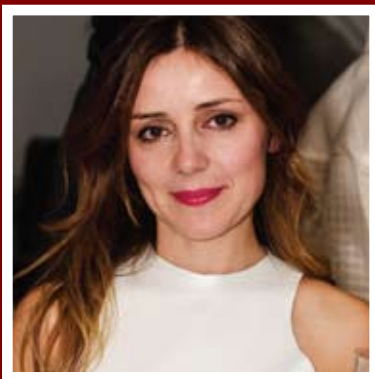


UMD Voice



**GENOVEVA CHRISTOFF: MAKING A
STATEMENT IN THE WORLD OF FASHION**



**ANDREW D. PEYKOFF, SR. APPOINTED
MACEDONIAN HONORARY CONSUL
GENERAL IN CALIFORNIA**



**MACEDONIAN DIASPORA HELPS
ORPHANS DURING HOLIDAY SEASON**



**CHRIS PAVLOVSKI:
TORONTO ENTREPRENEUR
REACHES FOR THE STARS**



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**UNITED
MACEDONIAN
DIASPORA**
ОБЕДИНЕТА МАКЕДОНСКА ДИАСПОРА

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. With headquarters in Washington, D.C., UMD has an office in Melbourne, Australia and Toronto, Canada and representatives around the world, including Paris, London, Brussels, Vienna, Kiev, St. Petersburg, and Stuttgart.

UMD is a 501 (c) (3) charitable organization in the U.S., and UMD (Canada) is a registered charity.

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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



Dear readers and friends,

I hope you and your families are enjoying the holiday season! For me the holiday season represents a time to get together with loved ones, reflect on past memories, and hope for a better peaceful future in the world. Whether you celebrate Christmas or Hanukkah, I wish you and yours a beautiful time filled with joy, love, and health.

2012 has passed and a brand new year is on the horizon. In 2013, 100 years will have passed since the Balkan Wars and the signing of the Treaty of Bucharest that divided our nation into three, later four countries. As such, it represents a year that Macedonians all of the world must unite to make a stronger Macedonia.

George Santayana once said, "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it." This is inscribed on a plaque at the Auschwitz concentration camp in Poland.

It is time we told our side of the story and educated the world, to inform them that after a century of ethnic cleansing, cultural genocide, economic upheaval, and civil wars,

Macedonians are still standing proudly, and we have a very bright future ahead of us.

This is why UMD decided to hold its signature event in Macedonia— the 4th UMD Global Conference (UMD GC2013), from July 25-August 3, 2013. Let me personally invite you and your family to visit Macedonia this year, and join us. UMD GC2013 is estimated to provide a much-needed boost to the local economy and tourism sector in Macedonia, as hundreds of Macedonians from around the world are expected to attend. If you have been meaning to return for years, now is the perfect opportunity.

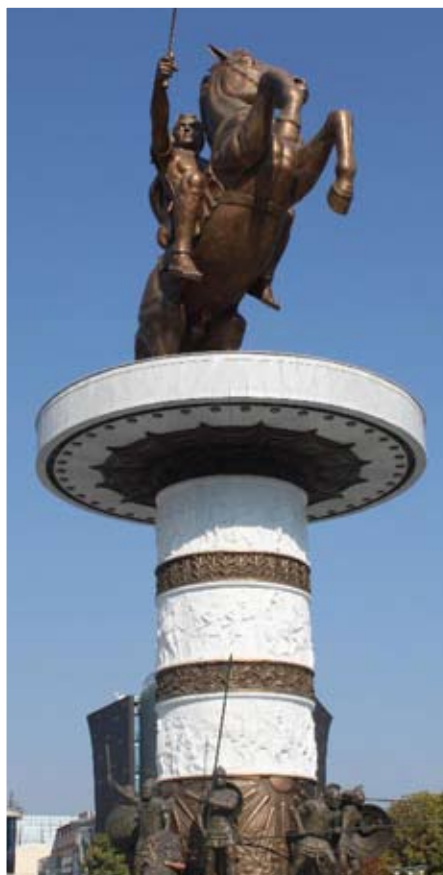
2012 saw Macedonia's progress being blocked by both Bulgaria and Greece. I just read that Serbia is now suggesting that they may be able to help resolve the so-called "name dispute." Is history repeating itself? It is almost like a 21st century reprise of the Balkan Wars on a political stage. The offspring of the Serbian, Bulgarian and Greek kingdoms are once again trying to derail Macedonia's destiny, for their own benefit. Sadly, the European Union and the U.S. reward this behavior every time they pressure Macedonia to change its name, or compromise its cultural identity.

As you and your families come together for the holidays, please reflect and don't forget what our forefathers went through to establish a free, sovereign, and independent Macedonia. We must do whatever we can to protect Macedonia, build it, make it prosperous, make it successful, and make it a role model for the entire region.

God Bless you, and on behalf of all of us at UMD, I wish you a Happy New Year!

Sincerely yours,

Metodija A. Koloski
UMD President



EDITORIAL

Monumental Politics

By Mark Branov

Monuments and statues are commonplace in the world's capital cities, often commemorating a person or historical event. However, in Macedonia, monuments are political bombs.

The government's ambitious Skopje 2014 project has produced dozens of statues recently, particularly the massive Alexander of Macedonia statue that dominates the city square. As huge as it is, the amount of press and controversy it has received is even more massive.

Non-Macedonian criticism has come from some Hellenic onlookers. Predictably, they consider the statue a "provocation," much the same way they consider the Macedonian people a provocation, and Athens' little helpers in Brussels were quick to parrot this thesis. Macedonian criticism has mostly fixated on the cost of the statues, while others have criticized the style, or the fact it was made in Italy and not Macedonia. Albanian minority leaders scream discrimination, naturally.

Some simply are not fans of Alexander, and they have their reasons, too.

Meanwhile, many Macedonians strongly support the city's transformation, and the Alexander statue in particular. They rejoice that Skopje has finally started to look like a capital city, instead of the gray, provincial outpost of a foreign regime in Belgrade.

It seems to me that the statue is primarily a public expression of sovereignty, during a period of time when respect for national sovereignty seems to be out of fashion in places like Brussels and Berlin.

No matter what your personal opinion of Alexander the Macedonian is, his image and symbols are deeply connected to the land, and that is the historical homeland of the Macedonians. And yes, this includes Aegean Macedonia, too. However, the statue is clearly not an irredentist provocation of any kind against Greece, a country with a military 10 times larger. If Greece were concerned by Macedonian irredentism, why would it refuse to sign a non-aggression treaty with Macedonia called NATO?

Sadly, the modern Greek mind often cannot grasp the reality that, not only does Macedonia have a distinct identity of its own here in the 21st century, but that it has always had its own identity, predating any Greek identity significantly, and that this Macedonian identity will always remain distinct, in perpetuity. Thus, this statue dispute is about the hostility of the modern Greek state towards the "other," and it is about how Macedonia should confront that hostility.

Greek xenophobia against the Macedonians is based on insecurities about a piece of confiscated land. It is about how, a century ago, Aegean Macedonia was seized by the Greek King, emptied of many of its inhabitants by force, and then flooded with Turkish-speaking Pontic refugees from Anatolia. It is about the Greek Civil War in 1948, when Macedonian women and children were napalmed to death from the air, despite the fact that officially, they "didn't exist." It is about who belongs in this land, about how long they have been there, and about what the future will hold for them.

These primal fears are deeply rooted in the Greek mind. They are expressed on the world stage via the Greek State's obsessive program to de-stabilize the Republic of Macedonia,

and they are expressed domestically by state oppression of the Macedonian community in northern Greece.

Macedonians are very secure in who they are, but their fledgling state is not as secure as it could be. Meanwhile, the Macedonian culture is under siege, in western parts of the Republic, and particularly, in the territories of historical Macedonia that fall under the neglectful eye of the European Union.

In Hellas, for instance, state aggression against Macedonian culture enjoys tacit approval from the average Yorgos in the street, who doesn't know any better. It also receives strong support from the fascist/supremacist element in Greek society, including in the Greek Army and Secret Service, in the Greek Orthodox Church, and in most mainstream Greek political parties, like the Golden Dawn and New Democracy.

Since the Alexander statue is a cultural expression, and since the Republic of Macedonia is a sovereign, independent state, no one need apologize for failing to ask Athenian permission before building it. If the EU's new concept of "good neighborly relations" means Macedonians re-baptizing themselves, and conforming to a Hellenic world-view, then the Macedonian people are not interested.

If Hellas wanted better relations, it would not worry about statues at all, but it would focus on fulfilling its own regional responsibilities. As signatory to numerous human rights treaties, it would fully recognize its indigenous ethnic Macedonian community in Aegean Macedonia, and it would drop its propaganda campaign against the Republic of Macedonia.

As for whether or not Skopje 2014 is a good use of public money, that is a complex issue. In any case, it is between the Macedonian electorate and their democratically elected representatives. Comparing the value of artistic expressions to the value of other social goods is like comparing apples to oranges. But there is no question that the current economic troubles in Macedonia are very real. Therefore, the government's critics argue, building monuments must wait.

While I sympathize with this argument, and other arguments about the cost of the project, I also wonder what standard of living is required in Macedonia before a monument can rightfully be built.

