MHR Review

AUSTRALIAN MACEDONIAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE INC. AMHRC est.1984

MACEDONIAN HUMAN RIGHTS MOVEMENT INTERNATIONAL MHRMI

MACEDONIAN HUMAN RIGHTS REVIEW

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Joint Statement by Macedonian Community Organisations to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Senator The Hon. Bob Carr

16 • November • 2012

On Friday the 16th of November, the Macedonian Orthodox Community of the City of Greater Wollongong - 'Saint Dimitrija Solunski', organised a community consultation with Australia's Foreign Minister, Senator Bob Carr. The consulatation was held at the community's premises in Wollongong and before a 'full house', Dr. Vasko Nastevski of the AMHRC delivered the following words to Senator Carr:

Minister, we appreciate you taking the time today to meet with representatives from the Australian Macedonian community. We note well your statement in July of this year when you graciously acknowledged the valuable contribution of the Macedonian Community in Australia. Moreover, we are pleased to hear of the increasingly healthy bi-lateral relationship between Australia and the Republic of Macedonia.

Without question, this relationship has been given important impetus by the recent visit to the Republic of Macedonia by the Hon. Stephen Jones MP, who is also present here today. Accordingly, I would like to extend our deep appreciation to Stephen for his abiding interest and commitment to the Macedonian Community in Australia. I can assure him that it does not go unnoticed.

No doubt, as Stephen would have identified during his visit, there is a need for Australia to upgrade its diplomatic presence in Macedonia. People to people contact forms a very important part of the bilateral relationship between Australia and Macedonia and the current Australian Embassy covering Macedonia is more than 500 km away in Belgrade.

Given the large bi-national community in Macedonia we call upon the Australian Government to upgrade the current Honorary Consulate to the status of an Embassy. While we appreciate opening a new diplomatic mission can be an expensive exercise, especially in difficult economic times, may we suggest that in the case of a new Australian Embassy in Skopje, the cost could be minimised or even offset by a regional reorganisation of Australia's missions in South Eastern Europe. In such a scenario, an Australian Embassy in Skopje could cover Macedonia and some of its neighbouring countries.

To the Minister for Foreign Affairs, and in that capacity, we also note your regular statements about human rights issues around the world. For example:

- The fact that human rights will always feature in discussions between yourself and your Chinese counterpart;
- How Australia will not hesitate to raise human rights issues regarding the two Papuan provinces with our Indonesian neighbours;
- How Australia will contribute to maintaining pressure in Fiji to uphold human rights; and
- How Australia will provide support to address broader human rights issues in Myanmar.

Minister, clearly there is a consistent theme emanating from the Australian Government that it is concerned about human rights issues and that it will speak up in favour of human rights.

The Macedonian Community in Australia has its own human rights issue, which we would like to re-emphasise today.

As you are no doubt aware, the Macedonian Community in Australia has consistently opposed the Australian Government's approach in relation to the way in which it engages with the Republic of Macedonia.

The current Australian Government policy to refer to Macedonia by the internal United Nations "*provisional reference*": "*the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*", is something that we find to be demeaning, but also inconsistent with the prevailing international practice.

Fundamentally, this is a human rights issue.

In the course of history, there have been specific geo-political reasons that have led various detractors to attempt to deny the existence and identity of the Macedonian people, as a consequence giving rise to serious existential questions. This can and does result in great anxiety amongst the Macedonian people world-wide.

Bearing this in mind, the Republic of Macedonia's right to determine its own external forms of representation, is also a right which presumptively forms part of the notion of self-determination in its cultural sense. That is, this is a human right that transcends to the individual level and is expressed as a right to self-identification.

Therefore, the Republic of Macedonia exercising its independent legal personality under an identity of its own choosing is not just doing so in any abstract sense, but in a direct evocation of its people.

Nobody has the right to interfere with such an historical and naturally evolving process that gives expression and recognition to a unique group of people, and nobody should be complicit in any attempts to interfere in that process.

Minister, the Macedonian community would like Australia to recognise the country's democratically chosen name i.e. the *Republic of Macedonia*, as have more than 130 countries around the world.

There are a number of more practical reasons why we strongly believe that Australia must alter its current policy and forms the basis of a letter that I have been asked to read out to you today on behalf of the Macedonian Community in Australia.

1. Minister – There is a need to update

practice on Macedonia in light of changed conditions

- Since 1994, when Australia first considered its approach to the Republic of Macedonia, there were only a handful of states which recognised the independence of the Republic of Macedonia, even fewer which recognised its official name.

- However, since then, in the following 18 years, the Republic of Macedonia has entered into diplomatic relations with about 160 states and over 130 of these states (i.e. 80%), do so under its official name the "Republic of Macedonia."

2. Minister - Australia's position does not represent "UN practice"

- Australia's policy is based on the so-called "provisional reference" which stems from Security Council Resolution 817. DFAT has claimed that *"Australian policy on this matter is consistent and unchanged"* and that it *"follows UN practice"*. But, if by "consistent" with "UN practice" the Department is referring to the use of the provisional reference by the UN, then one should consult the legal basis for the adoption of the reference, as it contradicts DFAT's so-called "consistency" argument.

- Namely, UNSC Resolution 817 clearly states that: *"… the State whose application is contained in document S/25147 be admitted to membership in the United Nations, this State being provisionally referred to for all purposes* ***within*** *the United Nations as the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia pending settlement of the difference that has arisen over the name of the State"*. The key phrase here is "*referred to for all purposes* ***within*** *the United Nations"*.

- There is nothing in UNSC Resolution 817 or indeed in any other UN resolution or document that prevents states from recognising the Republic of Macedonia under its official name. UNSC Resolution 817 does not bind other parties or indeed member states in their dealings with the Republic of Macedonia.

- Evidence of this fact can be found in the fact that over 130 countries (two-thirds of UN members) recognise the democratically chosen name of the Republic of Macedonia in their bilateral relationships.

- Indeed, all of Australia's major allies have recognised the "Republic of Macedonia" (i.e. USA, UK, Canada) as have other powers such as Russia, China and India. There is no reason why Australia cannot do the same. In fact, Australia is now in the minority and is inconsistent with international practice.

3. Minister - There are comparative examples of inconsistency in Australia's position relating to so-called "UN practice"

The case of Burma/Myanmar

- Officially, within the UN, the name of this state is the "Republic of the Union of Myanmar", while until recently Australia referred to the country as "Burma". Why the inconsistency? Why did Australia not follow "UN practice" here?

- Minister, we note that earlier this

year that the Australian Government began using the official name of 'Myanmar' in referring to that country.

- Could Australia not take a similar approach to the Republic of Macedonia?

The case of Kosovo

- More than half of the countries around the world do not recognise the independence of Kosovo and the issue is still pending between Belgrade and Pristina. Also Kosovo is not even a member of the United Nations.

- However, Australia did not wait for an outcome in relation to the future status of Kosovo before recognising it as an independent state. In fact, Australia was only the 8th country in the world at the time.

- Why does Australia ignore "UN practice" on Kosovo but claim to follow it in relation to Macedonia?

4. Minister - Recognition of the Republic of Macedonia will not interfere with the UN discussions

- Australian recognition of Macedonia has NOTHING to do with the UN discussions between Skopje and Athens. The UN process is an entirely separate matter and Australia is not bound by any UN terminology or process.

5. Minister - Australia's approach is not consistent with its major allies

- All of Australia's major allies (including the United States, Canada, the UK and India) have recognised the Republic of Macedonia under that name in bilateral relations. There is no reason why Australia could not follow this trend.

6. Minister - Australia's current policy is <u>NOT</u> a balanced approach

- We have heard in the past that Australia's approach to this issue is "fair" and "neutral". This is simply not the case. Rather it is totally in line with the Greek Government's position. A fairer and more neutral approach would take into account all of the relevant facts and give due consideration to all points of view.

- Firstly, the official name of the country, which has been democratically chosen by the people of the country and is enshrined in the country's constitution, is the Republic of Macedonia. The freely chosen name is consistent with the right to self-determination; a fundamental aspect of international law.

- Internationally, more than 130 countries have recognised the county under the name 'Republic of Macedonia' and only a handful of other countries, which includes Australia and Greece, use the UN provisional reference in bilateral relations, as well as within the UN itself – where it was initially intended to be used for all internal purposes.

- Australian policy does not strike a balance between the use of the name Republic of Macedonia and the "provisional reference." Australia simply uses the "provisional reference" in bilateral and multilateral contexts but encourages Athens and Skopje to "resolve" the issue. This, simply put, is in direct support of the position of Athens and implicitly legitimises something that is legally and morally untenable – the attempts of Athens to undermine the fundamental right of a sovereign nation to choose its own name.

- A much more balanced position would be for Australia to recognise the Republic of Macedonia for all purposes (i.e. bilaterally and multilaterally) while encouraging Athens and Skopje to maintain friendly dialogue on the basis of mutual respect for human rights.

7. Minister - There is ample precedence for making a change to policy in bilateral relations

- For example, the majority of the 160 states which with the Republic of Macedonia has entered into diplomatic relations did so from the outset under this name.

- However, a smaller group of countries (most notably, the UK, USA and Canada) did so under the provisional reference but then modified their policy and recognised the official name. There is no reason why Australia could not follow this trend and also join the other 130 or so states which recognise the official name in bilateral relations.

8. Minister - Recognition would not "inflame" community relations in Australia

- Despite the fact that large Macedonian and Greek communities reside in the United States and Canada, when both of these countries made the decision to recognise the official name of the Republic of Macedonia (in 2004 and 2007 respectively), it DID NOT result in an "inflammation" of community tensions, nor did it lead to mass protests either in the US, Canada or even Australia.

- In 2000 when the Victorian Government restored the term *Macedonian* to refer to the Macedonian language after the HREOC found that the renaming of the language was unlawful, it DID NOT result in an "inflammation" of community tensions, nor did it lead to mass protests in Victoria or anywhere else in Australia.

- In 2007 the Greek Prime Minister visited Australia, as did the Macedonian Prime Minister in 2009. The respective visits DID NOT result in an "inflammation" of community tensions, nor did it lead to mass protests by either community.

- In the last decade the Republic of Macedonia has opened up an Embassy in Canberra and a Consulate General in Melbourne. Both diplomatic offices OPERATE NORMALLY and the Macedonian diplomatic presence (as well as the Greek Embassy and its various Consulates) has not resulted in an "inflammation" of community tensions, nor have they led to any mass protests either in the US, Canada or Australia.

9. Minister - Macedonia has actively demonstrated support for Australian national interests

- As you yourself have previously noted, Australia and Macedonia are allies in the international missions in Iraq and Afghanistan respectively.
- Recently, Macedonia was among the 140 states which supported *and* voted for Australia in the ballot for a place on the UN Security Council. It should be noted that Macedonia voted for Australia at the expense of at least one of the European candidates; despite its strategic goal to join the EU at some point in the near future.
- Macedonian state support for the Australian UNSC bid is in contrast to other countries in South East Europe which did not support Australia's candidacy; opting instead to back fellow EU member-states. For example, Greece *did not* vote for Australia in the UN ballot.

Minister, given all of the above information, we now strongly urge the Australian Government to commit to a review of the nomenclature it uses in relation to the Republic of Macedonia with a view to affording the country the dignified recognition it deserves, i.e. under its official and democratically chosen name.

Prepared by the executive members of Australian-Macedonian Human Rights Committee Inc. (AMHRC) with the approval of the following Macedonian community organisations:

- ***Macedonian Orthodox Community of the City of Greater Wollongong 'Saint Dimitrija Solunski' Inc.***
- ***Macedonian Community of WA (Inc.)***
- ***Macedonian Community of Adelaide and South Australia Inc.***
- ***Macedonian Orthodox Community of Australia Ltd***
- ***Macedonian Orthodox Community of Melbourne and Victoria Ltd***
- ***The Association of Macedonian Communities in Australia Inc.***

MEMBERSHIP FORM

AUSTRALIAN MACEDONIAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE INC.

YES, I want to become a member of the ***AMHRC*** and help defend the human rights of Macedonians all over the world.

MEMBERSHIP STATUS: ❑ I am a NEW Member ❑ I am an EXISTING member

FIRST NAME: _____ **SURNAME:** _____

ADDRESS: _____

SUBURB: _____ **STATE:** _____ **POSTCODE:** _____

PHONE/MOBILE: _____ **EMAIL:** _____

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP: ❑ $500 – Advocate's Club ❑ $120 – Adult ❑ $60 - Student/Pensioner

SINGLE DONATION *(specifiy amount)* $_____

PAYMENT METHOD/S: ❑ **Cash** ❑ **PayPal** – pay online at *www.macedonianhr.org.au*

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Account Name: **Australian Macedonian Human Rights Committee** BSB: **063494** Account No: **10135997**

❑ Please charge my **Credit Card**: ❑ Visa ❑ MasterCard

Credit Card #: _____ Expiry Date: _____ 3-Digit PIN: _____

Name on Card: _____ Signature: _____

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or email: info@macedonianhr.org.au

Carr Hears Republic of Macedonia Plea

By Chris Paver
16 • November • 2012

The Hon. Bob Carr

Foreign Affairs Minister Bob Carr heard the case for Australia to officially recognise Macedonia under its constitutional name the Republic of Macedonia during a visit to Wollongong yesterday.

Senator Carr received a warm and familiar welcome at the Macedonian Orthodox Community of Wollongong St Dimitrija Solunski Church in Stewart Street yesterday morning.

Senator Carr was quickly surrounded by people on his arrival, including many who remembered his first visit to the city as the NSW Opposition Laeader in 1991.

After a brief church tour, the group moved into the function centre, where Dr Vasko Nastevski from the Australian Macedonian Human Rights Committee in Victoria made an impassioned speech on behalf of Macedonian community organisations calling on the government to recognise the Republic of Macedonia.

At present, Australia refers to the country as "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia" in accordance with the terminology used by the United Nations.

However, Dr Nastevski argued this was *"demeaning" and "inconsistent with the prevailing international practice."*

"Since 1994, when Australia first considered its approach to the Republic of Macedonia, there were only a handful of states which recognised the independence of [the country], even fewer which recognised its official name," he said.

"However, since then, in the following 18 years, the Republic of Macedonia has entered into diplomatic relations with about 160 states and over 130 of these states ... do so under its official name, the Republic of Macedonia."

He said the UN reference did not bind other parties, noting that nations including the US and the UK referred to the Republic of Macedonia in bilateral relations.

"There is no reason why Australia cannot do the same," he said, to applause from about 200 people at the event.

He also said Australia's approach was "totally in line with the Greek government's position", adding that recognition would not "inflame" community relations in Australia because it had not done so overseas.

In addition, he argued that Macedonia had supported Australia's successful bid for a place on the UN Security Council.

