrians mobilized non-Hungarian citizens in Hungarian territory, such as the Croats, Serbs, Slovaks, Romanians and others, which together comprised nearly half the residents. This led to the Hungarian National Revolution, which returned the land back to the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

So the question is: who first remembered that we - the modern inhabitants of Macedonia – did not fall from the sky?

This event left a strong impression on all national movements in Europe. It became clear that nations become stable only when ethnicities are recognized. All national movements began to dig through their history, defining their national identity and finding symbols useful to unite the majority of citizens. The Balkan states were no exception. For instance, under the influence of Russia, the Serbs based their identity on Czar Dushan’s Kingdom, in hopes that they might make it all the way back to Solun.

Greeks, on the other hand, had a real identity crisis, which was, and still is, as fragile as ever. The first problem for Greece was language. After liberation in 1832, the leading military powers in the new Greek state were “Albanofonite Klepti”. Given that the southern Tosk dialect of Albanian language (called “arvanitika” in Greek) was widely used in Athens and the Peloponnese, Albanian was the logical choice to make the standardized language of the country. However, it was strongly resisted by representatives from other parts of the country, who preferred to speak in Turkish. Finally, King Otto, the Bavarian appointed by far-off European powers to lead the newly created state, solved the dilemma. With the help of his friend Drojzen, who was a classical historian by vocation, they decided that to unite the ethnic populations in Greece, they would

have to dig deeper into the past, until the time of the Athenian League and Hellenic civilization. Such a definition was in sharp contrast with nationalist vision known as the “Great Idea” (Μεγάλη Ιδέα), according to which all Orthodox Christians in the Balkans were to become part of a new Orthodox nation aligned with Rome. But it was Otto that had the power; he managed to impose his idea of modern “Hellas”, even to impose a language that was synthetically created out of the classical Hellenic language, and had very little in common with the Greek language spoken at the time.

Where was Ancient Macedonia? In the book “Nationalism, Globalization and Orthodoxy,” Victor Rudmetof states that, in the period from 1794 to 1841, at least 14 leading Greek intellectuals (including prominent figures such as Panagiotis Kordikas, Adamantios Korias, Alexandros Socos, Georgios Kozakis Tripaldos and Jakovos Rizos Nerulos) considered a public information campaign to clarify that the ancient Macedonians were in fact not part of the Hellenic world, but that they were actually the conquerors of the ancient Hellenic city-states, the first of a series of conquerors who dominated the Hellenes. Philip’s successful invasion of Greece set the stage for a series of foreign occupations that lasted for more than two thousand years. Paparigopulos, one of the first modern Greek historians, in his “General History” (1849) wrote: “... the Macedonian nation has grown old, within the general world history, on a completely different mission from that of the Hellenic nation.” So, even according to Greek sources, the Macedonian nation and the Hellenic have always been two separate and significantly different nations.

So, who first began considering themselves as descendants of the Ancient Macedonians? When did the first Macedonian national movement take place? An article from the Bulgarian Petko Rachev Slaveikov, published on January 18, 1871 for a newspaper printed in Constantinople, gives us abundant information. The article called “The Macedonian Question” was very significant because Slaveikov was actually a fierce opponent of the Macedonian national movement, which is obvious from the article. Yet, he could not

hide the fact that the intelligentsia in Macedonia (teachers, traders and artisans), under the cover of fighting for separate languages in primary schools, was in fact fighting for the recognition of an entirely separate Macedonian nation. Slaveikov mourns that Bulgarian authorities had been trying to keep it quiet for ten years, to hide it under the rug, but that it was already a reality, and the press could not ignore it any longer. In the article, Slaveikov openly accuses the Macedonians of considering themselves descendants of the ancient Macedonians and gives evidence of it. Then he blames them for insisting that their Macedonian language be considered distinct from Bulgarian, and for calling the Bulgarians "Tatars."

Four years later, in 1875, Georgi Pulevski published the "Trijazichnikot": a dictionary of Macedonian, Albanian and Turkish language, written in Cyrillic letters, very similar to the modern Macedonian alphabet. In it, he defines the notion of nationality with the following words: "People are called a nation when they are the same kind, speak the same language and live and socialize with one another... So we Macedonians are a nation and our place is Macedonia." Not only that we are Macedonians, but further on, Pulevski says that Philip and Alexander are "our Macedonian kings and that our mothers and grandmothers gave them birth."