TORONTO ENTREPRENEUR CHRIS PAVLOVSKI REACHES FOR THE STARS

By Mark Branov



It is always a pleasure to feature Macedonians who are at the top of their fields, and Toronto's Chris Pavlovski certainly fits that description. An enthusiastic entrepreneur, Chris has built a variety of successful businesses, particularly in online marketing. He has contributed to an extremely ambitious project involving space travel, and has also taken the encouraging step of investing in Macedonia's nascent IT industry.

MB: Please tell us a little about your Macedonian background, family and growing up in Canada.

CP: I was born and raised in Toronto, Canada but came from a strong Macedonian background. Both my mother and father were born in Macedonia, so I quickly became accustomed to the Macedonian culture, though living and being raised in Canada really defined the person I grew up to be. Naturally as a Canadian, I loved hockey and still play today. During my adolescent years, I was introduced to the Internet and became quite involved with programming and computers. From there, I studied at University of Toronto, and at the same time started what would eventually become Jolted Media Group..

MB: When did you first discover your passion for building websites?

CP: My passion for computers and programming happened when I was around 14-15 years old. My parents purchased the first computer and I became quickly obsessed with everything to do with it. I was building sites practically every day, gaming, entertainment, even financial stock sites when I was 16. Eventually, Jokeroo emerged and that ended up evolving into a real business with many employees and Fortune 500 clients.

MB: With over 10 years of online advertising and marketing experience, you went to University of Toronto, worked for Microsoft, and went on to found the

highly successful Jokeroo.com site, which eventually led you to become CEO of Jolted Media Group, based in Toronto. At JMG, you have amassed an impressive client list, including renowned firms like Microsoft, Yahoo, Bell Media, Universal Studios, and many more. What have been some of the secrets to your success?

CP: One of the most important things in business is to continuously stay ahead of the curve. At JMG, we started with greeting cards and evolved into photo sharing, then video sharing, until, finally we became the largest comedy content syndication platform in Canada. The secret to success has been staying ahead of the curve and always evolving the business at a constant pace.

MB: What competitive advantage does JMG offer to its clients that keeps them coming back?

CP: Right now our competitive advantage lays in the proprietary systems and patent pending advertising formats that we have produced. One of the coolest achievements of our company is our patent pending video advertising format. When you have your own, patented format, it provides your company with a durable competitive advantage for the lifetime of that advertising format. In addition to our patents, we have created proprietary systems that allow content creators to monetize their content. So generally speaking, it's extremely important to create new things that no one else is doing.

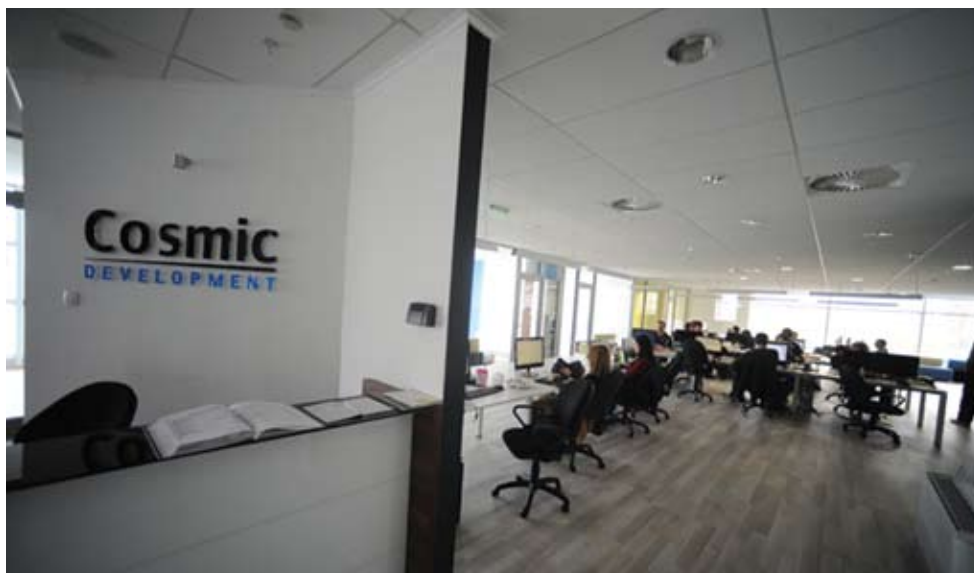
MB: What trends do you see on the horizon in terms of how the internet will develop, and how sites themselves will evolve?

CP: This is a great question, and no single person has the right answer. But from my opinion and years of experience, I believe the trend is moving towards the user. Just as JMG is evolving today to allow users to take control of their content, I believe social platforms like Facebook and video platforms like Youtube will need to do the same. The power will move into the hands of the user, and companies that excel at providing users that capability, will win them over.

MB: You have a passion for astronomy. Please tell us about your work with Next Giant Leap.

CP: Since the time I was a child, my goals were set extremely high: I wanted to be an astronaut or be involved with space, something

Most kids lose touch with the ambition to chase their dreams, but, the older I get, the more I want to pursue my dream.




many of us probably share. Most kids lose touch with the ambition to chase their dreams, but, the older I get, the more I want to pursue my dream. In the case with Next Giant Leap, it was an opportunity to team up with world leaders in the Aerospace industry. Our team at Next Giant Leap is made up of like-minded individuals who have a love and passion for space and have one goal; to land on the moon (with our robotic hopper) and be the first private company to do so. People involved include former 5-time NASA astronaut Jeffrey Hoffman, and organizations include MIT, Sierra Nevada Corporation, builders of the new Dream Chaser Space Shuttle, as well as Draper Labs.

MB: In yet another venture, you recently opened an office in Skopje, Macedonia. What advice can you offer foreign investors interested in expanding to Macedonia, and what advantages are there to operating there?

CP: Yes, we opened up Cosmic Development, a software IT and consultancy firm, focused on outsourcing to the Canadian and US markets. Originally the investment was going to be made in India, but after a few discussions with my wife, and meeting some excellent individuals in Macedonia, including Ilcho Bojchevski, I founded Cosmic Development in

Skopje, Macedonia. As for investing in Macedonia, I would highly recommend establishing a relationship with someone that understands the Macedonian landscape and language. Without that understanding, opening operations in Skopje could prove to be very difficult. With respect to advantages, Skopje offers the most talented IT workforce that I have ever seen. Although the market is extremely small in comparison to India, the quality of the labor has exceeded my expectations.

MB: You recently married the love of your life Vanesa. How did you meet? Have you brought her to Macedonia? What were her impressions?

CP: Yes, we just got married! We met 10 years ago, when we were teenagers. A few years ago, Vanesa and I decided to do a backpack trip through Greece and Macedonia. Her experience of the area was extremely positive and she loved the warmth of the Macedonian people. My family treated and welcomed her like one of their own, and the culture, cuisine and landscape left a very positive impression of Macedonia for her. Above all, the roots of my Cosmic investment stemmed from this trip, where Vanesa pointed out and recommended that I make my next investment in Macedonia. We both plan on returning in the near future and are really looking forward it. 



MACEDONIAN DIASPORA HELPS ORPHANS DURING HOLIDAY SEASON

On Friday, December 21, 2012, the United Macedonian Diaspora (UMD), the United Macedonian-Americans of Detroit (UMAD), Ajvar LLC, and Pencils 4 Kids International (P4KI) delivered much-needed aid to the "11th October" orphanage in Skopje, Macedonia in the form of twenty-five new beds/mattresses and school supplies for all the orphans.

"We were warmly welcomed at the orphanage by the children and the staff, and we very much enjoyed the singing and dancing performances," said UMD Washington, D.C./ Maryland/Virginia Regional Representative Zhikica Pagovski, who delivered the aid to the orphanage in Skopje. "It is an amazing feeling to give back to our homeland by helping these children and witnessing their joy."

"UMAD was thrilled to be part of this initiative to help the Skopje orphanage. Our goal this holiday season was to show to these children that someone cares for them, their warmth and happiness," said UMAD President Tom Bayoff. "It gives us great joy that

during this holiday season, these children will be able to sleep in warm, new beds."

UMAD raised these funds at their November 3, 2012 "Proud to be Macedonian" banquet, attended by over 350 guests. UMAD organizes an annual fundraising event each year in Detroit to benefit the needy in Macedonia.

"The educational development of all children worldwide, especially in Macedonia, has been a priority of P4KI since it was founded, and we were honored to join together with UMD, UMAD, and Ajvar LLC, and take a small part in the children's joy by providing them school supplies," said P4KI Co-Founder Ambassador Ljubica Z. Acevska, and Macedonia's first Ambassador to the United States.

"Our September 9, 2012 Ajvar 5K Run/Walk had a vision to raise funds for orphans in Macedonia, and we hope to ensure this is an annual event so that the Macedonian Diaspora and friends of Macedonia have an opportunity to get involved in helping the needy in Macedonia," said Ajvar LLC Co-Founder Bernard Pesjak.