Senator Carr said the presentation was *"powerful and persuasive."*

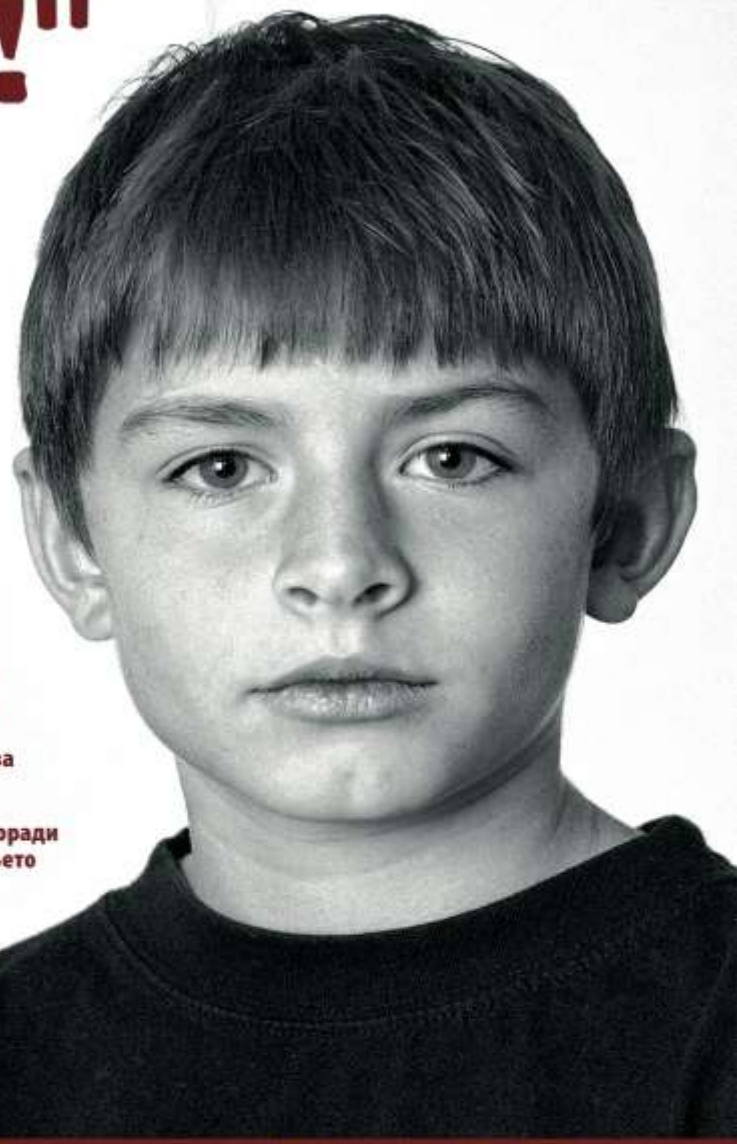
"We hear you, we understand the arguments, and we'll get there," he said.

"[The arguments] are under active consideration and we hope we can clear up this whole nomenclature challenge before long."

Senator Carr, Throsby MP Stephen Jones and Cunningham MP Sharon Bird also met Wollongong City councillors and others, including students from Dapto and Warrawong high schools, at a roundtable discussion in Wollongong yesterday.

Source - illawarramercury.com.au:
http://www.illawarramercury.com.au/story/1126992/carr-hears-republic-of-macedonia-plea/?cs=307

"НИКОЈ НЕМА ПРАВО ДА ПРЕГОВАРА ЗА МОЕТО ИМЕ!"



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

ЕУ И НАТО се заложници на Грција

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

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

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

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

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

НАЈОСНОВНОТО ЧОВЕКОВО ПРАВО Е ПРАВОТО НА САМОИДЕНТИФИКАЦИЈА.

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

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и други македонски организации - www.mhrmi.org/our_name_is_macedonia

НАШЕТО ИМЕ Е МАКЕДОНИЈА

Dear Al Jazeera World

On your website (http://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/aljazeeraworld/2012/10/201210251091386015 9.html) you have provided a description of the programme entitled "Macedonia: A River Divides" which has been airing on Al Jazeera World.

The programme description contains descriptions of Macedonian ethnicity and the Macedonian language which Macedonians rightfully find offensive and highly discriminatory; namely, "Slavic-speaking majority". Please note that the Macedonian majority in the Republic of Macedonia has a concrete and historically-based identity which is precisely that-Macedonian. The Macedonian majority in the country identifies itself- and its language-as only Macedonian as can be attested to by checking the results of numerous census counts and does not self-describe as "Slav" or "Slavic-speaking". Similarly, the language spoken by Macedonians is Macedonian and nothing else. The language is recognised as Macedonian world-wide and its description as "Slavic" is to completely ignore and deny its status as a distinct language with its own specific grammar, vocabulary and history.

In only one place in the programme description do you use the term ethnic Macedonian, whereas your reporter appears to have no qualms about describing Albanians using their term of self-ascription and self-identification " Albanian", as in "ethnic Albanian minority", "of Albanian origin" and "Albanian youths"

I therefore request that you remove the offensive term "Slavic-speaking" from your programme description and replace it with Macedonian. Descriptors such as "Slav" and "Slavic-speaking" should also be removed from the programme itself, or if that cannot be done, an apology provided to the thousands of Macedonian viewers you have offended.

Yours sincerely

Dr Chris Popov
Executive Member
Australian-Macedonian Human Rights Committee Inc.

Dear Dr. Kathy Alexander

Re: False information on the website of the City of Melbourne

23 • October • 2012

I refer to the following information on the website of the City of Melbourne:

*"Melbourne is said to have the **third largest Greek-speaking population in the world** after Athens and Thessaloniki, Melbourne's Greek sister city."*

http://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/AboutMelbourne/History/Pages/multiculturalhistory.aspx#greeks

*"Hosting **the third largest Greek-speaking population of any city in the world**, it is appropriate that Melbourne should have a strong and vibrant sister city relationship with a suitable Greek partner."*

http://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/AboutMelbourne/MelbourneProfile/SisterCities/Pages/Thessaloniki.aspx

*"Athens might be a world away but Melbourne is home to **the largest Greek population outside Europe**."*

http://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/AboutMelbourne/PrecinctsandSuburbs/Pages/Culturalprecincts.aspx#greek

An actual examination of the facts clearly demonstrates that the claim of Melbourne being the "third largest Greek -speaking population in the world" is plain wrong. In fact, it is factually incorrect.

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, at the 2011 Census there were 116,802 persons in the ENTIRE STATE OF VICTORIA claiming to speak Greek, in addition to the English language: http://www.censusdata.abs.gov.au/census_services/getproduct/census/2011/quickstat/2

Moreover, according to the official Hellenic Statistical Authority, in as of 2011 there were five cities in Greece itself with a larger "Greek" population than Melbourne, assuming that all those counted considered themselves to be able to speak Greek. They were: Athens: 3,074,160; Salonika: 790,824; Patras: 214,580; Heraklion: 173,450 and Larissa: 163,380. See: http://www.tovima.gr/files/1/2011/07/22/apografh22.pdf.

Furthermore, outside of Greece, there are at least three cities with larger Greek-speaking populations than Melbourne. The population of the Greek-Cypriot controlled part of the Cypriot capital Nicosia/Lefkosia was 206,201 in 2001. In 2001, Limassol, the second city in Cyprus, had a population of 161,200 (See: http://www.cyprus.gov.cy/portal/portal.nsf/All/817E9279C04E4480C2257023002B858C?OpenDocument.)

Also, according to the US Census Bureau, as of 2011, New York had a Greek population of 155,425 (See: http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_11_1YR_S0201&prodType=table).

Therefore, on the basis of the above official government statistics, it appears that Melbourne, far from being the "third largest Greek city in the world"; it is in fact the NINTH largest in the world and the FOURTH largest outside of Greece.

In light of the above facts, we kindly request that you remove claims of Melbourne being the "third largest" Greek-speaking city in the world and the "largest" outside of Greece and Europe the from the website of City of Melbourne and from any future publications issued by the City of Melbourne.

I look forward to receiving a response from you in relation to this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Jason Kambovski

Executive Member
Australian Macedonian Human Rights Committee Inc.

1 November 2012

CITY OF MELBOURNE

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Melbourne VIC 3001
Telephone (03) 9658 9658
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ABN 55 370 219 287

Australian Macedonian Human Rights Committee
Unit 106 Level 1
55 Flemington Rd
NORTH MELBOURNE VIC 3051

Dear Mr Kambovski,

False Information on City of Melbourne Website

Thank you for your letter received on 23 October regarding the Greek statistics information found on the City of Melbourne website. Your request has triggered some further investigation by our research department.

After considerable investigation your claim has proven to be substantially correct and we have altered the expressions from:

"third largest Greek Speaking population in the world", "the third largest Greek speaking population of any city in the world" and "the largest Greek population outside Europe" to

"The largest Greek speaking population outside of Europe", based on the following facts:

Melbourne (ABS, Census data by Capital Cities (Statistical Division) Basic community Profile and Time series)

http://www.censusdata.abs.gov.au/ABSNavigation/prenav/PopularAreas?collection=census/period=2006

	1996	2001	2006	2011
Speak Greek at home	120,127	118,394	113,845	114,211
Greek ancestry		151,785		154,253

New York

(http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?src=bkmk)

	2010
Speak Greek at home	74,581
Greek ancestry	159,763

Continued on next page...

Although we don't have as many people of Greek ancestry as in New York, much higher proportion of that population actually speaks Greek language at home. We sincerely apologise of any inconvenience caused.

The City of Melbourne is committed to continually improving the way we do business and as such, we appreciate you taking the time to contact us to express your concerns.

Yours sincerely,

Chris Thomas
Acting Manager Customer Relations

Telephone: 9658 9856
Facsimile: 9650 2003

E-mail: christhomas@melbourne.vic.gov.au
Website: www.melbourne.vic.gov.au

Customer reference: 2063741
CoM reference: 7524865

Dear The Hon. David Davis, MLC

Re: Use of the term "*Macedonian (Ελληνικά)*" for the Macedonian language by the Victorian

6 • September • 2012

We refer to the Tourism, Leisure & Recreation Seniors Card Directory 2012–2014, issued by the Victorian Government.

The Interpreting Services information on page 5 incorrectly refers to the Macedonian language as **"*Macedonian (Ελληνικά)*".** The word in parenthesis is written in the Greek language and means "Greek". Therefore the meaning of the term "*Macedonian (Ελληνικά)*" in the publication is "Macedonian (Greek)."

Minister, as you may well appreciate, the Macedonian-speakers in Victoria and beyond find the term "Macedonian (Greek)" to be inaccurate and highly offensive.

Moreover, we would like to bring your attention to the fact that a previous decision by the Victorian government in 1994 to rename the Macedonian language "Slav Macedonian" was declared unlawful by the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC). On 8 September 2000, Hearing Commissioner Alexander W Street SC made the following determination:

> *I declare that the respondent has engaged in conduct rendered unlawful by section 9(1) of the Act by the act of issuing the directive in terms of the memorandum dated 21 July 1994 which involved a distinction based on ethnic origin in re-naming the language Macedonian and had the effect of impairing the recognition on an equal footing of a human right in the cultural life of users of the Macedonian language and I declare that the respondent should not continue such unlawful conduct.*

The full decision can be viewed here:

http://www.macedonianhr.org.au/wip/images/stories/pdf/hreoc.pdf

Commissioner Street's final decision in HREOC was taken after the High Court had refused to grant the Victorian Government leave to appeal against the full Federal Court's decision to remit the case for consideration by the HREOC in accordance with the law as established by the Federal Court. Subsequently, the Victorian government readopted the correct term, *Macedonian*, to refer to the Macedonian language.

We therefore demand that the Victorian Government promptly corrects and **reissues** the publication and refers to the Macedonian language as *Macedonian (Македонски) i.e.* Macedonian, followed by the word „Македонски" (this is how to write the word Macedonian in the Macedonian language). In practical terms, this would mean updating the document online AND re-sending the hard copy or issuing a correction to the document to all those who were sent the original publication by post.

We would also appreciate an apology from Victorian government in relation to the publication of the offensive term in reference to the Macedonian language.

Finally, could you please provide us with an explanation as to why the Macedonian language was listed as "*Macedonian (Ελληνικά)*" i.e. "Macedonian (Greek)? Who was responsible for renaming Macedonian into "*Macedonian (Ελληνικά)*" i.e. "Macedonian (Greek) and will action be taken against that person/persons? What steps will be taken to prevent this from happening in the future?

We look forward to a swift resolution to this matter.

Yours sincerely,

David Vitkov
Executive Member
CC: The Hon Ted Baillieu, Premier of Victoria

Office of the Minister for Ageing

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Melbourne
Victoria 3001
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Facsimile: (03) 9096 3373
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DX 210311

e2859617

David Vitkov
Executive Member
Australian Macedonian Human Rights Committee INC
Suite 106, Level 1, 55 Flemington Road
NORTH MELBOURNE VIC 3051

Dear Mr Vitkov

Thank you for your letter of 6 September 2012 to the Hon David Davis MP regarding the Seniors Card Tourism, Leisure and Recreation Directory 2012-2014.

The Seniors Card Tourism, Leisure and Recreation Directory contains two errors on the Interpreting Services page. The translations next to the Macedonian and Serbian headings are incorrect. These errors were made by the interpreting company All Graduates during the typesetting process. All Graduates has acknowledged the error and apologised for its mistake.

The Seniors Card program also apologises for the mistake and regrets any inconvenience caused. The errors have been corrected online and an updated version of the publication is available at www.seniorsonline.vic.gov.au.

You may be interested to know that the program has been contacted by a number of Macedonian speaking Seniors Card holders in relation to the error. In each case an apology was given, an explanation of the error occurring at the interpreting agency was provided, and an offer to send an amended page was made. I understand that all those who made a complaint have been reasonably satisfied with the program's response. The program will continue to provide amended versions of the incorrect pages in the directory to all those who request them.

Once again, I extend an apology from the Seniors Card program to your committee. If you have any further queries regarding this matter, please do not hesitate to contact Mr Steve Clancy, Senior Program Manager, telephone 9096 1039.

Yours sincerely

Katherine Walsh

Katherine Walsh
Advisor

25/10/2012

MACEDONIAN ORTHODOX COMMUNITY
OF THE CITY OF GREATER WOLLONGONG
"ST. DIMITRIJA SOLUNSKI"

МАКЕДОНСКА ПРАВОСЛАВНА ПРКВА
СВЕТИ ДИМИТРИЈА СОЛУНСКИ

8-14 Stewart Street
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AUSTRALIA. 2500

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A.C.N. 000 569 406

Dear Friends at the AMHRC

16 • November • 2012

We the Management Committee of the Macedonian Orthodox Community of the City of Greater Wollongong "Saint Dimitrija Soulunski" as well as our cultural and educational branches and our parish priest wish to take this opportunity to express our gratitude to all the executives from the AMHRC that were involved in preparing the joint statement for the Minister for Foreign Affairs the Hon. Senator Bob Carr.

We also wish to take this opportunity to thank our new friend Dr. Vasko Nastevski for the powerful joint statement he delivered on behalf of all the Macedonian Organizations in Australia. His composure and delivery were hypnotizing as he had everyone there listening and waiting for his every word, followed by a huge applause on numerous occasions.

And just after Vasko finished the joint statement, we quote part of the speech from our Minister for Foreign Affairs the Hon Senator Bob Carr. **"Can I thank Vasko for that powerful and persuasive presentation. I and my Parliamentary colleagues heard the case put, but we have never heard it better and stronger in respect of today. We hear you, we understand the arguments and we will get there."**

We also wish to thank Chris Angelkov, for introducing us to George Vlahov, David Vitkov, Jason Kambovski and now Vasko, from the AMHRC. We are very proud to be members of the Australian Macedonian Human Rights Committee and to be associated with such a competent and professional group of young Macedonian leaders.

Dear friends at the AMHRC on behalf of our Community Organization we also made a very short and moral plea to the Minister for Foreign Affairs the Hon Senator Bob Carr.

"We the Management Committee from the Macedonian Orthodox Community of Wollongong "Saint Dimitrija Soulunski" wish to thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs the Hon Senator Bob Carr for taking the time to meet and hear the concerns of the Macedonian Community in the Illawarra region. We the Macedonian Community of Wollongong have always been loyal to Australia. We believe that Senator Carr is a man of principal and we plead with him for fairness and justice and after 22 years we believe that it's time for Senator Carr to take whatever action is required for the Republic of Macedonia to be recognized under its constitutional name, by the current Australian Government."

Once again we wish to thank all those that were involved and attended this historical event, on behalf of the Macedonian Orthodox Community of the City of Greater Wollongong "Saint Dimitrija Solunski"

United for all Macedonians.