Three years later, in the autumn of 1878, the Kresensko Uprising took place, dominating nearly half the territory of ethnic Macedonia. A series of towns and villages were liberated for a period of nine months before the Turks managed to suppress it again. During that time, a committee of 211 members drafted a constitution of the first Macedonian state, and sought diplomatic relations with neighboring countries Serbia, Bulgaria and Greece. In the preamble of the constitution: "We raised the uprising as advocates of freedom with our blood, that we shed over Macedonian fields and forests, and to serve freedom, as the Macedonian army of Alexander of Macedon, with our motto Liberty or Death" (СЛОБОДА ИЛИ СМРТ)

In 1880, in Gremen Teke, Aegean Macedonia, thirty-two representatives called the People's Assembly of Macedonia, formed an interim government. On March 23, 1881 in Kyustendil, they



issued a manifesto that begins like this: "Macedonians, our dear homeland of Macedonia was once one of the most famous of countries. Macedonians have set the foundations of the art of war, with their victorious phalanx and the illumination of Aristotle, that civilized humanity, and Asia ... Our dear country is calling you: my faithful children, you the successors of Aristotle and Alexander the Great, you in whose veins flows Macedonian blood, do not leave me to die, help me! Great shame would be for you, real Macedonians, if you remain silent witnesses to my funeral ... Get rid of the killers in this country who are waving the flag of destruction, and plotting deadly ideas of separating you, my children. The people, so united under the flag of Macedonia, as a single nation, put this glorious banner high and prepare as one to write on it: Long live the Macedonian people, Long live Macedonia!"

"We raised the uprising as advocates of freedom with our blood, that we shed over Macedonian fields and forests, and to serve freedom, as the Macedonian army of Alexander of Macedon, with our motto Liberty or Death"

In the next ten years, a series of letters and manifestos with similar content followed from different parts of Macedonian society, sent to capitals in Europe, diplomatic missions, and spread throughout the land. In 1892, a group of Macedonian students in Sofia formed

the Young Macedonian Literary Company and began to publish a newspaper called "Loza". On the third page of the first issue they wrote that Macedonia is their true homeland, and on the fifth page they wrote of Philip and Alexander of Macedon, and the glory of ancient Macedonia.

All these examples are from the earliest period of the Macedonian national revival, before the creation of the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (BMPO). All clearly show that the first Macedonian renaissance is seen as the resurrection of ancient Macedonia, and these leaders saw themselves as heirs of the ancient Macedonians.

Of course, none of this suited the official Bulgarian, Serbian and Greek propaganda. To Bulgaria, it was acceptable to go back in history only to the 7th century, and the creation of the Bulgarian Empire. For the Serbians, it was desirable to harken back to the Kingdom of Czar Dusan, with its capital, Skopje. Greek propaganda, on the other hand, carried out a radical revision of their attitude toward the ancient and modern Macedonians. In 1881, Greece was awarded Thessaly, and for the first time they approached 50 miles of the southern Macedonian border. That led them to go from depicting the ancient Macedonians as the enemy and destroyer of Athenian democracy, to promoting them first as "cousins" and then "brothers." By the beginning of the 20th Century, they even tried to use linguistic arguments to submit that the language spoken in Macedonia is essentially Greek, even if it appeared to be Slavic. Eventually, even Yugoslavia, which was seen as a liberator for recognizing the Macedonian nation, also had an obvious vested interest in representing Macedonians as only a south Slavic people (Yugoslavia = Land of the South Slavs).

Such four-way propaganda against our own interpretation of history apparently brought results. In the last 70 years, it was a punishable offence to speak openly of Macedon and the ancient Macedonians as our ancestors. But the idea is not new at all; indeed, it was a founding principle of those who formed the Macedonian national movement. Despite being choked from foreign propaganda on all sides, it is now slowly re-emerging to light again. ✨

Macedonia's Name in the Spotlight and Big Screen

By Jason Miko, Producer, *A Name Is A Name*

A Name Is A Name – a film about a nation held hostage because of its name – was recently screened in several world cities, having now been viewed by over 4,000 people around the world.

The film is a project of the With Macedonia Foundation, a foundation created to promote Macedonia by encouraging cultural artists around the world any ethnic background to make a stand with Macedonia. The director is Sigurjon Einarsson, an Icelander and filmmaker by profession who lives and works in Norway. I am the producer, an American from Arizona. The narrator of the film is the talented poet and author Sir Andrew Motion from the UK who until May of 2009 was the Poet Laureate of the United Kingdom. Morten Harket – lead singer of Norwegian rockers a-ha – contributes the title of the film and main song – A Name is a Name – from his second solo album, Letter from Egypt. Other international artists contribute tracks to the film as well: Icelandic bands Sigur-Ros, mum and Earth Affair; California band Monte Negro; the legendary Graham Nash of Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young; Macedonia's own Kiril and the late, great Tose Proeski.