Ajvar 5K Run/Walk brought together over 150 runners/walkers, and will be held on an annual basis. The 2nd Annual Ajvar 5K Run/Walk will be held on Sunday, September 8, 2013 in Washington, D.C., and has plans to expand to other cities in the U.S. and Canada. ✨



THE GLOBAL INVESTMENT SUMMIT EXCEEDS PARTICIPANTS' EXPECTATIONS

Macedonia 2025, organizer of the Macedonia Global Investment Summit that was held for the first time from 18 to 21 October 2012 in Ohrid, would like to express its great pleasure for the accomplishments of this first investment summit: attendance of around 350 registered participants from the country and all over the world, participation of 40 world business leaders on the working sessions, more than 100 official and non formal business meetings. Macedonia 2025 would also like to thank the Macedonian Enterprise Development Foundation as a Local Partner for small and medium enterprises; the Platinum Sponsors: Alkaloid, Makstil and Cosmic Development; the official Telecommunications Partner: Makedonski Telekom; as well as all the institutions – supporters that helped with the organization of the Summit.

The three main goals of the summit are: attraction of foreign direct investments, increase of the export potential and economic growth through more active integration of the Diaspora in the Macedonian economy. The Summit should strengthen and enhance the relations between the global Macedonian community and the businesses in Macedonia, as well as to present the Macedonian investment possibilities in front of the representatives of the Macedonian Diaspora and other potential foreign investors. Because this is a first summit of this kind, with expectations to become traditional annual event, more attention was dedicated to the presentation of the investment possibilities and the business climate in Macedonia.

During the closed working sessions, the current foreign investors indicated several key advantages of our country: long-term macroeconomic stability, strategic geographical position, good logistics connection, relatively low costs, low taxation, quality work force, availability and cooperation of the institutions, developed infrastructure and fully functional and developed industrial zones.

During the summit were presented the main reforms that were implemented recently: lowest taxes in Europe, reduced administrative burden and costs for companies, reduced





labor costs, capital investments for infrastructure projects, signed free trade agreements which cover 85% of the Macedonian exports and establishment of Technological Industrial Development Zones.

The main challenges that the Macedonian economy will face in the following period, according to the Summit panelists are: increasing the low consumption power that is a result of the unsustainable unemployment levels, finding the right balance between attracting labor intensive and capital intensive industries (the first would contribute to reducing unemployment, and the second would bring transfer of technologies), improvement of the competitiveness of the Macedonian companies, reduction of the productivity gap of the Macedonian companies compared to the companies of Western Europe, further reforms of the judiciary system, promotion and implementation of the public-private partnerships, continuous adoption of the EU standards, improvement of the business standards and ethics.

One of the main obstacles for doing business in Macedonia that was identified during the sessions was the expensive finances that the commercial banks offer to the foreign investors. Although the banks are willing and able to finance more business projects, about one third of the companies lack risk-bearing instruments.

As investment possibilities were identified the telecommunications sector, attraction of investors from China and India and focus on specialization and competitiveness through

the educated work force. Macedonia was identified as a land of opportunities in the IT sector and in the food – processing industry.

One of the keynote speakers on the Summit, Samih Elhage, COO of Nokia – Siemens Networks regarding the competitive sectors in Macedonia said: “The importance of the Telecom and IT industry in Macedonia is very big, because this is the field where we can attract world class players. Today it is not the device that is important, but the data of the mobile infrastructure in the interconnected world”.

The general impression from the Summit from the perspective of the participants is that there are big expectations for proactive and more active involvement of the Diaspora

in the further development of Macedonia. This Summit is a powerful tool for closer cooperation and linkage between the business capacities of our country and the Diaspora. The state institutions have already done a lot for a better investment climate that would promote new investments, export and development projects, and establish a platform for cooperation whose implementation and realization will include all the factors in the process.

The main headline from the first day of the Summit was the announcement that Macedonia 2025 and SEAF will establish a new investment capital fund, focused on growth of the Macedonian enterprises. The initial fund is 15 million Euros, provided by SEAF and the members of the Board of Directors of Macedonia 2025. The members of Macedonia 2025 besides the investment capital in the Fund will offer mentoring and market access to the Macedonian entrepreneurs.

Zoran Martinovski, member of the Board of Directors of Macedonia 2025 said: “This summit is of great importance to our country. We are very satisfied that we gathered so many business leaders, investors from the country and abroad and government representatives. Today together with them, through Macedonia 2025 we are on our way to build a new solid platform for animation of the business Diaspora. There is no better place for living than at home and that is why we should continuously work on our country's growth.”

For more information:

<http://www.macedonia2025.com>

<http://www.mgisummit.org>



ALEXANDER THE GREAT OF MACEDON HIMSELF

Clearly Separated the Macedonians from the Greeks!

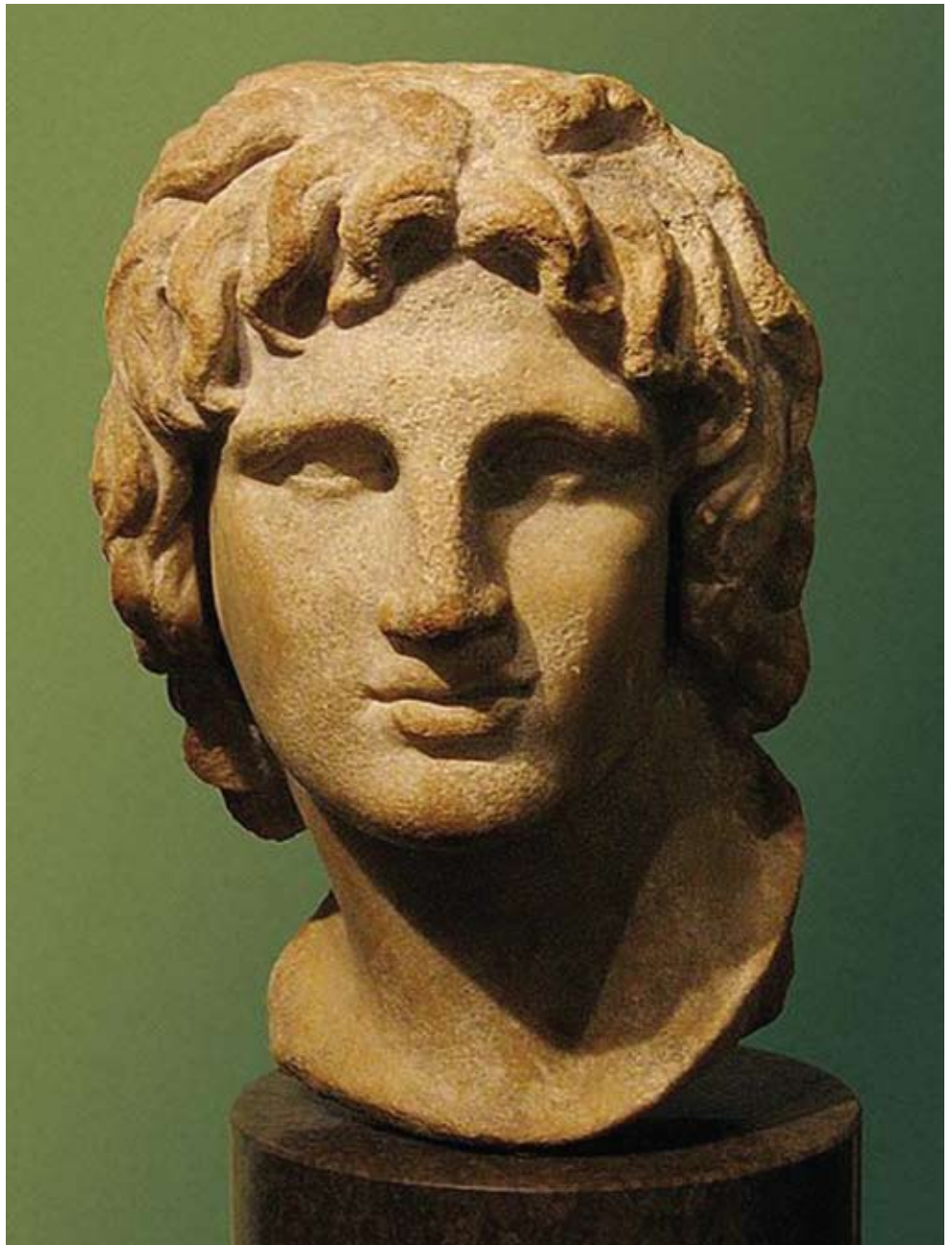
Alexander the Great of Macedon (356 - 323 BC) is the most prominent person from the ancient times who clearly separated the Macedonians from the Greeks as two different nations.

By Aleksandar Donski

Today numerous extractions are preserved from his letters and speeches, published by the Greek historian Arrian. Arrian took those materials from the historical work dedicated to Alexander, written by Alexander's general (and some say half-brother) Ptolemy. This historical work is preserved today only in fragments taken from other ancient historians. But, let's get to the facts.

Arrian transmits the speech (taken from the lost work of Ptolemy) that Alexander the Great of Macedon made before his officers when they, on the soldier's demand, decided not to follow him through the final conquering of India and, tired, wished to go back home. However, none of them dared to tell him this. Alexander realised what was happening, and he called his officers to a meeting and told them the following:

"O Macedonians and Grecian allies, seeing that you no longer follow me into dangerous enterprises with a resolution equal to that which formerly animated you, I have collected you together into the same spot, so that I may either persuade you to march forward with me, or may be persuaded by you to return. If indeed the labours which you have already undergone up to our present position seem to you worthy of disapprobation, and if you do not approve of my leading you into them, there can be no advantage in my speaking any further. But, if as the result of these labours, you hold possession of Ionia,' the Hellespont, both the Phrygias, Cappadocia,



Paphlagonia, Lydia, Caria, Lycia, Pamphylia, Phoenicia, Egypt together with Grecian Libya, as well as part of Arabia, Hollow Syria, Syria between the rivers, Babylon, the nation of the Susians, Persia, Media, besides all the nations which the Persians and the Medes ruled, and many of those which they did not rule, the land beyond the Caspian Gates, the country beyond the Caucasus, the Tanais,

as well as the land beyond that river, Bactria, Hyrcania, and the Hyrcanian Sea; if we have also subdued the Scythians as far as the desert; if in addition to these, the river Indus flows through our territory, as do also the Hydaspes, the Acesines, and the Hydraotes, why do ye shrink from adding the Hyphasis also, and the nations beyond this river, to your empire of Macedonia?"