Fote Lozenkovski
President

Boris Vrtkovski
Secretary

Dave Tanchevski
Treasurer

Ljupco Stefanovski
President Overseeing Committee

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An ideal way for businesses to financially support the human rights of Macedonians throughout the world is by becoming an advertiser in the *MHR Review*, the joint official publication of the Australian Macedonian Human Rights Committee (AMHRC) and Macedonian Human Rights Movement International (MHRMI).

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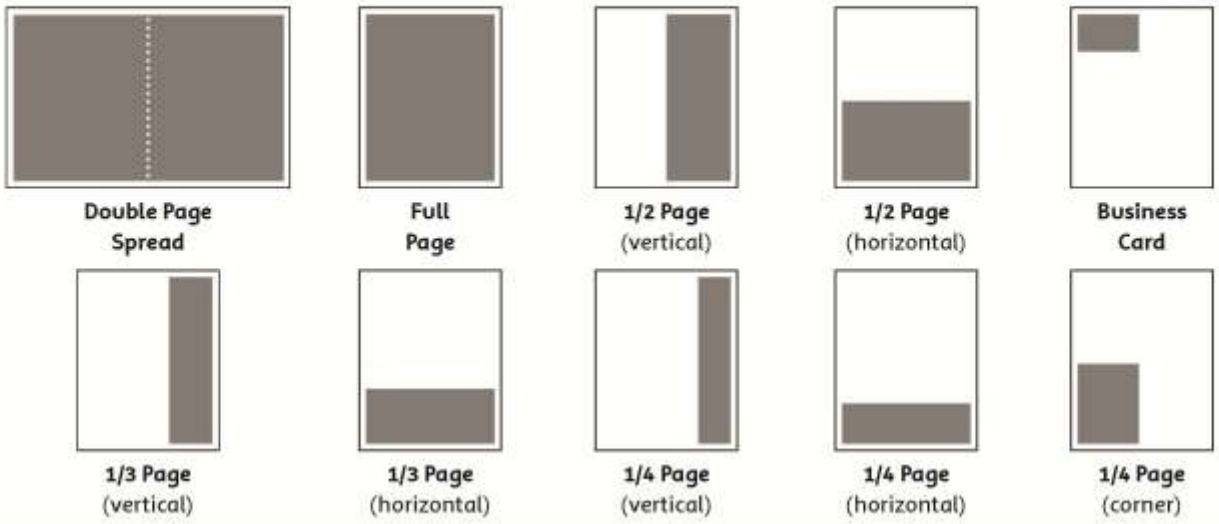

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And if you don't have any advertising material, we can make one up for you at no extra charge!

Macedonian Senior Citizens' Club of Doncaster Donates to Vinozhito

On 13 September 2012, Dr. Chris Popov from the Australian-Macedonian Human Rights Committee attended the weekly gathering of the Macedonian Senior Citizens' Club of Doncaster. The purpose of his visit was to officially receive on behalf of the AMHRC the $1,500 dollars that the Club has donated to Vinozhito, a political party of the Macedonians in Greece.

Dr. Popov was very graciously received by the club members and delivered a short address in which he thanked them for their donation and the patriotic spirit which had motivated it and also outlined the current activities and initiatives being undertaken by the AMHRC in defence of Macedonian human rights in Macedonia, Australia and elsewhere. The President of the Macedonian Senior Citizens' Club of Doncaster, Mr. Ilo Palev, also addressed those present and urged them to continue their support for the AMHRC and Vinozhito. The cheque for the amount of $1500 was officially handed over by the club's Treasurer, Mr. Boris Karadaov.

The AMHRC wishes to express its gratitude to the Macedonian Senior Citizens' Club of Doncaster for its generous donation and long-standing support for the work of the AMHRC and sincerely hopes that the cooperation between our two organizations will continue to grow and develop in the coming years.

Show Your Support For Macedonian Human Rights

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

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

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

Among our many initiatives are:

- Macedonian language classes in Aegean Macedonia and Albania, including the opening of another new kindergarten class in Korca, Albania;
- In addition to the MHRMI/AMHRC-purchased and financed radio station in Lerin, we recently opened a TV station in Korca;
- The historic Detsa Begaltsi lawsuit against Greece for the return of confiscated property, citizenship and financial compensation;
- The funding of pro-Macedonian newspapers and publications in Aegean Macedonia, Pirin Macedonia and Mala Prespa;
- The landmark European Court of Human Rights judgments against Bulgaria and Greece for violating Macedonian human rights;
- The operation of human rights offices for Macedonians in Bulgaria, Greece and Albania;
- The crucial Our Name is Macedonia campaign, which demands that Macedonia end all negotiations over its name; and
- Funding successful election campaigns for Macedonian candidates in Bulgaria, Greece and Albania.

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

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

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

Thank you in advance.

Macedonian Support for Australia's Successful Bid for UN Security Council Seat

Melbourne and New York City
19 • October • 2012

Yesterday, Australia was elected as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) for a period of two years beginning on 1 January 2013. Luxembourg was also elected, outpolling fellow EU member-state, Finland.

The Australian Macedonian Human Rights Committee (AMHRC) was pleased that the Republic of Macedonia voted for Australia in the ballot of all UN member states. Macedonia's support for Australia represents a clear expression of the will to strengthen and deepen the bilateral relationship.

Macedonian support for the Australian UNSC bid is in contrast to some countries in South East Europe which *did not* support Australia's candidacy; opting instead to back fellow European member-states.

The AMHRC now calls upon the Australian government to reciprocate by supporting the Republic of Macedonia's bid for a seat on the United Nations' Human Rights Council in the period 2014-2016.

Moreover and without further delay, Australia should recognise and utilise the Republic of Macedonia's democratically chosen name, as have more than 130 countries around the world. This represents more than two-thirds of all UN members, most of whom voted for Australia in the Security Council vote.

****

Established in 1984, the **Australian Macedonian Human Rights Committee (AMHRC)** is a non-governmental organisation that informs and advocates before international institutions, governments and broader communities about combating racism and promoting human rights. Our aspiration is to ensure that Macedonian communities and other excluded groups throughout the world, are recognised, respected and afforded equitable treatment. For more information please visit www.macedonianhr.org.au, email info@macedonianhr.org.au or via +61 3 9329 8960.

AMHRC/MHRMI Strongly Condemn Racist Slur by EU Ambassador

Melbourne and Toronto
20 ● November ● 2012

The Australian Macedonian Human Rights Committee (AMHRC) and Macedonian Human Rights Movement International (MHRMI) strongly condemn the racist slur by the Head of the EU Delegation to the Republic of Macedonia, Mr Aivo Orav. In comments made last week to the European Parliament's Committee on Foreign Affairs, Mr Orav referred to Macedonians as "Slav Macedonians."

The term "Slav Macedonian" is not a term of self-identification and therefore is totally rejected by Macedonians in the Republic of Macedonia and beyond. As well as being offensive and insulting, such terminology has been used in the past as a term of abuse by various states where Macedonians have and continue to reside.

AMHRC/MHRMI would also like to remind Mr Orav that the use of "Slav Macedonian" is fundamentally incompatible with the basic principles of the European Union. For example, Article 2 of the Treaty on the European Union begins by declaring that: *"The Union is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights…"*, while Article 22 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union stipulates that: *"The Union shall respect cultural, religious and linguistic diversity."*

Mr Orav has responded to the public outrage in Macedonia over his offensive comments by claiming that: *"I used language understandable to those present at the meeting…nor did I have an intention to offend anyone."*

AMHRC/MHRMI finds it hard to believe that Mr Orav was not aware that his reference to "Slav Macedonians" would cause offense. Moreover, if it was not his "intention" to cause offence, then what exactly was his *intention*? Was it to deny Macedonians the right to self-identification? Was it his intention to violate the EU's Charter of Fundamental Rights? Or was it his desire simply to appease and use "language understandable" to *certain* members of the Committee before which he was appearing?

Given that Mr Orav has refused to publically apologise for his use of the offensive "Slav Macedonian" remark, it is now incumbent upon the EU's High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Catherine Ashton, to instruct him to do so. Moreover, Mr Orav ought to publicly recommit himself to the basic principles of the EU, including respect for the right to self-identification. In future he should simply refer to ethnic Macedonians as Macedonians.

Failing a public apology from Mr Orav, Ms Ashton has a moral obligation to remove him from the post.

AMHRC/MHRMI has formally written to Mr Orav and Ms Ashton in relation to this matter and we encourage all Macedonians to do the same:

Mr Avio Orav
EU Head of Delegation to the Republic of Macedonia
delegation-fyrmacedonia@eeas.europa.eu

Baroness Catherine Ashton
High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy
COMM-SPP-HRVP-ASHTON@ec.europa.eu

Established in 1984, the **Australian Macedonian Human Rights Committee (AMHRC)** is a non-governmental organisation that informs and advocates before international institutions, governments and broader communities about combating racism and promoting human rights. Our aspiration is to ensure that Macedonian communities and other excluded groups throughout the world, are recognised, respected and afforded equitable treatment. For more information please visitwww.macedonianhr.org.au, email info@macedonianhr.org.au or via +61 3 9329 8960.

Macedonian Human Rights Movement International (MHRMI) has been active on human and national rights issues for Macedonians and other oppressed peoples since 1986. For more information: www.mhrmi.org, www.twitter.com/mhrmi, www.facebook.com/mhrmi, info@mhrmi.org, +1 416-850-7125.

Religious Unrest in Macedonia

By Tom Vangelovski

During recent months, violence has once again erupted between the majority Macedonian (64 per cent) and minority Albanian (25 per cent) communities in Macedonia.[1] Here, the overwhelming majority of ethnic Macedonians (97 per cent) identify as Christians while a similar majority (98 per cent) of ethnic Albanians identify as Muslims.[2] There is also a small Macedonian Muslim community, mainly in the south-western municipality of Struga. The vast majority of Muslims in Macedonia are Sunni's with small pockets of Bektashis and Sufis.[3]

'Conventional wisdom' suggests that there is a long tradition of tolerance between the Christian and Muslim communities in Macedonia. However, much of this thinking was influenced by socialist dogma and the failed Yugoslav idea of 'brotherhood and Unity', rather than the reality on the ground. Even during socialist times, Macedonian authorities, along with many ordinary Macedonians, viewed Islam with suspicion and saw it as an integral part of Albanian nationalism. During the 1970's and 1980's, Macedonian authorities sought to repress Islam through numerous discriminatory policies, including banning Islamic education for children under the age of 15.

Armed conflict between ethnic Macedonians and ethnic Albanians in 2001 saw the beginnings of Islamist radicalisation among some elements of the Albanian community and the small Macedonian Muslim community. In particular, radical Wahhabis from Saudi Arabia have slowly but surely made inroads into the Albanian community both at the grassroots level and within the official hierarchy of the Islamic Religious Community (IRC), headed by Sulejman Rexhepi. The IRC is the officially registered organisation representing Muslims in Macedonia and holds the title deeds to the vast majority of Islamic religious buildings and property. Wahhabis have set up a small but committed network of followers, particularly among younger Albanians across Western Macedonia and the capital Skopje. They have also taken control of up to five key Mosques, through which they have infiltrated the IRC leadership.[4] While Sulejman Rexhepi and his followers have resisted the Wahhabis in the past (becoming victims of physical attacks and anonymous death threats), recent reports indicate that Rexhepi has made peace with them and allowed them to maintain their positions within the official hierarchy of the IRC.[5]

Another unexpected development has been the radicalisation of a section of the small Macedonian Muslim community. Historically, this small community has identified itself as ethnically Macedonian and supported the Macedonian majority over their co-religionists in the Albanian community. However, since the early 1970's, and particularly after Macedonian independence in 1991, the community has come under increasing assimilatory pressures from the Albanian community. Albanian political, cultural and religious leaders have promoted the idea that this community is really Albanian, which was 'Macedonianised' during socialism. As proof, they offer their shared Islamic faith, claiming that if one is a Muslim, they cannot be a Macedonian and therefore must be Albanian – a form of ethnic proselytising through religious affiliation.

Since the decentralisation of various political and budgetary responsibilities in 2004, Albanian elites, who control key local governments, have also been able to offer political and financial incentives to ethnic 'converts'. The assimilatory pressure may be working, as those identifying as Macedonian Muslims have dropped from 39,500 in the 1981 census to only 2,500 in the 2002 census.[6] Of those that have resisted 'Albanianisation', many are beginning to shed their Macedonian identity and identify simply as 'Muslims'. It is among this group, particularly in the villages of Labunista, Podgorci and Oktisi (all within the Struga municipality), that young men are being targeted by a number of radical Islamist groups, particularly Wahhabis and Tablighi Jamaat, whom some believe is now being used, wittingly or unwittingly, by extremists to attract new recruits.[7] There are also increasing reports of young 'Macedonian' Muslims from this region being sponsored to study in madrassas in Pakistan and Saudi Arabia and identify new recruits from among their family and friends.

The recent violence began on the eve of the Christian Orthodox New Year, 13 January 2012, when the Macedonian populated village of Vevcani celebrated with its traditional carnival. As part of the carnival, residents usually dress up and satirise political and social events that have occurred during the past year. As part of this year's festivities, a group of Macedonian men dressed as burqa-clad women and reportedly performed simulated sex acts. This caused outrage amongst the local Muslim community, particularly in the neighbouring municipality of Struga.

In reaction, both Albanian and Macedonian Muslims protested in Struga, chanting 'death to Christians', attacking a number of buses carrying Macedonians and raising a green flag representing Islam in front of the municipal building, with some reports suggesting that it was actually a Saudi flag.[8] This was followed by a number of attacks on local Churches, two of which were burned.

Muslim leaders across the country called for restraint from their followers, but they

also accused the national government of promoting 'Islamophobia' because it traditionally funds the Vevcani carnival.[9] Albanian Muslim religious leaders and Albanian political leaders also called for an official apology from the Mayor of Vevcani and demanded that criminal charges be brought against those involved.[10]

Low-level violence has continued intermittently since, including an off-duty ethnic Macedonian police officer killing, in self-defence, two ethnic Albanians who were part of a group that threatened him and his daughter in the majority Albanian populated town of Gostivar. Other violence has involved armed gangs of youth from the two communities in open street battles across the capital, Skopje, and in April this year, the mysterious execution-style murder of five ethnic Macedonian fishermen. While little information is publically available about the most recent murders, many Macedonians blame Albanian militants and consider these murders as part of the continuing violence that began in Vevcani and possibly as retribution for the police officer's killing of the two Albanians in Gostivar. In response, thousands of Macedonians have held protests against the government for not protecting them and stamping out Albanian extremism. At the time, the authorities arrested a dozen suspects claiming they were a part of a radical Islamist cell whose aim was to ultimately spark another war between the Macedonian and Albanian communities and spread their own brand of extremism in the ensuing chaos. After six months of investigations, charges were finally laid against six men in October.[11] Four are in custody and the other two are believed to be in hiding in Kosovo. The six men are accused of terrorism, however, reports indicate that evidence is still lacking and the case against the accused remains weak.[12]

While the level of violence remained relatively low over the European summer, even with suggestions of paramilitaries being mobilised on both sides, relations between the two communities are still highly strained and violence can erupt with little provocation. The longer-term conflict in Macedonia has a number of deep-seated causes, including competing rights claims and incompatible worldviews based on their respective national ideologies and religious belief-systems. Whether the latest violence is the result of conflicting religious belief-systems, other deep-seated issues merely manifesting themselves as religious conflict or a combination of both is not always clear. Indeed, conflict between ethnic Macedonians and ethnic Albanians has always involved a strong religious element and both sides see the 'other' not only through an ethnic lens, but a religious one as well. This may be because the ethno-religious dividing lines are relatively straightforward – Albanians being Muslims and Macedonians being Christians.