The 48-minute road film is the true story of the director, who came to Macedonia to learn about the country and its people. The director takes his viewers on a road of discovery throughout every corner of the country, where he meets everyday people who share their true feelings about their country's name and their ethnic identity. With each person he meets and each place he visits, he learns more about the issue. Through his eyes, the viewers learn what it means to be Macedonian.

Since its debut in Toronto, Canada, last October at the Macedonian Film Festival, the film has traveled to several cities in the U.S. and Australia, for public viewings followed by question and answer sessions. On February 1, the United Macedonian Diaspora organized a screening in Washington, D.C. at the Jewish Community Center, emceed by UMD President Meto Koloski. The audience included members of the State Department, Diaspora leaders, staff from the U.S. Congress and several diplomatic embassies, and Macedonian Ambassador to the U.S., His Excellency Zoran Jolevski.

From Washington, D.C., the film moved to Tempe, Arizona on February 4 and Arizona State University, where it was the highlight of the annual Mary Concoff Endowed Lecture, an annual event that focuses on events in Macedonia and Southeastern Europe.

From the United States, the film crossed the Pacific to Australia, where it was wildly and enthusiastically received. The State Theatre in downtown Sydney was the venue for the February 26 Australian premiere, where we had our largest turnout to date – almost 2000 in attendance. On March 3, in Adelaide, the film was screened twice at a local movie theatre, and on March 4, the film was screened in Melbourne at the Forum II Theater, a larger venue to accommodate Melbourne's large Macedonian community. After we sold out the first screening, we added a second screening. I would like to offer special thanks to With Macedonia Foundation Honorary Board Member Zoran Lozevski for organizing the Australia screenings.

Finally, the film was screened in

Syracuse, New York, on March 20, at the St. George Macedonian Orthodox Church. A significant part of the Macedonian community in Syracuse turned out.

The film will continue to be shown around the world before making its way to Macedonia, and the requests keep coming from far and wide – Los Angeles, Chicago, Detroit, New York, Ft. Lauderdale, Toronto, London, Berlin, Brussels – and more Australian cities, including repeats. We are working to accommodate as many of these as possible, so hopefully, the film will be coming to a city near you. The best way to stay informed is to register on our website (www.anameisaname.com) or join our Facebook group.

Wherever we have been with the film, Macedonians and non-Macedonians have shared their excitement about the film, arguing passionately against any changes to Macedonia's name and identity, simply to appease the nationalism of its southern neighbor. Others have expressed their pride, often as only a young person can do. For example, in Adelaide, a 14-year-old girl spoke up at the first showing, saying: "I want to learn Macedonian now." After the second showing, a young boy of 12 stood up and said: "I am so proud to be a Macedonian." To me, that says it all!

In between future screenings and its release on DVD planned for later this summer, we need your continued support and promotion. Reach out to your friends and tell them about the film, but also about the issue of preserving Macedonia's name and identity, as best expressed by the film's famous baba from Trpejca who said: "I feel Macedonian, my dear, a true Macedonian. The Macedonian name will not be changed! No, it won't!" ✨



UMD Inaugurates Los Angeles Operations; Awards World-Acclaimed Pianist Trpčeski

By Sashko Kurciski

On April 18, 2010, the United Macedonian Diaspora inaugurated its Los Angeles operations with a special reception in honor of pianist Simon Trpčeski, at the Omni Hotel in the heart of downtown Los Angeles. With over 250 distinguished guests in attendance, the evening was a great success, thanks to the generous support of our sponsor and benefactor Niagara Bottling, LLC, and local UMD members and friends in California. Guests enjoyed an evening of networking, and an opportunity to admire a beautiful exhibition of fine art by California-based Macedonian-American artists Daniel Peci and Blagojce Stojanovski, as well as Skopje-based artist Rumen Kamilov.

Emceed by journalist Sonja Magdevski, the evening featured remarks by His Excellency, the Consul General of the Republic of Macedonia, Jovica Palashevski, who flew in from Chicago, newly appointed UMD Los Angeles Regional Representative, Dimitar Nasev, UMD Co-Founder Steve Gligorov, St. Mary Macedonian Orthodox Church Board President Cane Carovski, as well as UMD President Metodija A. Koloski, who flew in from Washington, D.C.