And furthermore:

"I will also demonstrate both to the Macedonians and to the Grecian allies, that the Indian Gulf is confluent with the Persian, and the Hyrcanian Sea with the Indian Gulf. From the Persian Gulf our expedition will sail round into Libya as far as the Pillars of Heracles. From the Pillars all the interior of Libya becomes ours, and so the whole of Asia will belong to us, and the limits of our empire, in that direction, will be those which God has made also the limits of the earth."

And further on:

"But, O Macedonians and Grecian allies, stand firm! ... But what great or glorious deed could we have performed, if, sitting at ease in Macedonia, we had thought it sufficient to preserve our own country without any labour, simply repelling the attacks of the nations on our frontiers, the Thracians, Illyrians, and Triballians, or even those Greeks who were unfriendly to our interests?" (Arrian, "Anabasis", Chap. XXV-XXVI)

In this speech, preserved from the lost historical work of Ptolemy, it can undoubtedly be seen that the Macedonian emperor himself made a clear difference between the Macedonians and the Greeks, as two completely different nations. In here not only does he refer to them as "Macedonians and Grecian allies", but he decisively explains that the Macedonians who remained in Macedonia could be in danger of their neighbours: Illyrians, Thracians, Triballians and - Greeks!

Alexander the Great of Macedon clearly separated the Macedonians from the Greeks in his letter which he sent to the Persian king Darius as a response to his peace offering, as well. Arrian transmits some parts of this letter. Here, among other things, Alexander wrote to Darius:

"My father (Philip II) was killed by conspirators whom you instigated as you have yourself boasted to all in your letters; and after slaying Arsēs, as well as Bagoas, and unjustly seizing the throne contrary to the law of the Persians, and ruling your subjects unjustly, you sent unfriendly letters about me to the Greeks, urging them to wage war with me. You have also despatched money to the Lacedaemonians, and certain other Greeks; but none of the States received it, except the Lacedaemonians. As your agents corrupted my friends, and were striving to dissolve the league which I had formed among the Greeks, I took the field against you, because you were the party who commenced the hostility..." (Arrian, "Anabasis", Chap. XIV).

It is rather obvious that Alexander treats the Greeks as a foreign nation, a nation to whose representatives the Persians sent "unfriendly letters" against Alexander. It is well-known that the Lacedaemonians (Spartans) were the only Greeks who successfully opposed

the Macedonian hegemony. Here we can see that Alexander himself claims that it was because they were paid with Persian money. He claimed this based on truthful information from his people, of course. Simply, he treats the Greeks as a foreign nation here as well.

Even in the Alexander Biography written by the Latin historian Quintus Curtius Rufus some statements from Alexander the Great of Macedon are transmitted in which he mentions the special Macedonian language calling it "mother tongue" (for which we will talk in some other article).

Because of all this, it is really unclear how today's Greek historiography and propaganda, as well as pro-Greek authors from other countries, treat Alexander as a "Greek" when he himself clearly separated the Macedonians from the Greeks.

This text is an excerpt from the book "Ancient Greek and Other Ancient Witnesses For the Distinctness of the Ancient Macedonians," by Aleksandar Donski. The book includes accounts from almost 60 ancient Greek and other ancient authors, that all clearly state that the ancient Macedonians and ancient Greeks have always been two different peoples. The book is available in English and in Macedonian, and it represents a serious blow to modern-day Greek government propaganda. You can order the book



through United Macedonian Diaspora, c/o snikolov@umdiaspora.org. The cost is \$20, plus \$5 shipping and handling for the U.S. and Canada, or \$10 for Europe and Australia. Please be sure to indicate your language of preference.



CENTRAL OHIO GOLF BENEFIT REACHES OVER \$50,000 IN DONATIONS

Annual Macedonian American Golf Scramble Hosts a Successful 5th Year



By Tom J. Hristovski

Five years ago, a group of young Macedonian adults decided it was time to make a difference in their community. Though there were thousands of Macedonians living in the communities in and surrounding Columbus, Ohio, many of their American neighbors were not aware of the culture that surrounds them. These young adults, who attend St. Mary's Macedonian Orthodox Cathedral in Reynoldsburg, Ohio, formed the Macedonian Orthodox Philanthropic Society (M.O.P.S.).

"It was just something we felt was missing in our community," said Tom Hristovski, Chairman of the Macedonian American Golf Scramble and Member, M.O.P.S. "We looked at it not only as an opportunity to raise money for the church, but also as an opportunity to have fun and educate our neighbors about the Macedonian culture."

Through the determination of its members, M.O.P.S. created one of the group's many annual events, the Annual Macedonian American Golf Scramble. As of this year, the event has raised over \$50,000 since it began. All proceeds from the event will help to build a new cultural center at St. Mary's Macedonian Orthodox Cathedral, which is home to 350 families in the Columbus area, and has been in the community for over 50 years.

The cathedral has already begun the process of preparing to build by leveling the land. When the cultural center is built, it will offer traditional Macedonian dance classes, Sunday school, dances with live music, and many other activities, in addition to teaching the Macedonian language.

"Experiencing religion, language, dancing, and music are all very important parts of spreading the culture," says Hristovski, "Many other cultures in the community are much easier to access and learn about, such as the Italians or Hispanics. What we are offering in the cultural center is a chance to carry on our Macedonian traditions for generations to come."

Many of the local businesses, both Macedonian and American owned, strongly supported M.O.P.S.' cause. This year's golf scramble was sponsored by 22 area businesses including; Sam's Club, Jordan's Pub & Deli, Jimmy V's Grill & Pub, Ricart Ford, and many others. "Sam Walton envisioned seeing his associates, the members of the community, go out and make a difference," said Erin Glenn, Sam's Club of Reynoldsburg. "I am so proud to be part of such a great and community-centered company, and I am so excited to see the extra effort our local Macedonian Cathedral is making to add such unification and beauty to the Reynoldsburg, Ohio area."

Sam's Club has been the Title Sponsor of the Macedonian American Golf Scramble for the last three years and continues to support other events at the cathedral, such as the Macedonian Festival. "We're honored to have the support of local area businesses in Columbus that allows us to enhance the experience of our players," said Hristovski.

The success of this year's event raised over \$15,000, alone, the most successful year yet. This year's Macedonian American Golf Scramble held a variety of contests for its participants including; longest drive, longest putt, closest to the pin and straightest drive. The event also offered players an opportu-



Sam's Club has been the Title Sponsor of the Macedonian American Golf Scramble for the last three years and continues to support other events at the cathedral, such as the Macedonian Festival.

nity to win cash by participating in the 'Par 3' contest. Additionally, "Mulligans" were available for teams to purchase to help boost their chances of winning the \$600 first place prize. Participants took home cash and prizes ranging from signed sports memorabilia, box seats at a Blue Jackets hockey game with dinner and drinks – to over \$1,300 in cash.

"We're excited to continue building the tradition of the Macedonian American Golf Scramble. This year, teams traveled from as far away as Arizona and Illinois in order to participate in the event. Our goal is to continue to grow it into a nationally recognized event," said Tom Hristovski, "We are grateful for the support of the participants, along with our sponsors, and look forward to another successful year."

In addition to the golf scramble, M.O.P.S. has organized and contributed nearly a dozen other annual events including; the Macedonian Festival, food drives, a Children's Easter party, and many more.

To help support the growth of the cultural

center, please send donations to: St. Mary's Macedonian Orthodox Cathedral, Attention: MOPS Donations, 400 South Waggoner Road, Reynoldsburg, Ohio, 43068. For more information and photos of the Macedonian American Golf Scramble, visit www.MacedonianGolf.org. To learn more about M.O.P.S. and St. Mary's Macedonian Orthodox Cathedral or to attend other events hosted by the group, visit www.MacedonianChurch.org or www.Facebook.com/MAGSofColumbus.

Thank you to all of the sponsors of the Macedonian American Golf Scramble; Sam's Club, Buckeye Auto Service, Giuseppe's Ritrovo, Easy Living Catering, Eyeglass Warehouse, Evans Funeral Home, Jordan's Pub & Deli, M.O.P.S., Ohio Sinus, Institute, Lawyer Tommy Taneff, FM Food & Music, BBR Columbus, Ricart Ford, Jimmy V's Grill & Pub in Westerville and Granville, OH., Heartland Bank, Zeno's Activewear, Golfsmith, Classics Sports Bar & Grill, Remax Realtor Nik Labudovski, Minuteman Pizza (Gahanna), United Macedonian Diaspora, SV Cable.