In addition, it is becoming more common for both communities to identify religion as a marker of identity and new loyalties on the periphery are arising as a result. Evidence of this is the Macedonian Muslim community, which has gradually left the Macedonian 'camp' and aligned itself with its co-religionists in the Albanian community. In the longer-term this can be seen through their self-identification as either Albanians or Muslims in censuses and through their voting patterns where they either support one of the ethnic Albanian political parties or their 'own' Macedonian Muslim Party of European Integration (PEI). When religious loyalties are combined with incompatible nationalist ideologies and competing claims over constitutional and territorial rights, it makes for an explosive mix and one to watch over the coming year.

By Tom Vangelovski

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[1] State Statistical Office of the Republic of Macedonia, *Census of Population, Households and Dwellings in the Republic of Macedonia – Book XIII, 2002*, Skopje, 2005.

[2] State Statistical Office, *The 1994 Census of Population, Dwellings and Agricultural Holdings in the Republic of Macedonia*, Skopje, 1996.

[3] M. Koinova, *Muslims of Macedonia*, Centre for Documentation and Information on Minorities in Europe – Southeast Europe.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Greece is holding the EU and NATO hostage

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

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

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

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

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

THE MOST BASIC HUMAN RIGHT IS SELF-IDENTIFICATION.

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

DEMAND AN END TO 'FYROM' REFERENCE.

DEMAND IMMEDIATE INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION.

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

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

OUR NAME IS MACEDONIA

The Rise of "*Golden Dawn*" in Greece

By Pavle Filipov Voskopoulos

During recent months there has been much chatter in Greece and on the wider international scene, about the political party operating in Greece, under the name, Golden Dawn. The party has attracted this attention because of its highly aggressive entry onto the Greek political scene in general and especially on account of the brutal physical actions it has carried out against economic migrants in Athens.

The seemingly novel nature of the Golden Dawn phenomenon is a result of its recent entry to the Greek parliament – taking 18 seats, with around 7% of the national vote. The first thing we need to mention in regard to this apparently new phenomenon (I say 'apparently', as the party has been in existence for decades), is that the ideology and practical activity of this neo-NAZI party, is not only focused against economic migrants, but all ethnic, religious and social minorities.

Though why has the Golden Dawn phenomenon become more widely visible and successful? The uncomplicated answer is owing to Greece's deep economic crisis. Though once we begin examining the parameters of Greek national culture, we find that pointing to the crisis is not enough.

Greek National Culture

To a large extent, Greek political parties and the average Greek have similar worldviews and hold onto similar stereotypes. These perspectives have strengthened over the last few decades and today they aggressively manifest themselves via Golden Dawn. Among the main components of the Greek ideology is a belief that 'the Greek people are the chosen people, special and different to others because the Greeks of today are the descendants of the glorious Greeks of the past and have lived on this territory for the last 2,500 years'

This is the basis of the destructive ideology which prevails in Greece today. Much like branches emanating from the trunk of a particular tree, the following interrelated claims are also a significant part of Greek national culture: 'Greeks today have a glorious past; Greece has inherited ancient Greek culture; other peoples/nations cannot be considered to be on the same level as Greece; over the last few centuries Greece has had many enemies – the most dangerous of Greece's enemies are the Balkan nations, foremost Turkey; and that all of these foreigners have not allowed the Greek people to prosper'. Additionally, over last few years, the notion that Westerners are the most to blame for the economic crisis in Greece, has become mainstream.

Unfortunately, all of that is on par with the manner in which the average Greek citizen has been educated; indoctrinated with an anti-Western ideology and a demonic view of foreigners, a perspective that has existed since the very formation of modern Greece, over a century ago. These notions were recently given added vitality by the war that ended the Yugoslav federation in the 1990's.

One might logically ask: how did the conflict in the former Yugoslavia 'complement' the anti-Western prejudice traditionally present in Greek national ideology? It provided an opportunity for Greece, on the basis of a Christian Orthodox connection, to demonstrate solidarity with the Serbs i.e. Milosevic, Karadzic and Mladic, in relation to the war in Bosnia, *and* in relation to the emergence of an independent Macedonian state. And of course, it was the West that eventually brought an end to the activities of Milosevic & co.

Golden Dawn and other Greek Political Parties

Since its formation in the 1980s until recently, Golden Dawn had almost no support from the Greek public. The reason is that it had nothing to offer Greek citizens in terms of policy that was different to the major political parties, as well the smaller non-parliamentary parties. The existing parties were already offering Greek voters a similar type of policy, with some slight variations.

Additionally, in the political life of Greece, one of the main characteristics is a system of 'patronage' which has a long and deep tradition. In particular, 'patronage' in this context means that if one is a member of a ruling or powerful political party, in return for voting for the party at an election, one may receive certain 'benefits' such as being employed in the public sector. In this regard, Golden Dawn could not compete with the major parties. Although Golden Dawn espoused an anti-Western platform, essentially the other parties did the same. It is precisely for this reason that this neo-Nazi party (the organisation became a political party in the 1990s) did not receive much support from Greek citizens.

However, with Greece now facing bankruptcy, the major political parties have struggled to maintain the system of 'patronage'. In relation to this, the Greek media began to increasingly promote a demonic view of the international community, especially by regularly launching irrelevant and or baseless attacks against European Union (EU) institutions and the International Monetary Fund, simply because they forced the political establishment of Greece to implement some necessary structural economic reforms, which had a negative impact on the system of 'patronage'.

In this new set of circumstances many Greeks began to feel alienated and thus the aggressiveness of the populist neo-Nazi Golden Dawn, became an attractive alternative. Yet it is quite scandalous that in a member-state of the EU and the so-called 'cradle of democracy', a neo-Nazi party is allowed to officially exist, to have the 'right' to be active to the extent that it acts as an 'evictor' of migrants in Athens and other areas. The behavior of this party is tolerated by the judicial authorities in Greece; behavior which Europe as a whole knows all too well, given previous experiences with Nazism's abhorrent ideology and appalling practices. It is unfortunate that there are daily manifestations of neo-Nazism in Greece today.

Another 'curiosity' to take note of, is the fact that the major parties in Greece do not at all consider it necessary to take steps to outlaw this neo-Nazi party, despite the clear manifestations of anti-democratic behavior. Instead, the major Greek political parties have been focused on preventing a decrease in voter support at the next elections, without attempting to reform the dogmatic nature of Greek nationalist ideology. Moreover, the leaders of these parties have tried to gain the sympathy of various international actors by labeling Golden Dawn a neo-Nazi party in contexts outside the bounds of Greece, while back at home they have taken *no action* against this party. In other words, they have attempted to 'launder' their ideology via Golden Dawn in a similar manner to which a criminal or mafia gangster launders money. They have done this by allowing Golden Dawn to legally exist in Greek society.

And so my dear readers, this is the situation in Greece today. A destructive anti-Western, anti-democratic ideology prevails in Greek society and political life. We, the Macedonians in Greece, are continually victimized and targeted as a result of this ideology. We strive to be constructive with pro-Western positions, in solidarity with a small number of democratically minded Greeks, in an attempt to reform Greek national ideology. Our task is by no means an easy one. Unfortunately Greece today resembles the last days of the Weimar Republic in Germany in the 1930s. The result of the subsequent expansion of Nazi ideology was the stigmatisation of minority groups, especially Jews and Roma. Those few democratically minded Germans who stood up for the rights of the Jews at the time, were labeled traitors. Today in Greece, minority groups including the Macedonians are stigmatised, while democratically minded Greeks are a minority within Greek society and are also labeled as traitors.

Never-the-less, Vinozhito and the enlightened Macedonians in Greece shall always, as a matter of principle, strive to achieve a real democratic future.

Pavle Filipov Voskopoulos is a member of Vinozhito, a Macedonian political party struggling for the rights of Macedonians in Greece.

Translated from Macedonian to English by David Vitkov of the AMHRC.

The Troublemaker of the Balkans

By George N. Papadakis

Anyone who has received an education at a Greek university and not just in the fields of political science or international relations, would be familiar with the notion of an "international troublemaker". This refers to a country which continually creates problems for its neighbours and for the international community in general. In Greece, we have always regarded Turkey as such a country; once in a while we have also assigned such a role to Macedonia and more rarely, to Israel.

However, what is really the case? It is very clear that over the last four years, the real international troublemaker has been our country [Greece] and that is on account of its astronomical debt and its inability to demonstrate – not even remotely – that it can come to terms with the debt, without endangering the Euro zone and international markets in general. In no way has Greece shown that it is capable of carrying out the necessary structural reform.

"*It is not permissible, every time a form of privatization becomes necessary in Greece, for there to be strikes. It is not permissible for the public transport system to not cover its costs and for the tax authorities to be unable to gather up the taxes in a country which is hydrocephalus* [another way of saying this might be 'top heavy']. *In Europe, if such matters cannot be discussed in a friendly face to face manner, and if, when they are mentioned, they look upon us as foreign interlopers, then there is no possibility of going forward.*" These words were uttered some time ago now, by the Chancellor of Germany, Angela Merkel and I think they reveal what all the other members of the EU think of Greece and indirectly, though clearly, indicate that they have a score to settle with the 11 million (or may be 10, because immigrants in Greece, don't count) little troublemakers, who, when they unite, create a headache for the international community.

And what do we do? Instead of feeling embarrassed about the horrific picture that we present to the outside world, we do all that we can to make it still worse. Instead of rolling up our sleeves and working to change our conditions, it seems as if we do everything we can to drive our European friends crazy. How else to describe the mass lunacy, in the context of the worst crisis ever faced by the neo-Greek state, of directing our interest towards Macedonia and Turkey, instead of looking at ourselves in the mirror? Honestly, over the course of the last month, there have more energetic public statements about the "defence of our national interests", than I have ever seen before. It's as if everyone from Papoulias and Tsipras, to Delave-kur-as, and from Avramopoulos to half of the New Democracy parliamentarians, have been bitten by a bug – representatives of both the state and para-state have unleashed an uncontrolled and untenable verbal assault, which has shocked foreign observers.

The Serbian president, Tomislav Nikolic – a politician who needs to answer some serious questions in his own right, but still not remotely in Papoulias' league – could not understand why, at an official dinner held during an official state visit in Athens, the brotherly comrade of Milosevic, Karadzic and Mladic, i.e. Papoulias, approached him and asked for "*Serbia's practical support*" for Greece's paranoid desire to re-name a sovereign independent state. And we ask, in what *practical* way could Serbia lend support to Greece in regard to this matter? Perhaps by ceasing to recognize the Republic of Macedonia under that name and to begin referring to it as "FYROM", or better still, as "Skopia"? Or should Serbia invade Macedonia from the north and thereby realize the

dream of Milosevic and Papoulias, of a joint Serbo-Greek border?

What can one say about the insane deceit of a possible future premier of Greece, Aleksis Tsipras, who asserted that the constitution of the Republic of Macedonia foreshadows an advance of the country to the Aegean coast? Where did this illusion come from? And why did he not apologise when the error became widely known? When the Turkish Minster of Foreign Affairs accurately pointed out that Greece does not respect the rights of Muslims residing on the islands of Kos and Rodos, Avramopoulos and his underling in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs responded with a pack of lies … it is no wonder that every time Delave-kur-as asserts Greece "*is a model for the respect of human rights*", it brings on horse laughter….

As with when we open our mouths more than we should, so it is now, that this barrage of anti-Macedonian and anti -Turkish rhetoric, has been accompanied by some unintentional truth. This is the only way one can hear the truth from the mouths of people who lie as much as they breathe – people like our dear Delave-kur-as. A Macedonian journalist asked him why Greece is flagrantly ignoring the spirit of the decision made by the International Court at The Hague; in answering the question, Greece's representative for foreign affairs, Delave-kur-as, revealed a truth: "*The problem* [which Greece has with the name of the Republic of Macedonia] *creates a barrier to strengthening and deepening the relations between the two countries and a barrier to the general stability of the wider region.*"

With these simple words, this overly talkative liar deconstructed decades of systematic efforts by Greek governments to convince themselves and others that Greece amounts to a factor for stability in the Balkans. Without wanting to, he recognized that Greece is actually a major factor in destabilizing the Balkans, because a problem that Greece alone possesses – not to mention our continually strained relations with Albania and Turkey – is preventing the development of general stability in our neighborhood.

George N. Papadakis is a member of Vinozhito (a Macedonian political party struggling for the human rights of Macedonians in Greece) and a journalist who writes for Nova Zora – a newspaper voicing the concerns of Macedonians in Greece: http://novazora.gr/

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

George Papadakis

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An Incarcerated Village

By Dimitri Jovanov

On the 30th of October 2012, the court hearing of the "accused" inhabitants of the village of Zabrdeni, Lerin (Florina in Greek) County, took place. They had been arrested during the attempt by people from Zabrdeni to prevent the intended carrying out of military exercises, uncomfortably close to the village.

Unjust prosecutions were made against seven inhabitants of the village, after a number of incidents involving the use force by the police, in order to remove a blockade erected by inhabitants from Zabrdeni in 2008. They were protesting, logically, to prevent military exercises and the firing of heavy artillery right next to their properties. It was a reaction against a regularly occurring degradation of their well being.

The police used force against women, children and the elderly and even broke a hand of one inhabitant of the village. Four villagers were handcuffed, arrested and taken to the police station in Lerin. They were held all night and essentially used as a means to 'encourage' the inhabitants of Zabrdeni and neighbouring villages to end their protests and blockades. It is obvious that the aim of the authorities was to terrorise them into fearful submission. The police then continued 'hunting' and brought legal charges against a further three inhabitants of Zabrdeni.

The 'well prepared' prosecution resulted in a penalty of six months jail, suspended, and a fine amounting to 200 Euros for the former president of the village, Mr. Kole Michkov (Nikolaos Mitskopoulos). The remaining 'accused' were penalised with 8 months jail, suspended, and a fine for each of them, of 200 Euros.

And the charge was? "The blocking of traffic". The defendants have already lodged an appeal and it is expected that the matter will be re-examined, within two years time, by the appellant court in Kozhani. As one inhabitant of Zabrdeni remarked about the first trial, all the judges were young and experienced, and upheld the accusations of the prosecutor, without a thorough examination of the events surrounding the affair.

Once again, the rights of citizens have been sacrificed before the altar of "national interests". Somehow it was in the "national interest" to stage military exercises by the homes of the "strange" inhabitants of Zabrdeni, in order to terrorise them and the rest of the "strange" inhabitants residing in the wider region.

We shall end this report by quoting a policeman involved in the removal of the blockaders of Zabrdeni: "*I am not interested in what you are doing, I am not from this area, I come from far away … you are doing well at dying of cancer* [!]. *As you live by the border* [of Greece] *you need to endure military exercises. That is if you don't want us to take Zabrdeni beyond the border!*" No further commentary is required!

Dimitri Jovanov, editor of Nova Zora, a monthly newspaper voicing the concerns of Macedonians in Greece: http://novazora.gr/

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

The Dark Heritage: A Review of *Keep the Candle Alight*

By Jim Thomev

A play in the Macedonian language
Written by Dushan Ristevski
Directed by Stefo Nantsou
Performed by the Australian Macedonian Theatre Company of Sydney

In Dushan Ristevski's latest drama, Оставија свеќата да гори (*Keep the Candle Alight*) the focus is domestic violence; inevitably the atmosphere, for most of the one and a half hours of crisis, is heavy with foreboding about things going wrong – confronting and often unpleasant. And things do go very badly for the (somewhat) unfortunately named Magarevski family. Yet for all that, there is humour, strength and a suggestion of enduring vitality.

The complex theme of violence in the daily lives of a Macedonian family is explored in the simplest of dramatic terms – it is presented without any explicit judgment or moralising beyond the words and actions of the characters themselves. This is not to say that the drama is unclear about whether wife-beating and living in mutual torment with the family is a bad thing…

The presentation I saw on the modest stage of a Sunshine community hall around midday on Saturday 24 November showed that all you need for a drama is "two boards and a passion". At any rate, it moved me deeply by addressing through its action, central questions about the basis of social life, the family, its strengths and vulnerabilities and its moral disintegration.