Koloski honored Trpčeski with the UMD Outstanding Achievement Award, in recognition of Trpčeski's brilliant achievements in the arts and



phenomenal musical talent. "I have had the chance to attend several of Simon's performances, but Saturday's performance at the Walt Disney Concert Hall, alongside the Los Angeles Philharmonic, was truly exceptional, especially his piano version of the Macedonian folk song 'Na Struga Dujkan Da Imam,'" stated Koloski, "Simon is Macedonia's most prominent cultural Ambassador – a national treasure. We are so proud of his accomplishments, and it is a great pleasure to recognize them here tonight, in Los Angeles, together with the Macedonian-American community of California." According to classical music critic Melinda Bargreen of the Seattle Times, Trpčeski is "the best thing to come out of Macedonia since Alexander the Great."

Trpčeski also received a Certificate of Special Congressional Recognition, for his contributions to

the arts and global culture, from Congresswoman Linda T. Sanchez, representing California's 39th District. In addition, he received a California Legislature Assembly Certificate of Recognition, in recognition for his outstanding commitment to promoting Macedonia's cultural image, from Assemblymember Ted W. Lieu, representing California's 53rd District.

Nasev commented: "The inauguration of UMD Los Angeles Operations signifies UMD's dedication to reach out to local Macedonian-American communities throughout the United States. We are honored that UMD has bestowed upon us the important task of uniting the Macedonian-Americans of California." Assemblymember Lieu also awarded a California Legislature Assembly Certificate of Recognition to UMD, to celebrate the organization's expansion in Los Angeles.

UMD Los Angeles Operations will be responsible for coordinating all of UMD's activities throughout California, along with advocacy on issues of general concern to all Macedonian-Americans; promoting and preserving Macedonian identity, language and culture; undertaking charitable activities at home and abroad; and supporting the educational and social advancement of Macedonians everywhere. ✨

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UN, CoE Repeatedly Denounce Greek Human Rights Abuses

By Donche Boshkovski, LLM



During the last decade, the sensitivity surrounding the issue of national minorities in Greece has become a “chronic problem” that this country is not ready to face yet. It has always been a difficult issue, both for the minorities and the Greek Government. In recent years, Athens has been facing strong criticism for the treatment of its minority populations. However, the Greek state took the hard line position that any recommendation by treaty bodies and human rights monitors cannot determine the “existence” of minority group in Greece, nor impose on Greece an obligation to officially recognize any group as a minority.

In its last country report presented to the UN Committee on Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD), the Greek government, recalling the Explanatory Report to the Framework Convention for Protection of National Minorities (FCNM), rejected the claims of “a small number of persons”, thus relieving themselves of their obligation to guarantee specific minority rights. This position was taken by the government specifically to defend its arguments for the “non-existence” of the Macedonian minority, stressing that the non-recognition of a group as a minority does not deprive such group from the enjoyment of all civil, cultural, political and other rights.

As a counterargument to this position, one has to take into consideration the UN Human Rights Committee’s (HRC) interpretation of article 27 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), where it is undoubtedly pointed out that the protection of minorities’ rights cannot be limited to invoking general equality before the law and non-discrimination. All existing minorities need to be acknowledged by states, and states are urged to allow the development of the identity of all minorities. This position was acknowledged in practice by the HRC when, reviewing the fifth periodic report submitted by Greece, it was specifically

interested in whether any measures had been taken by the state to protect the rights of ethnic groups. In its Concluding Observations, the HRC expressed serious concerns about the unwillingness of the government to allow associations to use names that include the term “Macedonian”, and noted that individuals belonging to this minority had a right under the Covenant to the enjoyment of their own culture, traditions, and the use of their own language. Unsatisfied with the explanations provided by the state, HRC called upon Greece to review its practice in light of article 27 of the Covenant.

The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) was especially critical in all its reports on the minority situation in Greece. In its fourth and latest report, the Committee expressed concern that many of the recommendations contained in ECRI’s previous reports have not been fully implemented, among which is the recommendation that the Greek authorities ratify the FCNM as soon as possible. Also, the government seemed to be more prepared to recognize other minority groups, such as Pomaks and Roma, rather than Macedonians and Turks, who still encounter significant difficulties when practicing their right to self-identification. In the spirit of the FCNM, ECRI strongly recommended that the Greek authorities open a dialogue with these minority representatives, in order to find a solution to the tensions, so that co-existence may be achieved in everyone’s interests. However, the attempts by the Macedonian minority representatives to establish continuous dialogue with the Greek government have not been successful so far.