SHOOTING OURSELVES IN THE FOOT

By An Educational Worker

It seems to me, that we need help, or am I wrong? I pray to God that I am wrong on this one. Nonetheless, what is it all about?

It is sad to work in the field of education, and for years to not be able to change anything, simply because you are only one up against many. Many governments have changed, many new school directors have come, but nothing ever seems to change for the better.

At times, I feel ashamed to work in the education field, and I am not capable of changing the inappropriate behavior of some of my colleagues and fellow teachers. We have gone to hundreds of conferences, done many projects, but obviously some of us understood nothing during these conferences.

A few years ago, we signed a code of ethics that we, the teachers, all agreed to, as well as the parents and the students across Macedonia. However, as soon as the end of the semester approaches, the code of ethics does not apply. I wonder, how can a student

who had bad scores all year long, who caused trouble of all kinds, end up with straight As at the end of the school year? How does one dare to urge the teacher to “fix” the student’s grades, and how does a teacher dare to fix, negotiate, or bargain the student’s grades?

We are shooting ourselves in the foot, but by the time we realize it, it will be too late. Actually, it’s already late. Generations have gone by, and we have produced quite a number of half-illiterate “intellectuals”. I believe those are the worst. In the past, we used to call them quasi-intellectuals, because they don’t know how to value knowledge correctly, and because we, the older ones, were the best example of those who valued knowledge. They say, “One educates with examples, but the children learn best from our actions.”

I cannot and I do not want to accept this low level of value for knowledge in our system, but it is very difficult to “speak to the deaf”. I often wonder, can just anybody work in the educational sector? Therefore, I am asking the Ministry of Education and Science to please establish clear standards on who may enroll, and complete the college degrees required work with our children - standards that should have been in place long time ago.

I am begging the past, present and the future Members of the Parliament to never again intimidate teachers with a suggestion that they would lose their jobs if they don’t increase the grades of their children or grandchildren. Please, once and for all, forget the question, “Do you know who I am?”

I am asking the parents of the children to please spend more time with your children, and give more love. The energy they spend urging the teachers to increase their children’s grades can instead be spent on a conversation, or doing homework with the children.

Above all, I am asking the teachers across the country, to work honestly and to not give in to pressures, for the sake of the children.

Otherwise, the one who does not care what grade a student gets, regardless of whether the student has invested any effort to justify the grade, does not deserve to work in the field of education. The honest teacher has integrity, and the wicked one has nothing.

Finally, I am asking God to give me strength to endure and to one day see that something changed for the better. And you know why? Because I do care what happens to our children. We owe a better education to our people, and to our country.

And you, dear, do you care? ✨

A BUILDER OF THE HIGHEST CALIBER: AUSTRALIA'S VASKO SPASESKI

By Robert Pasquale

It is important for our Macedonian community in Australia to take the time to recognize all of those who excel in their professional pursuits, and thereby bring honor and prestige to the entire community as a whole. One of these leaders in Western Australia is surely Vasko "Vas" Spaseski, of Inspired Homes, based in Lansdale, near Perth.

The HIA Awards are the most prestigious of their kind in the Australian housing industry, and, over the last few years, Inspired Homes has won eight of their highest honors. This included Best Townhouse - Villa Development Builder of the Year 2011, beating out over 500 entries, which was the first time ever for an Australian of Macedonian descent, and it is the highest honor a builder in Western Australia can receive. This was followed up in 2012 with three more of the top awards, including Excellence in Service for Western Australia.

Vas Spaseski was born in Perth in 1976, and first visited Macedonia at the age of 7. Since then it has become a family tradition to visit Macedonia frequently, and he travels there every two to three years. His parents were born in Prilep, Macedonia. After a period working in the tobacco industry in Galicani, Prilepsko, they moved to Western Australia in 1970.

In conversation with Vas, his wife Danielle and their daughter Mikayla, I asked if he took any creative inspiration from what he saw in Macedonia, to which he said: "I take a lot of inspiration from Macedonian architecture and building styles, especially a technique I saw with aluminum railing in Ohrid, as well as marble work that is used in Prilep. I plan to adapt these techniques into my business."

He continued: "My Macedonian upbringing taught me the value of discipline, hard work, a focus on the home, saving my money, and always being honest and straight down the line with people, so everyone knows where they stand with you" said Vas, adding, "The word WORK in my household was a common theme and my parents would not stand for anything less than 100% effort."

Vas also stated: "I am very proud to be



a Macedonian, and to be a member of the UMD. I think all Macedonians should get involved to the best of their abilities, to help our people and our country, Macedonia."

Inspired Homes (www.inspiredhomes.net.au) has expanded rapidly, taking on a 120-lot sub-division, and it is also entering the finance, brokerage and retirement man-

agement businesses. Vas holds a degree in Town Planning, which has seen him work on many various projects in the region, especially in Western Australia and Victoria.

Approximately 65 per cent of the staff at Inspired Homes is from a Macedonian background, a number that has tripled over the last year.



GENOVEVA CHRISTOFF

Making a Statement in the World of Fashion By Mark Branov



In the world of American fashion, Genoveva Christoff is a rising star. The Columbus College of Art & Design graduate has worked with many of the biggest names in the international fashion industry.

MB: Please tell us a bit about your background being born and raised in Macedonia, and your experience of immigrating to Columbus, Ohio, in the United States?

GC: I was born in Resen, a small town in the southwest of Macedonia, and I have great memories growing up there. I remember the smell of the coffee on the streets that was coming from the coffee factory Agropod, and playing games with my friends, feeling safe, picking apples in the fall.... even though I did not think it was very cool back then, now I miss the peaceful feeling of being in the apple orchard with my family. I studied high school in Bitola, and I became

independent from an early age. I was very passionate about fashion and design, but, due to opportunities at the time, I enrolled at St. Kiril and Methodij, majoring in Social Work and Social Politics. I chose this profession because I always loved helping people, and I believe it is a very humane vocation. For a few years, I worked for women's non-governmental organizations called SOZM and MZL. I was enjoying working on the improvement of the status of women, and also, working with very strong and successful female role models. I moved to US to be with my husband Benjamin, who I had met in Macedonia. Although I enjoyed my first career path as social worker, I had a chance

for a new start when I arrived in the U.S. - a chance to pursue my passion.

MB: Please tell us about when your inspiration to build a career in fashion design.

GC: While growing up in Macedonia, my fondest memories always led to fashion, design and art. Since I was very young, I have had special love for fashion, so, for hours, I would draw models from magazines and redesign my mom's old dresses. Those were the moments when I realized that designing clothes would be my profession some day. I knew deep inside of me that I would be a designer, sooner or later.

MB: According to your website, you have conceived designs for many of the biggest brands in the fashion world, including Victoria's Secret, DSW, Bloomingdale's, Ralph Lauren, Henri Bendel, Armani and L'Oreal / Lancome. What is it like for an aspiring fashion designer, in terms of creating a name for yourself with these large fashion houses?

GC: It is a pleasure to design for all the large brands, and it was a wonderful learning experience, as well!

MB: How would you describe your signature style and fashion inspiration?

GC: My designs are fashion forward, chic, feminine as well as edgy. I create unique attire for sophisticated young women, who are fashion-savvy with impeccable style, intelligent,

While growing up in Macedonia, my fondest memories always led to fashion, design and art. Since I was very young, I have had special love for fashion, so, for hours, I would draw models from magazines and redesign my mom's old dresses.

confident women with social influence, who are always seeking exciting new designs.

MB: Please tell us about your career breakthroughs at the Diet Pepsi Style Studio Show / Mercedes-Benz Fashion Week.

GC: I was handpicked by Diet Pepsi (sponsor of New York Fashion Week), as one of four designers to showcase my designs at Diet Pepsi Style Studio Show- Mercedes Benz Fashion Week New York. I was thrilled to hear about the great opportunity. I feel very happy and fortunate that my dream to present at New York Fashion Week came true. It was a great pleasure to be mentored and presented by Simon Doonan. The show was very successful, attended by celebrities such as Mary Kate Olsen, Debra Messing, Jay Manuel, Angela Simmons, Jonathan Adler, Jay Alexander and others.

MB: What advice would you offer young designers considering a career in the fashion industry?

GC: Work hard, stay true to yourself and never give up on your dreams.



THE DECA BEGALCI

A HISTORY THAT CRIES OUT TO BE TOLD

By Niki (Lazarova) Lacatus

For the past ten or fifteen years, I have been thinking: who will care enough to write a book about the Refugee Children of Aegean Macedonia, the “Deca Begalci” (DEH-tsa BEG-al-tsi), the children who were the most affected by the Civil War, 1946 -1948, in Greece? And here we are; to my surprise, the authors are neither of Macedonian nor of Greek descent.

When I heard about *The Children of the Greek Civil War*, by Loring M. Danforth and Ricki Van Boeschoten, I thought: how much could they know about these children from northern Greece, who spoke no Greek, but only Macedonian? The life of the Deca Begalci was, and still is, a very complicated political debate, and true understanding of these events has suffered greatly at the hands of the Greek government and its propaganda machine. The issue has become like a knot in an old rope, which frays into threads when you try to undo it. For me personally, the Greek Civil War started in 1946, but it still continues today, as I still cannot go back to the house of my parents, or whatever is left of it.