We are confronted with the seemingly unresolvable relationships of three generations – five family members in all. Scene 1 through to Scene 14 take place in the lounge room of Altana the grandmother, who is the representative of the first generation from the Macedonian migration. The last scene, Scene 15, takes place in the living room of an apartment to which Elena, the wife who has separated from her abusive husband Done (Altana's son), where she begins a new life with her two teenage children, Emma and Chris.

The three generations are living together as a matter of necessity due to financial hardship. They live in a modern suburb in the country reputed to be one of the most livable if not the most livable on planet earth in early 21st Century.

Now that I have warmed to my theme, I want to take the reader back to the beginning of last century, and cite a passage written by a very astute observer and thinker who travelled through Macedonia early in the stormy first decade and published a remarkable book in 1906.

After suggesting that there were often folksongs in the traditions of the inhabitants of the weird country he has been exploring that satirised the incompetence of the Turkish rulers, the writer relates an extraordinary story and gives an equally remarkable interpretation of it:

> *But in the main it [i.e. incompetent rule] provokes less laughter than tears, and the prevailing emotion under the Crescent is a paralysing fear. But fear in Macedonia is more than an emotion. It is a physical disease, the malady of the country, the ailment that comes of tyranny. One enters some hovel which a peasant family calls its home. In the oppressive darkness one becomes gradually aware of a living something which stirs or groans in the gloomiest corner on the floor beneath a filthy blanket. Is it fever, one asks, or is it small pox? And the answer comes in the accents of custom and common place, "He is ill with fear". **The word [fear] becomes the key to half the circumstances of existence.** Fear is the dominant the ever-present motive. It builds villages. It dictates migrations. It explains deceits. It has created the morals of a country.* [1]

It would be hard to imagine a more succinct summary of what life had become for the ordinary subject people of the Ottoman yoke. For the purposes of the appreciation of the drama which the Aus-

tralian Macedonian Theatre of Sydney presented to the Macedonian speaking public, I want the reader to remember the essential ideas and images in the above quote from H. N. Brailsford.

As a result of Ottoman/Turkish tyranny and oppression fear was so pervasive that it became a physical disease. And it is no big leap to infer from this that all tyrannical behaviour whether by governments, employers or managers or husbands can lead to the development of a slave mentality in the victims of oppression whose dominant mode of control is fear or terror. The moral degradation alluded to and the migrations Brailsford mentions in 1906 are very familiar occurrences in Macedonian history; the uncertainty, insecurity and fear at the centre of existence in their homeland explain why Macedonians went to foreign lands as itinerant migrant workers (Печалбари) or migrated permanently when the opportunity offered itself. (And of course there were those who were expelled by hostile governments.)

The passage above may not be relevant to explain a wife beater's psychology and still less to excuse it. But I invoke the history because the presence of soul-shattering fear as the dominant controlling factor in people's lives results in similar social wreckage. Of course, the causes of the fear, insecurity and uncertainty are due to a radically different time and place and life circumstances. (But then let's remember Chinese Communist strongman Chou en Lai's famous remark about the French Revolution of 1789: asked in the early 1960's what he thought about its consequences, he simply replied, "It's too early to say".)

One of the play's greatest virtues is the quick pace of its narrative and the constant dramatic action (things happening to people and done by them). A tale of woe piled upon woe passes before us with great fluency. A riveting story in itself engages the audience; for those who have a serious interest into the whys and wherefores of domestic violence of this specific family, we get a clear picture, but are left with a few imponderables toward the end. As with any accurate depiction in a drama centred on social problems, there is much that is universal, or relevant to family life in many other even markedly diverse cultures. Human passions are permanent, just the "floorboards" on which they are enacted may be different.

At the outset, the stage is set for the tensions and conflicts to follow with the arrival of Done (the father) and his wife with their two teenage children at the grandmother's place (Altana, the Baba). What follows from this entrance into the battleground –the lounge room – for the next 14 scenes is the unrelenting disintegration of the family. Altana does not like her daughter-in-law Elena; Done tries to control everybody and resorts to violence to resolve major conflicts; Emma the daughter runs away from home and is brought home by the police; and Chris the son is suspended from school for bullying.

Done makes futile gestures seeking work and raising loans. He is not simply deplorable. Elena works but the money is hardly adequate, and she feels powerless; Altana relies on her pension but the weight of dead traditions and her lack of insight are major weaknesses. The frustration, humiliation, mutual incomprehension, and boredom has horrific outcomes: Done beats his wife black and blue and smashes furniture. The house that was intended to be a temporary haven for the family is transformed into a hell.

The family interactions are cringe-worthy for the most part. The bad nurturing of the male is neatly (and comically) illustrated in Scene 2 where Chris the teenage son goes to each of the adults to ask for money. He asks his father for $20, his mother for $50 and his Baba (Altana) for $100 in quick succession. Young Chris is spoilt and manipulative. He has no adequate role model or parental example that could steer him through to moral growth.

Indeed, one of the crucial issues is the stunted moral growth of the three generations of males. Done's father Bozhin had been violent when he was alive. And even from beyond the grave he exerts an influence that has made life a struggle for Altana in her widowed present as her memories of raising their two children Done and Sally are bitter and difficult to come to terms with. The heritage of resolving conflicts with their fists runs through the three males - the grandfather, father and son – Chris begins his career as a school bully.

Done's own problems are multiple: gambling, drinking, inability to hold down jobs, poor management of money, his lack of sensitivity or moral maturity in significant personal relationships, impetuosity, bad temper issuing in violent behaviour as a way of dealing with the world. His personal weaknesses are well attested in the interactions with his mother Altana. In the same scene (2), he has already upset his wife and sent off his daughter in tears. The following exchange between Done and his mother occurs immediately after Done has thrown out of the house his friend Peter who has been harassing him over a long-standing debt:

Done: Have you got $100 you can give me?

Altana: (amazed) What? What did you say?

Done: You really have a problem with your hearing when money is mentioned.

Altana: Are you short again?

Done: Tomorrow I'll get my Centrelink payment. I'll pay you back.

Altana: You said the same thing last week but…

Done: I swear by my mother, I'll give it back to you.

Altana: Did you gamble them away again?

Done: (angry) What are you talking about? You want to lecture me like Elena?

Altana: (crosses herself before the icon) God help me! Why can't God just take me so that I can be free and not have to see such shame!

Done: That's enough! Don't pray and

carry on like some nun – just give me money.

Altana: (She shows him her bank book) Here look, I don't even have a single dollar…I can't even pay for a coffee with my friends.

Done: (He grabs the bank book, glances at it and throws it back to her) What have you spent them on? Do you have another account?

Altana: No my dear, may I die on the spot, if I have…

Done: An old person doesn't need money…she'll only lose them…

Altana: I'll die and you won't have money to pay for my funeral! People will laugh at me, and they'll be pointing the finger at you…

Done: You just wait - don't die on us until we get some money together.

Altana: I gave you my last dollar for the car and that money was meant to pay for my funeral. All our people have bought their little grave plots and I've missed out…

Done: You don't need a grave. We'll cremate you – it's cheaper.

Altana: (Appalled) No! Not that! Never! What am I - a dog?

Done: Would you prefer to be eaten by worms?

Altana: Shame on you! I gave you birth, raised you and this is how you humiliate me!

Done: I was only joking – we'll bury you how you'd like.

Altana: I want a grave with a monument just like your father's.

Done: You're crazy! That cost $20,000!

Altana: (adamant) I think I deserve as much.

Done: Okay, then. We'll put you in the same grave as Dad.

Altana: Ooh! What do you mean in the same grave? Never with your father! I barely freed myself from him in this world, and you want me to be with him in the other world.

Done: Okay, okay, just don't shout. I'll go and get a loan.

Altana: I had money put away for all that but you wanted to buy yourself a car and-

Done: I needed a car for work.

Altana: You should have taken out a loan, not leave me without a cent…

Done: I can't get any credit. But what am I arguing with you for? I am off to look for work. (Goes)

Altana: You are going to look for work now? On Sunday? (She crosses herself) Dear God, make this boy come to his senses and give him good health.

(See Appendix 1 for Macedonian original)

Is there any surprise in Done asking his pensioner mother for a $100, just as the grandson Chris did on his collection round mentioned above? Scene 2, one of the longest in the play, suggests a rich complexity beneath the simple surface of daily life. Thus the issue of money and its role brilliantly illustrates the natures of both father and son, and highlights the lack of moral compass and the destructive relationships within the family. Altana is inclined toward the traditional castigating mother-in-law (свекрва) role as she blames Elena for the family crisis; this is a common phenomenon where the mother is blind to the spoilt son's inadequacies even when his behaviour is monstrous. Elena is the one blamed for Done's behaviour as she has "failed to make him happy". Altana's irrational attitude is a product both of her tradition and personality; she was never supposed to be critical of the men in her family, and this approach makes her appear feeble-mined and unable to acknowledge that her son is as badly behaved as her dreadful deceased husband. Altana is played with empathic insight and flair by Irena Veljanova. However, for those who have observed or lived closely to such grandmothers, with all their blind love, loyalties and confusions, the power of such a devastatingly accurate portrayal can be upsetting. One could weep with the pity of it – pity, and appalling sadness. (Here we have a case where the sensibility or experience of the viewer plays a big role – it is not always possible to detach one's self and not be affected because the drama is a piece of make-believe.)

This passage is typical of the trenchancy of the dialogue. The Macedonian language, as used in this play, carries more meaning and nuance with fewer words than the English. (At any rate, in translating I am having difficulty in capturing the communications with equal incisiveness in English.) This is one of the beauties of the Macedonian colloquial language as a unique code when used with artistic sensitivity. Emotional and intellectual satisfaction is a product where there is a distinct and appropriate style – i.e. where the words are absolutely suited to the subject. This is what verbal should be and why it can be a delight even with the most unsettling issues.

And this is where, I believe, art has it over what normally seems to pass for "entertainment" in mass culture in the West. Serious art brings us closer to reality, makes us contemplate it in images and language – style – that illuminate the world. In contrast, I invite any reader to reflect on the heroes of the past few decades that come from Hollywood – Arnie, the Terminator, Rambo and Bruce Willis blowing everything and everyone up in the cause of justice. Is it "mere entertainment" to have macho fascist-types who are morally indistinguishable from each other hell bent on mutual destruction? Of course it's only a movie, which makes a lot of money and costs a lot of money to make. This is a big part of the world in which children are being raised in. And as I write this, America is in emotional turmoil about its gun laws – President

Obama is worried about how "we Americans entertain ourselves" as well as the 300 million privately owned guns across the country!

The discussion between the two teenage Magarevski children about the vicious assault on their mother by their father, reflects the language of the Australian social milieu. Violence, here as in the USA, is unrelentingly presented in the lounge rooms of all citizens through the television in both "factual" (news etc) and fictional form – the latter being passed off as the "entertainment" that has even the President worried (**the following section of the original dialogue is in English as it is the dominant language of the third generation)**:

Chris: If he hits Mum just once more – I'll kill him.

Emma: No, I'll kill him… I'll make him suffer before I cut his throat…

Chris: Don't be stupid, you can't even kill a fly.

Emma: I can get a rope and hang him, like in that movie...

Chris: I'll get an axe and cut his head off.

Emma: I think we should poison him… I'll go on the net and see what the safest way is.

Chris: That's enough! You are not going to do anything. If someone is going to do something it's going to be me.

Emma: Should we tell mum about it?

Chris: Not a word to anyone, got it? Or I'll kill you too…

This is a little in one's face to say the least…I'll say no more.

I cannot help reverting to history again – the play before us necessarily makes one seek for the factors that have contributed toward the creation of the human beings who emigrate from Macedonia to more developed countries in the West in waves during the 20th Century.

Some earlier testimonies as to what husband and wife relationships were like under the Ottoman Empire are given in the huge folkloric collection of Kuzman Shapkarev. In one of his tomes, he records the following curiosity as part of what were considered traditional values, laws or practices regulating husband and wife relations (*published circa the early 1880's*):

> *The husband has absolute authority over his wife but not over her property. He has the unquestionable right to demand of her, total submission. Should she be disobedient, he has the right to rebuke her, beat her, but not to the point where he maims or mutilates her, as that would be far too tyrannical. Nevertheless, there are men whose wives out of sheer misery and shame have endured beatings with much physical harm without complaining to anybody. But there are women who do not put up with the slightest physical maltreatment and have even brought the matter before the church authorities or even insisted on a divorce.* [234]

Apart from the oddity of retaining ownership of her dowry as stated in the first sentence – unlikely in practice given the power over her granted the male by tradition; the wife clearly was no better (or worse) off than most Christian women anywhere in Europe.

Presumably the somewhat arbitrary demarcation point of allowing beatings but not mutilations was due to prudential considerations rather than to notions of fairness, or respect for the rights of the woman. After all, a maimed woman would probably not be as effective in cleaning and cooking, child rearing or fulfil other, much heavier conjugal duties.

The resolution of the crisis in the play comes after the abject horror of the beating of the wife and the maltreatment of all three women. The anguish of living in constant fear has become too unbearable for Elena. Again I cannot resist quoting another big moment in the dialogue to show the calibre of the script, its classical clarity and masterly selection of detail:

Elena: My God, Done! What have you done? Why have you thrown out my cooking!

Done: (brusquely) Why? Because it's good for nothing! Not even a dog would eat it.

Elena: (sneering) Your mother's cooking is no better!

Done: You're not worth my mother's little finger! You should admit you are worthless! You're as dumb as a bean, and you can't even boil a pot of beans!

Elena: I know I am not worth much. I cook, clean, wash and iron clothes for you, and I am still worthless. Are you aware that if it wasn't for me you would stew in filth and die of starvation! You can't even make yourself a sandwich. I serve the food up to you as if you were in a restaurant but even that is not good enough for you! You behave like a boy who hasn't grown up. (Mimics him) "Elena where are my socks? Where are my underpants…bring me a beer… bring me some water…" Do you want me to wipe your arse as well?

Done: (gets up) That's enough! Stop carrying on and chattering like a magpie! Do you want me to put you back in hospital? You got citizenship in this country when I married you, so don't jump up and down now. If I did not get you out of the village you would still be eating slops in the pig sty with the rest of the pigs!

Elena: Goodness gracious me! You saved me, hey? Would you like me to call you God now? If you hadn't married me you would still be crawling around the pubs with that horrible mate of yours Peter.

Done: If I hadn't married you, you'd

have been begging in the streets. (Sits down)

Elena: If it weren't for me, you would have been the one begging in the streets! You're not even capable of holding down an ordinary job. Your mother was looking after you up until yesterday, now I have that honour! Instead of going to look for a job you just lie there like a sack of potatoes and watch television all day with your mother!

Done: What about you? You have forgotten the years where you sat on your backside at home, while I worked at two jobs!

Elena: If you worked that hard why did the bank take our house off us?

Done: Of course the bank took our home when all you did was hang around shopping centres and wasted money on stupid things!

Elena: Is that so? And have you forgotten that you used to give me $10 a day?

Done: That's as much as you deserved.

Elena: Oh ye, I deserved as much! – and what about you? You gambled away the house and threw my life into the bargain!

Done: Here, we do have a house.

Elena: This is not my house – and it's not yours either.

Done: Okay then, go to work and buy yourself one, don't just blabber away about how terrific and hard-working you are!

Elena: It looks like I am fated to be both husband and wife because you are not capable…

Done: (stands up in menacing anger)) Who isn't capable? You witch! I'll make you fly out the window with one punch!

Elena: Oh I know what a big dangerous man you are! Just you dare hit me and I'll call the police!

Done: (sits down) I know, that the law in Australia, right or wrong, women have more rights than the men.

Elena: Exactly. And do you know why it's like that? Because there are a lot of men around like you. And if there were no laws like that you would treat me like an animal! (shakes her head) Oh Elena, Elena, you have put up with abuse and have lived in fear for years. Why? (turns on Done) What wrong have I done? Have I ever insulted or done something horrible for you to treat me with such contempt and lack of respect?