The state of minorities in Greece provoked both the Council of Europe’s High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Independent Expert on Minority Issues (IEMI) to undertake country visits in 2008. The IEMI recognized the fact that Greek citizens enjoy all civil, political and cultural rights enshrined with international instruments, but reminded the government that full protection of those rights is not a substitute for

minority protection. She called upon the authorities to step back from the dispute over the existence of national minorities and focus on protecting the right to self-identification. The CoE High Commissioner reminded Greece that freedom of ethnic self-identification is a major democratic principle, and should be considered as enriching Greek society. The Commissioner urged the Greek authorities to show greater openness, to diversity in their society and to take measures that would allow members of minority groups to effectively express their identities.

In August 2009, CERD was unsatisfied with the government’s explanation of why only the Muslim minority, as determined with the Lausanne Treaty, is an officially recognized minority group. CERD urged the state to assess the occurrence of discrimination based on national or ethnic origin, and to take targeted measures to eliminate it. The Committee also expressed concerns about the obstruction encountered by the Macedonian ethnic community in exercising freedom of association. It recommended the government overcome such obstacles, as Greece cannot pretend to be an exception from the historic Balkan phenomenon of ethnic mass movements. Thus, it can no longer ignore the existence of minorities in its territory. The denial of ethnic minorities in Greece does not correspond to reality. On the contrary, it is a tool that the Greek authorities have successfully used over the last century for their own nation-building purposes. The continuous disrespect of the findings of various human rights bodies must stop. Their recommendations must be approached with utmost responsibility by the Greek government, which must adopt measures to ensure the effective enjoyment of the minority standards by persons belonging to such communities, including the unrecognized Macedonian minority in Greece. ✨

Donche Boshkovski is an LLM in International Human Rights Law, University of Essex, United Kingdom



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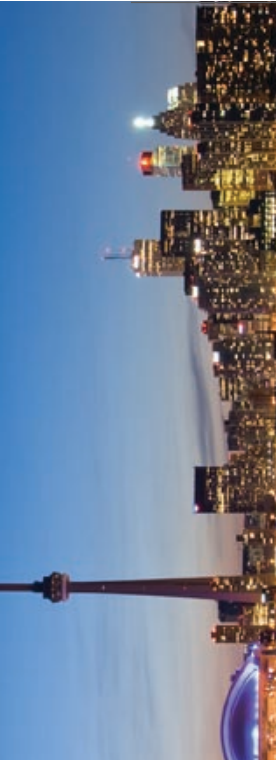
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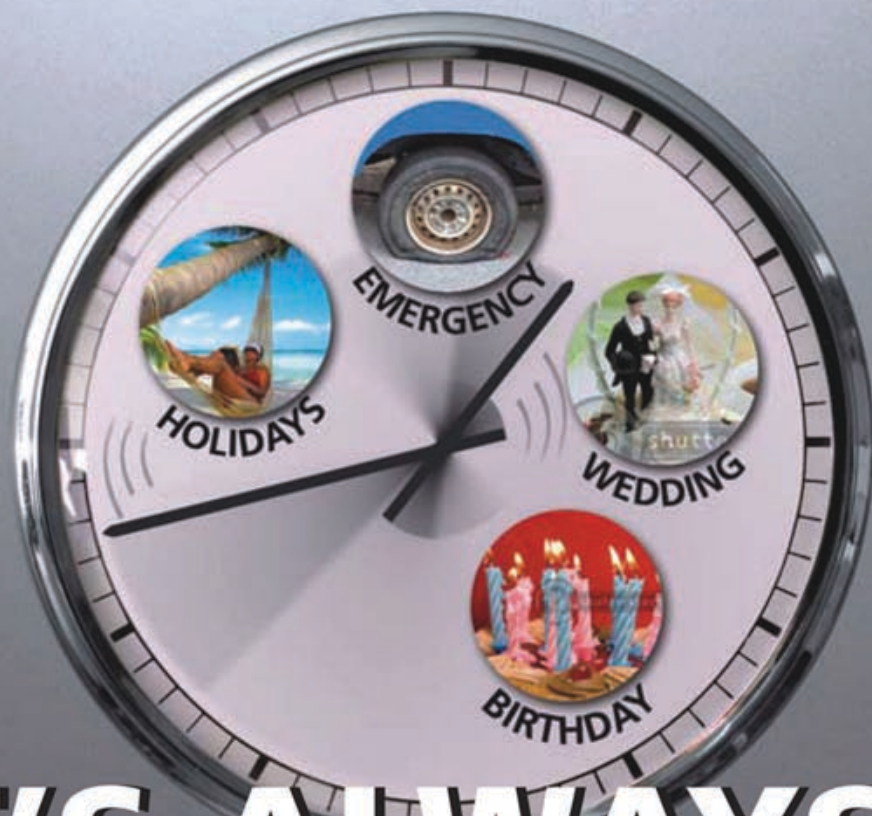
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