To write the story of these children, and to document the era before, during, and after the ‘evacuation’ period, required significant world travel. The Deca Begalci (who naturally are all now adults) were spread out as far away as Australia, Central Asia, Eastern Europe, the U.S.A. and Canada, so writing a book like this is a monumental achievement, especially if you intend to write it in a way that helps readers understand and feel what the Deca Begalci went through. It took a great deal of work, patience, determination and most of all, a passion for the truth. But, Danforth and Van Boeschoten never gave up until the knot had started to come loose. With their hard work and determination, the footsteps of the Refugee Children are traced admirably. With over 100 interviews, their effort tells what happened to those children in an unprecedented way. It is so well docu-



mented, in fact, that it has helped me to understand my own journey better.

On February 12, 2012, Loring Danforth came to Toronto at the invitation of the Canadian Macedonian Historical Society. The room was packed, and we were like young students again, anxious to learn. Later, as I poured over my copy, page by page, my mother’s stories came rushing back to me; stories of the Italian and German invasions, and later, the Civil War, stories of the intensive bombing of her village by the Greek Army, of her separation from her loved ones, and of my biological father’s untimely death. As I flipped each page, I was in her

arms again, together with over 20 kids from Zhelevo, on the way to Romania, while some of her family members were left behind in Aegean Macedonia, and others were on boat for Canada... it all came back to me, like a flood of emotion.

The book did an excellent job of explaining about how the Macedonian children were not allowed back home to their villages in Greece, as is my case. Sadly, there is very little history in the book from the period before 1946-1948, when our people were prohibited to speak their native Macedonian language, and forced to learn the Greek language, by the State and the Greek Orthodox Church, working hand in hand. In those

days, our lands were filled with a network of spies and paid informants, and our people were beaten or jailed if they were caught speaking Macedonian. The events before 1946, and the events of the Civil War itself are well-connected, especially for the Macedonian refugee children, so it's an unfortunate omission.

For example, the "bourandathes" played a big part in helping the Monarchists during the Civil War. This was a special kind of Greek police officer from the south, who was assigned to each Macedonian village, and who was in charge of monitoring it. They watched what was going on, and prohibited the Macedonian language and music. They watched out for whose husband or father was missing, because that meant he might be with the Partisans, and they often took our people to jail for no reason, often only so they could ask for bribes from their families in order to release their loved ones. Many Macedonians, including my father, were jailed in those times.

According to my mother, the word 'communist' was unheard of in her village before this Civil War. My parents and my grandparents had no clue about "right wing" and "left wing". My grandfather had come to Canada in the late 1800s with a British passport, ran a successful business, and traveled back and forth to his native home village Zhelevo every three years. He would eventually become a victim of the Civil War, however. On his last visit to take his family out from Greece, he was captured by the Greek police, and sent to one of the most inhumane jails in Greece, on the island of Giura. He died there, and was later buried somewhere in Athens.

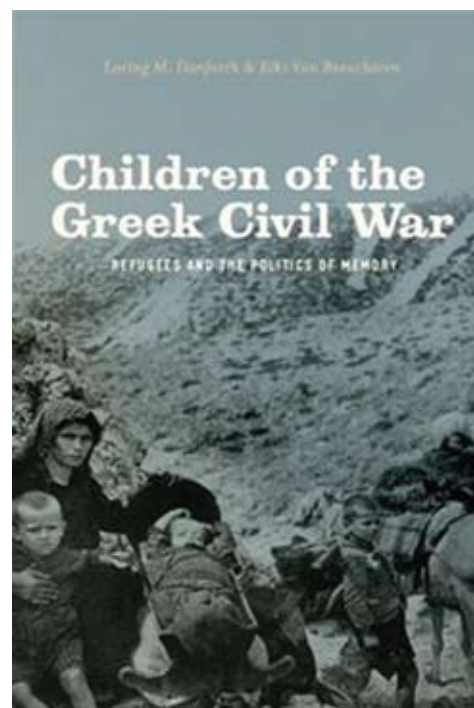
My father's family was well off. They had a large number of sheep and goats, and my father was running a coffee shop in the village, so why would he have been a 'communist'? Well, my father, as with many like him, was simply against the Greek monarchy. Even those without any leftist leanings believed that the Greek Communist Party would finally acknowledge the Macedonian community in Greece, because that is what they had promised, and that we would be able to put the Metaxas-era oppression into the past. Our people believed these promises, that they would grant the Macedonians equal rights after the war.

In the Danforth book, this topic is explored, but I would have liked to see an emphasis on life before the Greek government started

As documented in the book, refugee children 14 years old and older were encouraged to return back to fight by the Party, and many mothers, like my mom, were asked by the Communist side to go back to Greece to fight.

bombing the villages, with help from Britain and the U.S. The Greek Civil War was a classic proxy war, and it was one of first of its kind under the Truman Doctrine, which was based on the official Cold War policy of Containment.

I have only one thing in this world from my father, which is a letter, addressed to my mother, written from a Greek prison, dated 1946. In it, it states very clearly how the Greek Army was using the accusation of 'Partisan' to put any Macedonian in jail. Also, for the individual officers, it was a great business, because they could demand huge sums of money for the release of prisoners, and that would go in their pockets. My father would die not long after he wrote that letter.



My mom took me, with some 20 children from Zelevo all the way to Romania. I was very lucky to be with her, as I was only nine months old, but my brother was not so lucky. My brother was taken to Czechoslovakia; he was ten years old before the Red Cross would unite us. One of my grandmothers was taken to Poland, where she died, and the rest of family was scattered all over the world; Yugoslavia, Hungary, the Soviet Union, Romania, and Canada.



One the worst of these places was Moinesti, a city which had been deserted after the German invasion. ... We had iron beds, with one kitchen room used by 20 to 30 families, and Turkish washrooms used by hundreds of people. It was like the war had never ended for us.

As documented in the book, refugee children 14 years old and older were encouraged to return back to fight by the Party, and many mothers, like my mom, were asked by the Communist side to go back to Greece to fight. But, my mother was desperately searching for my brother, looking to be reunited with her brothers and sisters. In her case, she agreed to marry a Greek communist man, who was an invalid, but who had connections. She thought it would be only temporary, but what a mistake it was! As a result of this, growing up in Romania, my Macedonian ethnicity was hidden from me, and like many children, I was taught that I was Greek, and I was never allowed to learn Macedonian. For many years, I never even understood my own ethnic heritage.

As stated by the authors of the book, the Communist Party in Romania under Ceausescu was one of the most corrupt. As a result, the Romanian government gave control of almost all of Romania's Macedonian refugee children to agents of the Greek Communist Party. Over time, the Greek communists exerted more and more control, as more evacuations and dislocations started. After 1950, families started to be relocated across many cities within Romania. And, in each city, they would have 'organosi' or agents of the Greek communists, in charge of controlling the refugees, with Greek-speakers and Macedonian-speakers going to different places. And these movements happened again and again. For example, I was moved six times.



One the worst of these places was Moinesti, a city which had been deserted after the German invasion. Hundreds of us were moved there, isolated from everything. There were still barricades everywhere you looked. We had iron beds, with one kitchen room used by 20 to 30 families, and Turkish washrooms used by hundreds of people. It was like the war had never ended for us.

Later in my life, I came to feel so angry about how our people lived in such unjust conditions, over the long cold winter, far from civilization, far from life. The men worked in the petroleum refineries; a very hard job leaving early in morning and come back late. Going to school was a challenge, walking long distances with snow covering above the knees. A huge fence surrounded the camp, and the entrance to the camp was a huge tall door, similar to what you might see at one of Hitler's concentration camps.

At this miserable place, I would eventually finally meet my brother, who was brought to us by the Red Cross. But, we could not communicate for months, as I had been taught Greek by my Greek stepfather, while he spoke Macedonian and had also learned Czech. We lived in this remote place from about 1952 to 1963, with not only no TV, but also no hot water.

On page 74 of the book, there is an important section about how we were supposed to have received an allowance for clothes and medical care from the Romanian government, as well as pocket money incidental expenses. In my case, if the Romanian government ever sent money, I certainly never received any of it, nor any clothes.

Years later, I would come to realize that this policy of payments was the reason for my name to officially be changed, from Niki Stefo to Niki Lazarova, and I was sent to a Greek High School in Bucharest called Eliniko Gim-





nasio. The reason for the name change was that Greek Communist Party agents were receiving a fixed sum of money on behalf of each child if they could produce proof the child was an orphan, so by changing my name, they could claim this money twice. Also, in Grade 9, I discovered that my Greek "father" was in fact not my father at all, and that my real father had died in the War, which is why I had always been considered an "orphan". The veil had begun to fall, and I had started the long journey of discovering my true identity.

I had only one school uniform and one pair of shoes. Summer time involved taking the 8-hour train ride home, hiding between the compartments. The dormitory in Bucharest was shared with another 50 girls, and many days and nights, I would go to sleep hungry. I remember, in 1965, I graduated and went

to pick up my high school diploma in Bucharest. I was told it would be ready the next day, but I had nowhere to sleep. So, I stayed the night in the city cemetery with my friend, until morning.