Done: If you don't like it – leave!

Elena: I don't see any other way out of this hell. I'll have to go. I'll take my children and you shall never see us again.

(See Appendix 2 for Macedonian original)

Elena, the besieged wife, mother and daughter-in-law (played with great humanity and aplomb by Velentina Apostolovska), does not collapse under the pressure. In the above passage she can give as good as she gets, at least in the verbal exchanges. So it is quite convincing that she ups and moves off with the children to build a new life without Done, who is conveniently carted off to jail for a short spell.

Nikola Apostolovski, in the (unenviable) role of Done, gave a nuanced performance; he certainly looked the part of the down and out, the loser, without giving the air of the heavy macho. After displaying his worst, and plumbing the depths of degradation, powerlessness and in despair, Done elicits our pity as he does not lapse into it himself. In the last scene, he tries to patch the world he destroyed but Elena, quite realistically, dumps his conciliatory bouquet of flowers in the waste bin, once he leaves. In life there are tragic irretrievable breakdowns in trust – and this is one of them.

What Done can do, cannot really be decided by anyone else, as it is an existential problem for him to work out. For men who can only resolve personal and emotional conflicts with physical violence, to merge out of the mire, is often too big a task. But this is another of those areas in life where generalities are not very helpful. And where we lack enlightenment we should be silent.

Keep the Candle Alight depicts the patriarchal relations between husband and wife *in extremis*, at its most oppressive. The symbolism of the title, of a candle burning before an icon of Jesus is the way Altana, the grandmother, copes with the appalling experience and the attendant memories of having lived with a brutal husband. In a corner of her lounge room, she lights the candle regularly in the hope that her husband will not return to continue his harsh treatment of her. It makes for a very moving (and humorous, if you are lucky enough to be able to laugh at such things) scene when she explains this to her receptive and sympathetic granddaughter Emma. The constantly lit candle before the icon is the deep hold the past has on her. Her terror at the prospect of meeting her husband again is further emphasized by her reaction at the suggestion by Done that it would be a good bit of cost-cutting if she were buried in the same grave with her husband, as we can see in the passage I quoted above from Scene 2.

The cast gave an admirable account of themselves – the three main protagonists Altana, Done, and Elena were an artistic delight – the other characterizations were also appropriate, maintaining the integrity of the action. The life that exhibited itself on the humble stage of a Sunshine hall demonstrated that a great deal of useless unhappiness can be avoided when we look for the real human being, their thoughtfulness, their vulnerable delicacy and tenderness.

For all the rough play in the action, this presentation was a gratifying experience. I do not think I am alone in experiencing this deep satisfaction, given that a well-

crafted work of art is involved. The exhilaration and stimulus, the heightened, clear depiction of characters and action, are products of exceptionally good collaboration between writer, director and very engaging actors.

The combination of Dushan Ristevski the writer and Stefo Nantsou the director and actor is working better and better magic. Dushan captures the idiom of the Macedonian psyche its rhythm and stress with great accuracy – his observation is very clear-sighted and his deployment and selection of material makes for a compact drama. Stefo on the other hand not only displays his usual versatility as actor (he plays three secondary characters); he has also been able to utilise this material for the most subtle effects. His use of first time actors (especially Irena Veljanova who plays the demanding role of Altana superbly) is strongly reminiscent of the wonderful films Pier Paolo Pasolini made in the 60's in Italy. The Italian film director hired actors from different, often humble walks of life, people who had never acted – an incredible expression of faith in the sensitivity and good sense of ordinary people. And if we reflect on this notion for a moment, it becomes clear that most so-called common people in the world are uniquely good actors in their daily lives – one meets with so many people that are just brilliant actors in a natural, spontaneous way.

For all the horrible degradation, the end result of the play is far from bleak, or no bleaker than real life for most of us. There is some sense that human beings (in general, if you prefer), are all right, really. And as for the Macedonians – if they can live and struggle with their heritage of darkness and oppression, and get through it, as they must with the new generations, whether as a group or as individuals – they should be accorded every respect and recognition.

ENDNOTES

1. Henry Noel Brailsford, *Macedonia: Its Races and Their Future , Methuen & Co*, (Nabu reprint). I should add that a psychiatrist, practising in Skopje, Dr. Vitomir Micev, wrote a monograph titled *Fear*, (sub-titled, from the diary of a psychiatrist, Стравот, *низ дневникот на еден психијатар*) about thirty years ago in which all the case studies are analysed from a Freudian perspective (alas a bit too crude for my taste on some occasions). He was a specialist on phobias, clearly the central problem in his clinical work.

2. Kuzman A Shapkarev, Izbrani Dela, Tom 4, priredil T. Sazdov, Misla, Skopje 1976.

APPENDIX 1

Доне: Да не имаш 100 долари да ми дадеш?

Алтана:(Се изненадува) А? Што, што ми рече?

Доне: За пари не ти се слуша.

Алтана:Пак немаш?

Доне: Утре „сентралинк“ ми плаќа. Ќе ти ги вратам.

Алтана:И минатата недела така ми рече, ама...

Доне: Жими мајка ќе ти ги вратам.

Алтана:Пак ги искоцка?

Доне: (Со агресивност) Што е сега? И ти како Елена ќе ме пееш?

Алтана:(Се крсти пред иконата) Тешко мене. Како нема Господ да ме земе и да се куртулам, да не гледам срамотилоци.

Доне: Доста! Не богомоли како некоја калуѓерка, туку дај пари.

Алтана:(Вади банковна книшка) Еве види, немам ни еден долар... не можам ни едно кафе со „френојте“ да се напијам.

Доне: (Ја грабнува книшката, погледнува и ѝ ја фрла назад) Каде ги потроши? Да не имаш друга книшка?

Алтана:Не мајче, да пукнам овде ако имам...

Доне: На стар човек не му требаат пари...ќе ги загини...

Алтана:Ќе умрам и ќе немате пари да ме закопате. Ќе ми се смеат луѓето, а и вас со прст ќе ве покажуваат...

Доне: Па ти чекај и не умирај додека не собереме пари.

Алтана:Последниот долар ти го дадов за колата, а тие пари ми беа за закопнина. Нашите, сите имаат купено место за гроб, а јас така останав...

Доне: Не ти треба гроб – ќе те изгореме – така е поевтино...

Алтана:(Одговорува со одсечност) Не, тоа не! Што сум јас, куче?

Доне: Ами сакаш црвјата да те јадат?

Алтана:Срам да ти е! Те родив и израснав за вака да ме понижуваш?

Доне: Се смеам – ќе те закопаме како што сакаш...

Алтана:Сакам гроб да ми направите како што јас му направив на татко ти.

Доне: Ти како да немаш памет! Кошташе 20 илјади долари.

Алтана:(Категорички) Мислам дека заслужив за толку.

Доне: Добро де, добро. Ќе те ставиме во истиот гроб со тате.

Алтана:Ауууу! Како во истиот? Никако со татко ти! Јас одвај се спасив од него на овој свет, а ти сакаш и на тој свет да сум со него.

Доне: Океј, океј, само не викај. Јас ќе земам кредит.

Алтана:Јас си имав пари за тоа ама ти

сакаше да си купиш кола и...

Доне: Ми требаше кола за на работа.

Алтана: Требаше да си земеш кредит, а не јас да останам без една цента...

Доне: Кредит не ми даваат. Туку, што се расправам со тебе... одам да барам работа (Излегува).

Алтана: Да бараш работа сега? Во недела? (Се крсти) Господе! Дај му памет и здравје на детево...

(Затемнување на сцената)

APPENDIX 2

Елена: Лелеее Доне, што направи? Зошто ми ја истури манџата?

Доне: (Отсечно) Зошто? Затоа што не чини! Ни куче не ја јади. Ако не знаеш да готвиш, не си го губи времето.

Елена: Ами манџите на мајка ти не се подобри?

Доне: Ти на мајка ми не можеш ниту на малиот прст да ѝ се фатиш. Треба да признаеш дека за ништо не те бидува. Проста си како грав, а еден грав не знаеш да зготвиш.

Елена: Знам, знам дека не ме бидува. Ти готвам, ти чистам, те перам, те пеглам и пак за ништо не ме бидува. Дали си свесен дека ако мене ме нема, ти ќе скапиш во смрдеа и ќе умреш за јадење. Не знаеш ниту еден сендвич да си направиш. Ти го сервирам јадењето како во ресторан, ама ниту тоа не е ти е доволно. Се однесуваш како недорастено дете. (Го имитира) „Елена каде ми се чорапите... каде ми се гаќите...донеси ми „бира“... донеси ми вода...“. Да не сакаш и газот да ти го бришам!

Доне: (Станува) Доста! Не скокај многу. Што си се разгракала како некоја стрчка. Да не сакаш пак ќе те пикнам в болница? Граѓанка те направив за да ми скокаш сега? Ако не те извадев од селото до ден денес ќе јадеше трици со свињите.

Елена: Леле, мајко, ти ме спаси, а? Да не сакаш сега да те викам Господ. Ти мене ако не ме земеше до ден денес ќе шеташе по кафаните како оној смрдениот Пида.

Доне: Ако не те земев, ти ќе питаше по улиците. (Седнува)

Елена: Море јас ако не бев, ти си тој кој ќе питаше по улици. Не си способен една обична работа да си ја задржиш. До вчера мајка ти те гледаше, а сега јас. Наместо да бараш работа, ти лежиш овде како вреќа со компири и по цел ден телевизија гледаш со мајка ти.

Доне: А ти? Заборави кога седеше со години дома и си го шириш задникот, а јас работев по две работи?

Елена: Ако толку многу си работел тогаш зошто банката ни ја зеде куќата?

Доне: Па сигурно ќе ни ја земи кога ти по цел ден киснеше во шопинг и само глупости купуваше.

Елена: Така ли? А заборави ли кога ми даваше по десед долари на ден? Немав пари едно рало гајќи да си купам...

Доне: Толку заслужуваше.

Елена: Да, јас толку, а ти? Ја прокоцка цела куќа и ми го прокоцка животот.

Доне: Еве, имаме куќа.

Елена: Ова не е моја куќа, а не е ни твоја...

Доне: Тогаш оди работи и купи си, а не само да зборуваш колку си вредна и работлива.

Елена: Така ми било пишано. Кога ти не си способен, јас треба да бидам и маж и жена...

Доне: (Станува со заканување) Кој не е способен? Вештицо, со една тупаница ќе леташ низ прозорец!

Елена: Ааа, знам, ти си опасен маж. Само еднаш мавни ме и одма ќе викнам полиција!

Доне: (Седнува) Знам де, знам... тоа си е закон на Австралија, криви – прави жените секогаш имаат повеќе право од мажите.

Елена: Токму така. А знаеш ли зошто е така? Затоа што има многу такви мажи како што си ти. И ако немаше таков закон, ти мене ќе ме третираш како животно. (Ја ниша главата) Еј, Елено, Елоно, со години трпеше малтретирање и живееше во страв. А зошто? (Се врти кон Доне) Што ти имав згрешено? Дали некогаш ти згрешив нешто или те навредив за да ме третираш со толкава омраза и непочит?

Доне: Ако не ти се допаѓа, оди си.

Елена: Јас на гледам друг излез од овој пекол. Ќе морам тоа да го направам. Ќе си ги земам децата и нема да не видиш повеќе.

A Macedonian Food Festival

Visited by our roving photographic journalist, Diane Kitanoski

The sun was shining bright when the Macedonian Australian Organisation (MACO) held it's first and very successful food festival in Williamstown in October last year. With over 5,000 Macedonians turning up to taste the traditional food, the demand for kebapi outstripped the supply, but the rakia was plentiful, and the tasting of various imported beers and wines, was also on offer.

Nationally known musical act the Bumbari band graced the stage amongst many dancing groups including Geelong's group Biser. The crowd's hearts were singing as everyone joined in to do an "Oro", with many flags proudly flying high towards the end of the day.

It was a showcase of Macedonia's rich culture with people coming from as far as regional Victoria. It was a day for young and old. Everywhere you looked it was a sea of red and yellow with people proudly wearing the Macedonian colours. A wonderful cultural event promoting Macedonian food and its culture to the next generation of Australian Macedonians.

Text and photos by Diane Kitanoski.

Diane Kitanoski Photography

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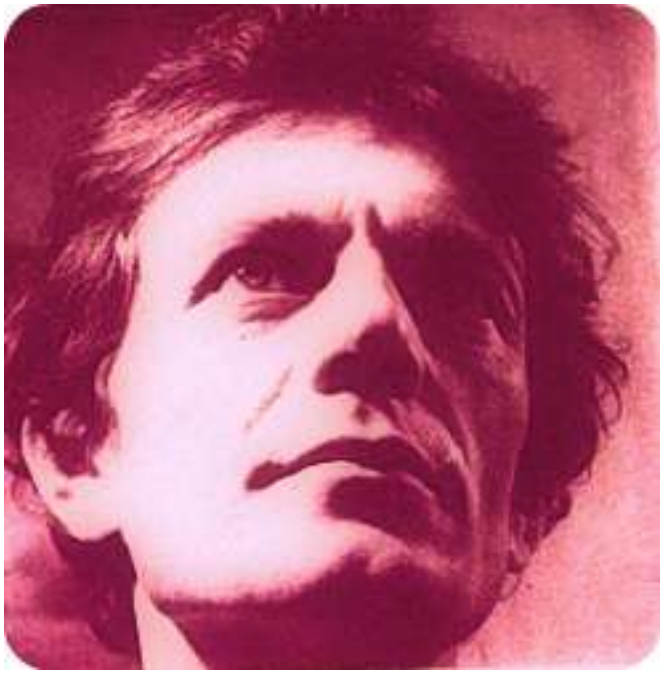

The Poetry of Radovan Pavlovski

Radovan Pavlovski, who was born in Southern Serbia (1937), is one of the finest poets to ever write in the Macedonian language. His poetry will, no doubt, continue to be read or recited by generations of Macedonians to come. It is such a gift to those who speak the Macedonian language.

Radovan Pavlovski might be considered difficult to understand if one insists on a clear, precise message from a poem. However, he might be considered one of the easiest poets to simply appreciate and to enjoy.

Perhaps I can best illustrate my point for the English speaking reader by making reference to the lyrics of a Bob Dylan song. His lyrics often have some similar effect on me as those of Radovan Pavlovski. Take, for example, a lyric like: *"I ain't gonna work on Maggie's farm no more. She hands you a nickel, she hands you a dime, then she fines you every time you slam the door."*

The listener to this song has no idea who Maggie is, other than the fact that he or she runs a farm and is not a particularly kind employer. So much so that the singer vows that he will never work on her farm ever again. However, the listener immediately understands and appreciates the sentiment of the song, that there are petty tyrants out in the world (a teacher, a drill sergeant, an employer, etc.) whom one vows never to willingly fall under the power of again. We may not know the specific details of the story in this song, but we can readily appreciate the sentiment and identify emotionally with the singer.

The poet Radovan Pavlovski has a similar effect on those who listen to his poetry. The elusive metaphorical language that is so characteristic of Radovan Pavlovski's poetry touches the listener in much the same way as Bob Dylan's use of words. If one cannot say precisely what the poet meant in a poem, one can almost always appreciate the meaning of the poem on some emotive, intuitive or instinctive level.

One of my favorite poems by Radovan Pavlovski, translated by the distinguished professor of Slavic studies and devoted friend of Macedonia, Reginald de Bray, in a book entitled *Road to the Mountains*, Leros Press, Canberra, 1985, is entitled simply *"Angel."* Part 1 of this poem reads as follows:

ANGEL

1.
The stars of the dead give forth their light
Such brightness from all sides
that one's eyes ache at the sight
and there is no shade for rest or sleep. Women,
mothers, children, old men, young boys and girls
with padlocks and keys hitched to their belts
climb up the mountain
walk across the sky and call to their Angel
and he responds and opens their eyes:
The star of our people rises
and from joy I feel I must clap with my hand
on stones, on my knees, and my heart
is full of tenderness and the mountains tremble
from the beauty. For our Lineage the Angel has been
the seed and flame for a thousand years;
In a small temple he leaves a sign.
Whether you come from wars,
or seek healing in freedom
or perhaps you no longer have any parents,
brother Angel, come with me, sharpen my sight,
if pain torments you, move a mountain
and be again
the visible fruit of an invisible power.

Ангел

1.
Изгреваат и ѕвездите на умрените
Толку светлина од сите страни
кога од видливост очи болат
а нема ни сенка за одмор и сон Жени
мајки деца старци момчиња и девојки
со катанци и клучеви заденати за појас
се искачуваат на планина горе
по небо чекорат и го довикуваат Ангелот свој
а тој се одѕива одврзува очи:
Изгрева ѕвездата на народот
а мени ми доаѓа од радост да треснам со дланка
по камења по колена да ми се отвори
нежно срце, планините да затреперат
од убавина Од наша Лоза бил Ангелот
на илјада години семе и пламен,
во мал храм тој остава нишан.
Од војни ли доаѓаш,
во слободали бараш лек
или ти веќе немаш родители,
Ангелу брате, појди со мене, изостри вид,
ако те измачува бол, помести планина
и пак биди
на невидлива сила видлив плод.

Dr. Michael Seraphioff

There, no doubt, could be other interpretations of this poem, but I see the poet, above all, evoking the memory of those who struggled and died to realize the dream of an independent Macedonian nation state. *"The star of our people rises,"* writes the poet. And as he celebrates those who died for the good of us all, as he declares them to be our *"Angels,"* he calls for their help to give us strength to endure the hardship that is the lot of those who would sustain the Macedonian name, identity and state in an all too often hostile world: *"the Angel has been the seed and flame for a thousand years."*

The best poetry manages to somehow give expression to that which is difficult to find words for. In this case, the joy of a people at the realization, after so much time and so much suffering, of a common dream of freedom of expression and self-determination. And what better word can there possibly be to describe those who suffered and died for the sake of their people than to name them our angels.

Dr. Michael Seraphinoff

In respectful recognition of the importance of the partition of Macedonia in 1913, the AMHRC is planning a series of manifestations to mark the passing of one hundred years since that fateful event. Among the most prominent of these is the following:

The Partition of Macedonia and the Balkan Wars of 1912-13

4-6 September 2013 ● Melbourne, Australia

The Australian Macedonian Human Rights Committee (AMHRC) in cooperation with Monash University

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An international scholarly conference

The year 2013 marks the 100th anniversary of the end of the second Balkan War. As a result of this war, a region of the Ottoman Empire known as Macedonia was divided and annexed by Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria. This was sanctioned by the signing of the Treaty of Bucharest on the 10th of August 1913. In the context of Macedonia's highly contested modern history and the current topicality of the Republic of Macedonia's international recognition, this multidisciplinary conference will aim to make a substantial contribution to an understanding of this important aspect of modern Macedonian history. The conference will attempt a **historical survey** of the context and the effects, both short and long term, of the partition of Macedonia on the inhabitants of Macedonia, from a variety of perspectives, especially **linguistic**, **sociological, anthropological and political.**

Some of the speakers who will be in attendance and their topics:

- Professor Andrew Rossos, University of Toronto:
  The Balkan Wars (1912–13) and the Partition of Macedonia: A Historical Perspective
- Professor Victor Friedman, University of Chicago:
  The effects of Partition on the languages spoken in Macedonia
- Professor Katerina Kolozova, American University College Skopje:
  History as Contingency and as the Real of a National Identity
- Professor Keith Brown, Watson Institute, Brown University:
  How Trauma Travels
- Professor Peter Hill, University of Hamburg:
  The Partition in relation to the later Codification of the Macedonian Language
- Professor Loring Danforth, Bates College:
  From the Partition of Macedonia to the Creation of the Transborder Prespa Park
- Professor Christina Kramer, University of Toronto:
  Partitioning Language Policy and Status Planning in Macedonia

To be followed by presentations from six more academics specialising in Macedonian Studies.

The conference will end with the 30th Annual AMHRC Dinner on Saturday the 7th of September 2013, at which members of the Macedonian community will be able to interact with the conference speakers.

It is envisaged that a book containing the papers presented at the conference will be published for distribution to tertiary libraries.

Other announcements to be made over the coming weeks and months.

Book Review: *Macedonia and Greece – Battle for the Name: Legal Mechanisms in the United Nations for return/use of the name – Republic of Macedonia by Janko Bachev*

Article by Dr. Vasko Nastevski

Dr Janko Bachev's *Macedonia and Greece – Battle for the Name* is a valuable and appealing book that adds to the existing discourse around the international community's so-called 'name issue', in which the Republic of Macedonia finds itself in a perpetual discussion/ negotiation over the right to use its democratically chosen name. The substantive content of the book represents Dr Bachev's doctoral dissertation, awarded from the School of Law 'Justinian I' Skopje. The primary focus of Dr Bachev's book is stated as being the processes and the legal mechanisms in the United Nations that are available to the Republic of Macedonia to initiate action for "*returning/usage of its constitutional name in the UN*". However, to the reviewer, the book is less about the standards and authority to be found in substantive international law and the associated procedural and legal mechanisms, although Dr Bachev does a very good job outlining these, rather the book seems to be more a reflection on the growing frustration and disappointment with Macedonia's international status and especially its treatment by the international community relative to other states. Significantly, this feeling is being expressed here by an 'insider'; that is from somebody that not only resides within the Republic of Macedonia, but has been part of and worked within the internal state structures.

The difficulty of Dr Bachev's intellectual task is notable, requiring the piecing together of various areas of international law and practice, international procedural and legal processes and reconciling sensitive international politics. Whilst none of these things are a mystery in themselves, prosecuting a case that seeks the "*returning/ usage of [Macedonia's] constitutional name in the UN*" firstly requires undoing existing legal agreements and other international legal instruments before one can make the case. Dr Bachev makes a valiant attempt in this regard, mostly through a positivist analysis of the existing state of international law. The self-acknowledged motivation behind Dr Bachev's work is twofold: firstly through patriotic duty given the issue is of the highest national interest and secondly, an intellectual contribution to an area that has not been the

subject of much deep analysis, at least within the Republic of Macedonia.

The book is written in Macedonian, so I feel that a couple of qualifications are necessary. Firstly, every effort has been made to translate the arguments and positions articulated in the book in their original context as accurately as possible. Of course any errors in this regard remain with the author of the review. Secondly, it should be understood that not all of the nuances and complexities in the arguments promulgated by Dr Bachev are likely to be captured in such a short review.

The Book

The book has four main chapters. The first three chapters rehearse the recent historical machinations from the declaration of independence of the Republic of Macedonia in 1991 to the formal 'name dispute' and the United Nations. This background and historical context forms a very useful prelude to the book's ultimate purpose of investigating the various legal mechanisms within the United Nations for challenging Macedonia's existing status. Dr Bachev, at times, also provides some detailed and intriguing accounts of various manoeuvrings by state institutions, international and regional organisations and certain individual actors through the many stages of Macedonia's quest for recognition under its self chosen name. Nevertheless, for readers wishing to engage the stated purpose of the book, it is not till chapter four that the book comes into its own.

Here, the book is neatly sequenced. It begins with a discussion about whether the so-called name issue is best approached as one being purely legal in nature or one that has a political character. Dr Bachev asserts that Macedonia's preference to date to follow a political/diplomatic course has proven ineffective. Moreover, he suggests that continuing down this path will not result in an acceptable outcome for either side, least of all for Macedonia. The implication seems to be that both states' essential interests cannot be reconciled through political and diplomatic means. Dr Bachev does not hesitate to outline that for Greece, this ultimately means denial of a Macedonian identity, and conversely for Macedonia it means defence of its name and identity. A political outcome is only possible if one of the parties to the 'dispute' withdraws from their fundamental position. The implication being that this is unlikely given that it would represent complete defeat of one side.

Although not obvious, from here Dr Bachev's argument seems to follow a position that a dispassionate formulaic legal approach to the 'name issue' can avoid 'winners and losers' in a political context and the inevitable emotional political confrontations between the two countries. Accordingly, Dr Bachev states that the Republic of Macedonia needs to overturn its current policy of pursuing a political/diplomatic approach and turn to available legal mechanisms. Without yet analysing Dr Bachev's preferred approach, purely from a lawyer's perspective, it is of course a sensible course to take. But it is difficult to accept that legal proceedings themselves, particularly in an international context, will remove political sensitivities given that international legal proceedings are in themselves the result of strategic political calculations.

Nevertheless, Dr Bachev then tackles perhaps the most important part of his task, the possible procedural limitations present to pursuing legal mechanisms. These include Security Council Resolution 817 in which Macedonia gained membership to the United Nations under the 'provisional' reference "*the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*" and the Interim Accord entered into by the Republic of Macedonia and the Hellenic Republic, which engaged both sides in the so-called 'name negotiations'. Dr Bachev declares that the nature of these two instruments themselves represents a breach of international law and that their inherent invitation to reach a 'solution' over the name of an independent and sovereign country, in the circumstances, is yet a further violation of international law. Indeed, he argues that these two very instruments can form part of the evidence and argumentation in any legal proceedings. Dr Bachev presents his own innovative legal reasoning with a view to annul any procedural significance that might be given to Security Council Resolution 817 and the Interim Accord. It is this legal reasoning that offers the most interesting reading in the book and is therefore worth summarising.

Security Council Resolution 817

Dr Bachev submits that the Republic of Macedonia should publically state that accepting Resolution 817 does not at the same time mean that the Republic of Macedonia has undertaken binding obligations to reach an ultimate conclusion to the so-called 'name issue'. Indeed, Dr Bachev argues that through a purely technical/legal perspective the only obligation that exists for both sides is that both sides should enter into and conduct discussions in relation to the differences over the name. In other words, the Security Council, through Resolution 817 is

merely providing the basis for a resolution, but no binding obligation to actually reach a final agreement over the name. In doing so, Resolution 817 neither prevents the Republic of Macedonia from using the name chosen by its people.

Secondly, the Republic of Macedonia should publically declare that under international law it has a right to choose its own name and that it will never accept the 'provisional' reference "*the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*" to be its name. Thirdly, it should be made clear that the Republic of Macedonia's membership in the United Nations is a definite fact and cannot be re-opened. The 'provisional' reference cannot be made a condition for such membership. Indeed, Resolution 817 makes it clear that the Republic of Macedonia has fulfilled "*the criteria for membership in the United Nations laid down in Article 4 of the Charter*". Whilst Resolution 817 recommends use of the 'provisional' reference, at the same time it does not prevent the Republic of Macedonia using its constitutional name, which is evidenced by the fact that it has entered into diplomatic relations with over 130 countries as such.

Fourthly, the Republic of Macedonia should recall Opinion 6 of the Badinter Arbitration Commission of 11 January 1992, in which the Commission takes the view that the use of the name "*Macedonia*" cannot imply territorial claims against another state given that the Republic of Macedonia has renounced such claims. Fifthly, it should be understood that Resolution 817 is itself a document that has temporary import for which its significance has passed. The two decades of negotiations/discussions has not resulted in any agreement and neither is there any such agreement on the horizon. Therefore, the indefinite use of a 'provisional' name is simply not reconcilable with any legal thinking or human logic. Twenty years is more than a reasonable period of time to try and reach an agreement and the failure to do so suggests that it is simply not possible. All of this indicates that whatever obligation Macedonia may have had to negotiate over its name stemming from Resolution 817 is now at an end as any legitimate basis that Resolution 817 might have had has surely been exhausted.

Interim Accord

Before delving into his reasoning against the Interim Accord, Dr Bachev takes the opportunity to firstly point out that ratification of the Interim Accord by the Macedonian Parliament is arguably inconsistent with the constitution of the Republic of Macedonia. Based on a Macedonian language version of the Interim Accord, ratification was for an Interim "*understanding*" and not necessarily an Interim "*accord*" and secondly, referring to the Republic of Macedonia in the Interim Accord as the "*Party of the Second Part*" gives the impression that the contracting party is a private party and not the sovereign and independent country of the Republic of Macedonia, as a subject under international law and as is conceived within the Macedonian constitution. Further, the legally correct appellation recognised under the constitution is that of the 'Republic of Macedonia'. Accordingly, formal legal instruments in which the Republic of Macedonia enters into must contain the correct appellation. Even more interestingly, Dr Bachev suggests that during the international legal proceedings in which the Republic of Macedonia brought the Hellenic Republic before the International Court of Justice for breach of the Interim Accord, the revelation that Greece itself had not actually ratified the Interim Accord is probably due to similar restrictions in the Greek constitution; that is Greece being referred to as the "*Party of the First Part*" in the Interim Accord.

In any event, Dr Bachev then proceeds to make the case against any possible procedural limitations from taking international legal action due to the existence of the Interim Accord. He rightfully argues that the very basis of the Interim Accord, in which it engages both parties in negotiations over the so-called 'name issue' remains inconsistent with the general thrust of international law and the purposes and rules of the United Nations itself. Despite this, the Republic of Macedonia entered into the Interim Accord in good faith and in full observance of its requirements. Notwithstanding this, following all reasonable attempts to resolve the so-called 'name dispute', after seventeen years there seems no prospects that a resolution will be found. Moreover, given that the Republic of Macedonia is to seek full use of its self chosen name within the United Nations any ongoing 'negotiations' serve no perceivable objective.

Accordingly, Dr Bachev appends his case by reference to Article 5(2) of the Interim Accord in which each party not only "*reserve all of [their] rights consistent with the specific obligations undertaken in [the] Interim Accord*", but "*to carry out normal trade and commerce between them in a manner* ***consistent with their respective positions*** *in regard to the name of the Party to the Second Part [Macedonia]. The Parties shall take practical measures so that the*

difference about the name of the Party to the Second Part [Macedonia] will not obstruct or interfere with normal trade and commerce between the Party of the Second Part [Macedonia] and third parties". Dr Bachev interprets this as meaning that nobody, not even the United Nations can prescribe a different name for the "*Party to the Second Part*" [Macedonia] and that equally nobody can compel the "*Party of the First Part*" [Greece] to accept that name.

In the alternative, Dr Bachev reminds his readers that under Article 23(2), the "*Interim Accord shall remain in force until superseded by a definitive agreement, provided that after seven years either Party may withdraw from this Interim Accord by a written notice, which shall take effect 12 months after its delivery to the other Party*". Dr Bachev asserts that based on this clause, the Interim Accord arguably technically elapsed in 2002, but because neither side has formally withdrawn their participation it continues to remain valid. Nonetheless, it is open to the Republic of Macedonia to invoke Article 23(2) based on the fact that it has technically elapsed, in doing so the Republic of Macedonia can make a unilateral announcement that the Interim Accord is effectively null and void, consistent with Article 53 of the *Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties*, which states that:

> *A treaty is void if, at the time of its conclusion, it conflicts with a peremptory norm of general international law. For the purposes of the present Convention, a peremptory norm of general international law is a norm accepted and recognized by the international community of States as a whole as a norm from which no derogation is permitted and which can be modified only by a subsequent norm of general international law having the same character.*

Moreover, Article 103 of the *Charter of the United Nations* states that "[*i*]*n the event of a conflict between the obligations of the Members of the United Nations under the present Charter and their obligations under any other international agreement, their obligations under the present Charter shall prevail*". Accordingly, Dr Bachev argues that based on general international law and the law of the United Nations, the Republic of Macedonia has a right to use a name of its own choosing and therefore it cannot be consistent with these rights and at the same time 'negotiate' its name.