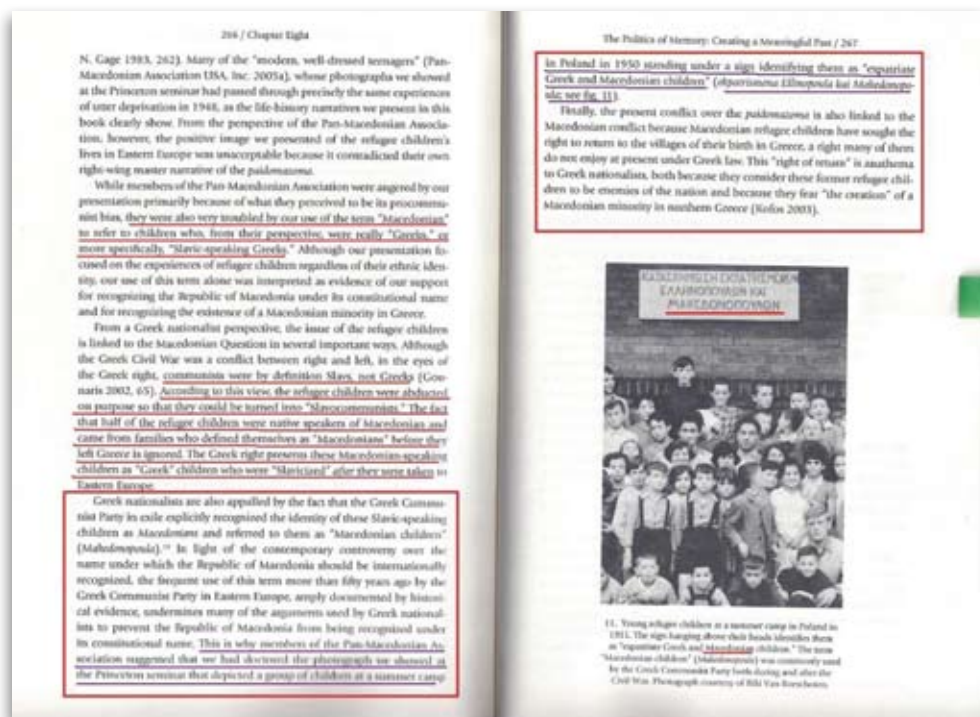
In the book, it is mentioned that the children in the eastern countries 'could continue their studies at the university level'. But, only families very high up in the Party got those opportunities for their children.

During my years in high school, I never understood why the Greek embassy never gave me a visa to visit my grandparents, who were still alive in Andartico (Zhelevo), in northern Greece. I remember, after a couple of visits, the Greek Embassy official in Bucharest said to me "you will never go back," because my people were to blame for the War. I had a Greek communist stepfather and was speaking only Greek, so I

would be one of the 'lucky' candidates to continue my study. However, with my last name Lazarova, I was never able to get a visa to visit my grandparents.

During my years in high school, I used to sneak away from my bedroom at night, and hide in the attic, listening to the Radio Free America, or a German radio station. I could not understand a word in English, but somehow, the tone of the speaker's voice meant something to me.

The repatriation mentioned in the book, the idea of 'going home,' wherever home was, was not an option for me. I had heard rumors of a time when we would get to leave, but for me, the destination was some western country in Europe, not back to Macedonia or Greece. By this time, I knew enough about Eastern and Western countries, I heard about it many times in that attic.



I can never forget the comment by Maria Todorova, another of the Deca Begalci, whose story is documented in the book. She said: 'The time seems ripe for beginning the process of reconciliation with the Greeks, and Danforth and Van Boeschoten's work will help us move down that difficult road.'

My first visit back to Macedonia came in 1967, but it was to the northern part, which was still under Yugoslavia at the time. I visited only for two months, which was enough for me to see this was not the country I should go to. On that trip, my stepfather sent me to check our documents, as he had a plan for us to immigrate to Yugoslavia. But, why did my Greek stepfather want to leave Romania for Macedonia? I never asked the question then to this man, who once said to my mom "aftin ti giftiki glossa then tha ti milisete sto spiti," which meant, 'you won't use that gypsy language in my house'. In 1980, I would find out why, but that is another story.

My second trip out of Romania was in 1968, when I had a dream to get to Italy. But I was too young, the police harassed me, and I was eventually returned back to Romania.

Many of the refugees did settle in what is now today's Republic of Macedonia, as explained in the book. In 1969, I became one of

those immigrants who were settled in Tetovo, where the Albanians outnumbered us. The child refugees were once again made into victims, this time by a corrupt government in Yugoslavia. Families of Aegean Macedonians coming in from Romania, Poland, Hungary and Russia were once again 'put back to the barracks,' thrown into one building, and only after a great struggle did we get apartments of our own. I thought to myself, why did we leave Romania? I knocked on many doors for help, for education, for the jobs that were promised, and was greeted with anything from neglect and indifference to sexual harassment. One well-known Yugoslav politician even tried to seduce me, and I decided to leave.

After two years of disappointment in Yugoslavia, I went back to Romania in 1971, where I met my husband. Until 1974, it would prove to be another painful chapter in my life, as I struggled with the bureaucracy to get my Romanian husband and daughter

out of Romania. In 1974, my husband finally got an exit visa to visit 'my family' in Tetovo, but in fact, we were really on the way to the Traiskirchen refugee camp, not far from Vienna, in Austria.

In 1975, I immigrated to Canada, where the next two chapters of my life began, starting off with a period that I spent in Toronto's Greek-speaking community. Eventually, and especially after 1990, I finally began the process of uncovering my well-hidden roots, and realizing that I was Macedonian, realizing what it meant to be Macedonian. I have been able to this in part by volunteering for Canadian Macedonian Place Seniors Home, the Canadian Macedonian Historical Society, the St. Clement's Macedonian Orthodox Church, and Macedonian Film Festival, and sharing my story with the Macedonian people that I meet.

I can never forget the comment by Maria Todorova, another of the Deca Begalci, whose story is documented in the book. She said: 'The time seems ripe for beginning the process of reconciliation with the Greeks, and Danforth and Van Boeschoten's work will help us move down that difficult road.' It is a brave statement and well-said, but even before we do that, I believe we must also reconcile ourselves with ourselves, for all Macedonians to be one, if they live in the Republic, in Aegean Macedonia, in Pirin Macedonia, or in the many communities of the worldwide Macedonian Diaspora. The reconciliation with the Greeks, and with the Greek government, will take much time and patience, but I hope to see some progress on this in my lifetime. The first step, as Maria said, is to re-examine the historical truth of what actually happened to our people in Greece, and what actually happened to the Deca Begalci.

To order the book:
<http://astore.amazon.com/mkdiaspora-20/detail/0226135993>

For history-related events in the Toronto area: <http://macedonianhistory.ca/>





DO YOU HAVE A PASSION FOR MACEDONIA?

• • •

DO YOU HAVE SPECIAL KNOWLEDGE, UNIQUE EXPERIENCE TO SHARE?

• • •

DO YOU LOVE TO WRITE, TAKE PHOTOS?

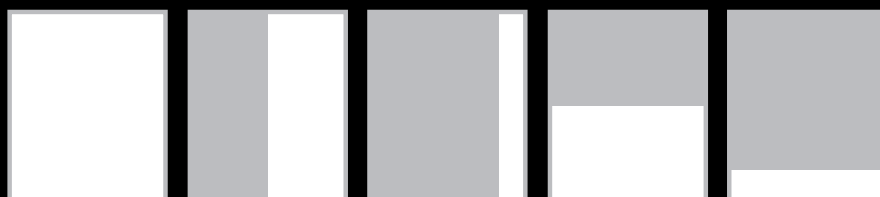
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ANDREW D. PEYKOFF, SR.

Appointed Macedonian Honorary Consul General in California



The United Macedonian Diaspora (UMD) warmly congratulates our dear friend Andrew D. Peykoff, Sr. on being appointed the first Honorary Consul General of the Republic of Macedonia to the State of California, based out of Ontario, California. Peykoff is the Founder and Chairman of Niagara Bottling, LLC – the largest private label bottled water company in the Western Hemisphere.

"I'm a proud Macedonian from California and now deeply humbled by the confidence of the Macedonian Government in appointing me as Macedonia's Honorary Consul in California. I will do my best to honor the memory of my parents, who immigrated from Egejska Makedonija," said Peykoff during the official opening ceremony. "Each Macedonian mother and father teaches their children that the keys to a happy life are strong family values, strong work ethic and strong savings ethic. Whatever you do, stick to it. Get busy, do it yourself. Don't wait."

The official opening ceremony of the Honorary Consulate of the Republic of Macedonia was held on Friday, November 30, 2012 in Ontario, California. Attendees included Macedonia's Deputy Prime Minister Vladimir Pesevski, Ontario Mayor Paul Leon, Mayor Rick Gibbs of Murrieta, California, State Assembly Member Norman J. Torres, Field Representative Alfonso Altamirano, Andrew Peykoff, II, son of the Honorary Consul General and President & CEO of Niagara Bottling, LLC, the Consul Generals of Bulgaria, Croatia, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Mexico, UMD Los Angeles Representative Dimitar Nasev, St. Mary Macedonian Orthodox Church Reverend Father Risto as well as Parish President Mite Ristovski, members of the extended Peykoff family, and friends of Niagara Bottling, LLC.

"Prime Minister Gruevski's Government could not have made a better choice to appoint Andy to this role. He has been an exemplary Macedonian-American, a man of great knowledge, wisdom, humbleness, and a role model for our future generations," said UMD President Metodija A. Koloski today.

"Andy's accomplishments in both personal and professional aspects of life speak louder than words and we cannot express how grateful we are that he will take up this new role to promote our homeland in California, and help to strengthen Macedonian-American relations. UMD and our Los Angeles team are ready to assist Andy any way we can," said UMD Los Angeles Representative Dimitar Nasev during the official opening ceremony.

Peykoff has been a long-time supporter and friend of the UMD, and also serves on the Board of Directors of Macedonia 2025.



BIOGRAPHY OF MR. PEYKOFF

Niagara Bottling is the largest private label bottled water company in the Western Hemisphere. Family owned since 1963, Niagara's founder Andrew Peykoff Sr. moved to California as a milkman in 1961. In 1963, he started his own water company, delivering high quality low cost water in five-gallon glass containers for homes and offices using his garage as his storage area.

In 1967, Niagara opened their first bottling plant. In 1988, they started bottling 1-gallon bottles and in 1994 bought their first blow molder to make one-gallon polyethylene bottles. In 1988, the company began leading the technological revolution in the water industry by investing in injection and blow molding to create North America's lightest PET bottle. As the company continued to grow, they expanded into offering single serve private label and branded bottled water to retailers and wholesale customers with the same focus on offering an unmatched combination of quality, price, and service. Growth continues, and today, the company has twelve geographically diversified production facilities servicing nearly every major retailer in the U.S.

Almost 50 years later, with production capacity of over 20 billion bottles of water per year, Niagara is the industry leader in high speed automation and emerging plastic technologies including vertical integration and light weighting. Niagara received the Best PET technology innovation Award in 2009 recognizing the Eco3 bottle design as the most innovative technological accomplishment in the PET industry. In 2012, Niagara also received an international award for development of the "nested pack," which eliminated corrugated.



MACEDONIAN LAWYER THOMAS N. TANEFF

**Named a 2013 Ohio Super Lawyer
and Columbus Top 50**

The United Macedonian Diaspora (UMD) congratulates long-time UMD friend, supporter, and UMD Advisory Council member Thomas N. Taneff on being named, for a third year in a row, a 2013 Ohio Super Lawyer, and making the Columbus Top 50. Taneff is included among the top 5% of attorneys in Ohio, and among the most highly regarded attorneys in the profession. Ohio Super Lawyers selection process includes peer nominations, a blue ribbon panel review and independent research of candidates.

Thomas N. Taneff was admitted to the Ohio Bar in 1988 and has been practicing law for 23 years. He is a graduate of The Ohio State University and Capital University Law School. Taneff was a Judicial Law Clerk and Franklin County Probate Court Magistrate. He practices in the areas of estates, probate, estate planning, guardianships, adoption and surrogacy throughout the State of Ohio, including interstate and international adoptions. He has handled more than 2,000 adoption cases and was awarded the United States Congressional Adoption Award in 2005. He was chosen as an Ohio Super Lawyer for 2011, 2012, and 2013 and has won Columbus C.E.O. Magazine's Best of Business Award (for law firms under 50) for 2010 and 2011. Macedonian Honorary Consul to the United States (Ret.).

MACEDONIAN LAWYER CHRIS PALIARE

**Named One of 50th Most Influential
People in Toronto**

The United Macedonian Diaspora (UMD) congratulates long-time UMD friend, supporter, and Macedonian Companions member Chris Paliare, O.Ont., LSM, LL.B., LL.M. on being named one of the 50th most influential people in Toronto in the December 2012 Issue of Toronto Life Magazine.

Toronto Life Magazine describes Paliare, aged 68, as someone who "has a stellar record handling multi-million-dollar commercial suits and precedent-setting public law cases. (He even had the pleasure of cross-examining Stephen Harper over the Chuck Cadman affair in 2008; the PM subsequently dropped his defamation suit against Paliare's client, the Liberal Party.) But his most interesting work happens behind the scenes, advising companies and CEOs (as well as fellow lawyers and judges) in highly sensitive matters requiring the utmost discretion."

Paliare, a founding partner of Paliare Roland Rosenberg Rothstein LLP in Toronto, has contributed thousands of hours of pro bono work - including international cases involving the human rights of Macedonians, principally in Greece. He is Vice President and Board Member of the Canadian Macedonian Place.



SAVE THE DATE!



4th UMD Global Conference July 25-August 3, 2013 – Macedonia

The United Macedonian Diaspora (UMD), the leading organization for the Macedonian Diaspora worldwide, is pleased to announce that its 4th Global Conference (UMD GC2013) will be held in our ancestral and historical homeland, Macedonia from July 25-August 3, 2013. The theme of the conference – Macedonia 2013: 100 Years After the Treaty of Bucharest – will coincide with the 100th anniversary of the completion of the Balkans Wars and the signing of the Treaty of Bucharest.

“Macedonia and Macedonians worldwide will mark several important anniversaries,” said UMD Chairman Stojan Nikolov. “The UMD Board of Directors took the important decision to host our signature event for 2013 in Macedonia to not only bring together Macedonians from around the world to our homeland, but to also showcase to Macedonia’s neighbors, Europe, and the world that we withstood significant challenges, including divisions, ethnic cleansing, and genocide. We still exist, and we will continue to exist as Macedonia and Macedonians.”

In addition to the 100th anniversary of the Balkan Wars and the Treaty of Bucharest, 2013 will mark the 70th anniversary of the deportation of Macedonian Jews to Treblinka by the Bulgarian armed forces during World War II (March 11, 2013); 110th anniversary since the death of Macedonian revolutionary leader Goce

Delchev (May 4, 2013); the 50th anniversary of the tragic and devastating Skopje earthquake (July 26, 2013); the 110th anniversary of the Ilinden Uprising (August 2, 2013); the 69th anniversary of ASNOM (August 2, 2013); and the 22nd anniversary since the establishment of a free, sovereign, and independent homeland for Macedonians – the Republic of Macedonia.

“Our history during the last 100 years was tragic, but our future for the next 100 years will be promising; 2013 is a year we, Macedonians, must unite to help Macedonia, and to set the trend of the next 100 years, for the future generations,” said UMD President Metodija A. Koloski. “We invite all Macedonians and friends of Macedonia to come and visit Macedonia, and to attend UMD GC2013.”

UMD GC2013 will consist of an academic conference evaluating the last hundred years of Macedonian history,

lessons for the future, as well as an economic portion to highlight the need for Macedonians worldwide to give back to our homeland. In addition, day trips will be organized to Bitola, Krusevo, and the wine region of Macedonia. The main conference activities and festivities will be held in Skopje and Ohrid. UMD has plans to coordinate short visits to the Macedonian native communities in Mala Prespa (Albania), Blagoevgrad (Bulgaria), and to Aegean Macedonia (Greece) so that conference participants can witness the lifestyle of Macedonians throughout our divided ancestral lands. UMD GC2013 will conclude with a formal Gala on August 3, 2013 in Skopje.

A call for papers for the academic conference was announced this week, and details of the UMD GC2013 will be posted on <http://www.umdglobalconference.org>.

UMD held its 2009 Global Conference in Washington, D.C., 2010 in Toronto, Canada, and 2011 in Washington, D.C. Over 1,500 Macedonians and friends of Macedonia from more than 25 countries have participated in UMD’s Global Conferences.

CALL FOR PAPERS

Macedonia 2013: 100 Years After the Treaty of Bucharest
Skopje & Ohrid, Macedonia, 25 July – 3 August 2013

Abstracts/Proposals by 15 February 2013

2013 marks the 100th anniversary of the completion of the Balkan Wars and the signing of the Treaty of Bucharest, which divided historical Macedonia among Bulgaria, Greece, and Serbia. The conference will explore the implications the Balkan Wars and the Treaty had on Macedonians and the Macedonian identity for both domestic and regional politics, most notably, after the establishment of an independent and sovereign Republic of Macedonia.

The Annual Global Conference, organized by the United Macedonian Diaspora (UMD), the leading organization for Macedonians worldwide, based out of Washington, D.C., invites abstract submissions for its 4th Global Conference to be held in Skopje and Ohrid, Macedonia from 25 July to 3 August 2013.

Panels are organized around the following interdisciplinary themes, with more specific topics to be listed in the next couple of weeks on the conference website at www.umdglobalconference.org:

I. The Balkan Wars (1912-1913): Analysis of events and war tactics

II. Treaty of Bucharest: Repercussions and residual effects in contemporary politics

III. Republic of Macedonia: current affairs and challenges

IV. Macedonian minorities: status of Macedonians living in other Balkan countries

Abstracts must be submitted in English and should contain the title of the research paper, the author(s) full name, name of the institution, department, position, city and country along with contact details i.e. email ID and phone numbers. A short Curriculum Vitae of the author should also be attached.

Abstracts should be in 12 point Times New Roman and approximately 200-250 words.

Abstracts should be e-mailed to info@umdglobalconference.org.

Competitive travel scholarships are available for students both in and out of Macedonia.

For eligibility and details, please e-mail info@umdglobalconference.org.

Selected Papers will be published in a special edition release by the United Macedonian Diaspora and distributed to all subscribers and contributors to the organization, and libraries throughout the world.

For more information about UMD, please visit www.umdiaspora.org.

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The United Macedonian Diaspora (UMD) is pleased to announce that its
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For details, please visit: <http://www.umdglobalconference.org>



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