Dr Bachev then appears to go off on an interesting tangent from his legal reasoning and provides a brief criticism of Macedonia's initial rush to entertain and engage in processes that saw it relinquishing its original national flag, make amendments to its constitution to effectively withdraw any interest to the Macedonian minority in Greece (despite that the Greek constitution promotes Greek interest in Greek minorities outside of Greece), to all but abandon the historical argument to Greece and to hastily accept the use of the 'provisional' reference "*the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*". He affords a lot of the blame to the foreign and diplomatic corps of the Republic of Macedonia at the time and especially the insufficient expertise in international law and practice. In a sense, and as mentioned at the outset, it seems to the reviewer that this short digression reflects the larger frustration and disappointment of the position in which the Republic of Macedonia finds itself. The reader should expect such parenthesis frequently throughout the book, but far from being distracting (unless you are a lawyer hell bent on pure legal reasoning!), it provides an interesting supplement to the book's central purpose.

Finally, in returning to his legal reasoning, Dr Bachev highlights directly the clear contradiction inherent within the Interim Accord itself. By this stage it seems to be an obvious point, perhaps more so because he alludes to it throughout his book, but even this does not detract from its damning conclusion. Dr Bachev firstly points to Article 5(1), which neatly encapsulates the whole purpose of the Interim Accord in which the "*parties agree to continue negotiations … with a view to reaching agreement on the difference[s]*" that have arisen over the name. He then points out to the Preamble of the Interim Accord and especially Article 9, which states:

> *In the conduct of their affairs the Parties shall be guided by the spirit and principles of democracy, fundamental freedoms, respect for human rights and dignity, and the rule of law, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, the International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Helsinki Final Act, the document of the Copenhagen Meeting of the Conference on the Human Dimension of*

the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Charter of Paris for a New Europe.

As Dr Bachev asserts, it is these very international instruments that maintain international legal obligations such as the right to self determination, the equality of sovereign states, the right of a state to be in charge of its own jurisdiction, the non-interference in a states' domestic affairs and so on. The above rights, as expressed within the international instruments mentioned, upon a closer analysis fundamentally provide that the name of a state is exclusively an internal question for the state itself and one that cannot be subject to 'negotiation' with any other party.

Legal Mechanisms

The book then moves to its inevitable finale methodically outlining the four possible legal mechanisms in the United Nations available to the Republic of Macedonia for "*returning/usage of its constitutional name in the UN*". These include the Secretariat of the United Nations, the Security Council, the General Assembly and the International Court of Justice. From a practical perspective, Dr Bachev adds that ultimately the choice of which legal path to take should be as a result of strategic political calculations on behalf of the authorities in the Republic of Macedonia. Moreover, any such course should firstly secure wider consensus within the political system and political subjects of the Republic of Macedonia as a question that involves the highest national interest. One gets the sense that these practical points are made by Dr Bachev as a way to lead into heavy criticism of past failures by previous authorities. Whilst read objectively such critique can be constructive, on occasions it does appear as if Dr Bachev is merely using the opportunity to make domestic political points against the existing political structures in the country. To a reader with some knowledge of the politics within the Republic of Macedonia, despite being reasonable criticism, it can distract from the main purposes of the book.

Dr Bachev spends a bit of time going though the likely processes necessary in his four options. Without reciting all of the details here, in summary, regarding the Secretariat of the United Nations, the Republic of Macedonia would simply formally notify the General-Secretary that the Republic of Macedonia will request that henceforth within the United Nations that it be referred to by its self chosen name. Dr Bachev does not ignore the likely reactions to this, from the possibility that the Secretary-General may prevaricate and hold Macedonia's notification in abeyance, the inevitable reaction by Greece and even the possibility that such a "*provocative*" action may leave the General Assembly apprehensive. For these and other reasons, Dr Bachev does not recommend this option.

Regarding the Security Council option, Dr Bachev firstly runs through the various ways in which the question of the name of the Republic of Macedonia can find its way before the Security Council. This can happen via the Secretary-General or the General Assembly, in which a request is made regarding Macedonia's membership within the United Nations, or alternatively if one of these organs believes that the issue is likely to endanger international peace and security. By Article 35(1) of the *Charter of the United Nations*, the Republic of Macedonia, or any other member may bring any dispute to the attention of the Security Council. Dr Bachev examines the possible issues that the Security Council may take into consideration once the matter is before it, but this remains largely speculative. Dr Bachev then notes that once the issue is before the Security Council, it essentially removes any possibility of the General Assembly making its own recommendations and leaves the matter to the absolute discretion of the Security Council. In doing so, Dr Bachev again speculates that this can only result in the Security Council making political/diplomatic recommendations. This of course will defeat the purpose of seeking a legal outcome. Further, a hearing before the Security Council invites concentrated lobbying behind the scenes to try and garner the votes of the members of the Security Council, which itself diminishes any so-called legal process. For these reasons, Dr Bachev does not recommend this option either.

The next organ considered is that of the General Assembly. Here the Republic of Macedonia will simply request that the General Assembly place on its agenda for one of its plenary sessions the request that the Republic of Macedonia be able to use the name the 'Republic of Macedonia' within the framework of the United Nations. Dr Bachev highlights that argumentation will need to be led by Macedonia both regarding procedural and legal matters, which will no doubt illicit strong reactions by Greece and even attempts to obstruct the whole process. Assuming Greece is not successful in scuttling the process, the question should ultimately come down to a vote in the General Assembly. Whilst there will be a need to undertake serious lobbying

and possibly see off other procedural committee stages, Dr Bachev asserts that an intelligent campaign by the Republic of Macedonia should ensure that it achieves majority support, not least of all from member countries that have already recognised the Republic of Macedonia in bilateral relations under its constitutional name. Accordingly, Dr Bachev recommends this option be pursued.

Finally, Dr Bachev outlines the process in which the International Court of Justice (ICJ) may play a role. By Article 96 of the *Charter of the United Nations* either the Security Council or the General Assembly may request the ICJ to give an advisory opinion on any legal question. Dr Bachev suggests that the more likely scenario is that the General Assembly makes the request given historical preferences that such matters are referred following resolutions by the General Assembly. Again, Dr Bachev does not ignore that the Republic of Macedonia will need to lobby hard to get such a resolution. Further, once before the ICJ, Dr Bachev does express some cynicism that the judges of the ICJ may not always be immune from political influences, especially when it concerns the interests of the large powers. He points to the "*debacle*" over the advisory opinion sought over Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence. Dr Bachev questions the merits behind the ICJ's opinion in which they stated that Kosovo's actions were not inconsistent with international law or at least international law did not prevent such actions.

Nevertheless, Dr Bachev still recommends the ICJ as a reasonable option for the Republic of Macedonia for various reasons. Firstly, given the length of time of the current 'negotiations' and the almost non-existent prospects that a 'solution' will be found through the existing processes, for the General Assembly seeking an ICJ opinion perhaps offers the best hope of concluding the so-called 'name issue'. Secondly, Dr Bachev optimistically reaches the conclusion that the Republic of Macedonia's prospects for success before the ICJ are very good based on international law. This being so, he considers that the ICJ will have little option but to find in favour of Macedonia. Also, unlike the Kosovo case, there does not seem to be much international pressure to influence the outcome in the ICJ based on political considerations, or at least against Macedonia, which is evidenced by the fact that the Republic of Macedonia was successful in its recent case before the ICJ arguing that Greece had breached the terms of the Interim Accord. Thirdly, there is strong precedence stemming from the ICJ that clearly points to a decision in favour of Macedonia. Dr Bachev here points to an ICJ advisory opinion of 1948 in which it states that there should be no conditions extraneous placed on applicant countries for membership in the United Nations outside of Article 4 of the *Charter of the United Nations*. Dr Bachev recommends this option.

Brief Comment

Dr Bachev has provided us with a worthwhile contribution to the conversation on the right of the Republic of Macedonia to use its self chosen name. The underlying assumption in his work however is that a 'name issue' exists and that the best way to confront it, from the perspective of the Republic of Macedonia is to treat it as a purely legal question. Firstly, whilst the 'legal' case for Macedonia is strong, even a most comprehensive legal victory will not resolve the so-called 'name issue'. It is difficult to imagine Greece simply accepting any such legal outcome and as is proven time again, there is very little international enforcement of international law, least of all against Greece. Greece has been acting outside such legal frameworks for decades with its consistent human rights violations against the Macedonian minority. As I have written previously, neither will an international legal answer such as the one recommended in this book result in a resolution of the so-called 'name issue' in its totality. This may cause a victory within the framework of the United Nations, but it will not dissuade Greece from pursuing any and all methods to interrupt the Republic of Macedonia's status elsewhere. As Dr Bachev himself identifies, Greece's fundamental position from which it cannot withdraw politically, let alone psychologically, is to deny the existence of the Macedonian people. The existence of a country that declares its independent legal personality as the Republic of Macedonia, representing as it does the reality of a Macedonian identity, is the very antithesis of the current Greek State. So the question that remains unanswered is: international legal proceedings to what end? Why would the Republic of Macedonia put itself through such anxious moments? Why should it? Is this not really an 'issue' for Greece?

Certainly, for the purposes of international justice, the challenge is not simply to appreciate the competencies and relational context of the various international legal structures and processes, but also the moral and conceptual location of the issue which inevitably pre-empts any practical legal response. To this effect,

contemplating a purely legal response seems limiting. Whilst we need to accept that Dr Bachev's clearly stated aim is to highlight the legal mechanisms available to the Republic of Macedonia for return and use of its constitutional name in the United Nations, his book does however indirectly make a very strong moral claim on behalf of the Republic of Macedonia. This may leave some readers wondering why a laborious legal process is necessary given the clear moral position of the Republic of Macedonia.

Dr Bachev's book should give the reader the real impression that the issues being confronted by the Republic of Macedonia seem to be of their own doing. Not only from the fact that it was poor political judgment and decisions that led the Republic of Macedonia into its current status, but even worse, seemingly the most difficult and complex legal arguments for it to make now (assuming we follow Dr Bachev's legal approach) lies in the fact that the Republic of Macedonia continues to entertain 'negotiation' and 'discussion' over its name. To turn to Dr Bachev's thesis again, it would seem that in the first instance, the real decision to be made is one of a purely political character. In other words, withdrawing from the Interim Accord is in substance a political question. Further, as offered in a previous article published in Issue 12, following this, the Republic of Macedonia can then "*provide notice to the United Nations and other international and regional bodies that it will henceforth be exercising its independent legal personality under an identity of its own choosing*". Once this step is taken, the question then is what value is there in getting bogged down in difficult legal proceedings where a risk always remains of losing?

Dr Bachev's genuine desire to disentangle the Republic of Macedonia from its current status is more than commendable. In doing so he presents both innovative legal reasoning and a more than useful exposition of the various legal processes and mechanisms in the United Nations. To this extent, his book is a significant contribution to this unresolved discussion and one that will perhaps have greater impact within the Republic of Macedonia than elsewhere.

Dr. Vasko Nastevski – Executive member of the AMHRC.

Dr. Vasko Nastevski

Some images from the MHRMI human rights night and other events, last September with special guest Dimitri Jovanov, the editor of *Nova Zora* – a monthly newspaper voicing the concerns of Macedonians in Aegean Macedonia

ABOUT MHRMI & AMHRC

Macedonian Human Rights Movement International (MHRMI) has been active since 1986. The Australian Macedonian Human Rights Committee (AMHRC) has been active since 1984.

Both MHRMI and AMHRC are non-governmental organisations that inform and advocate about combating racism and promoting human rights. Our joint aspiration is to ensure that Macedonian communities and other excluded groups throughout the world, are recognised, respected and afforded equitable treatment.

RELATED ORGANIZATIONS

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

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MACEDONIAN ALLIANCE FOR EUROPEAN INTEGRATION
The political party of the Macedonians in Albania

Website	www.macedoniansinalbania.org

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MACEDONIAN SOCIETY "ILINDEN" TIRANA
A Macedonian cultural association in Tirana, Albania

Website	www.ilinden-tirana.com

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

Website	novazora.gr

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

Website	www.narodnavolja.com

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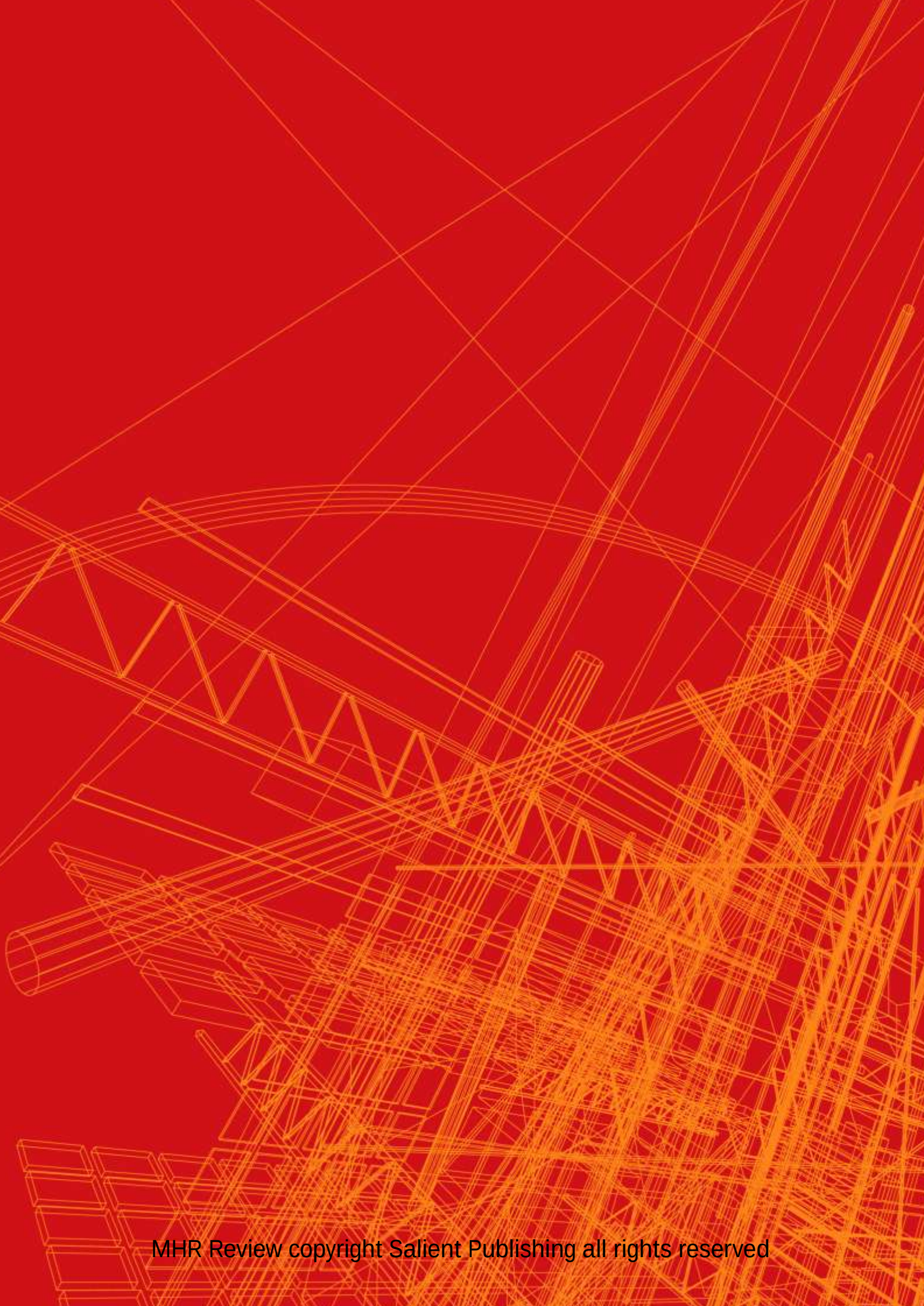

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