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EVANGELOS VENIZELOS: THE 'GOOD NEIGHBOR'

By George Vlahov

We shall begin by noting that even if it is true that the rumors which assign a different original surname to our good teacher of civility are false and malicious in intent, they serve him well in the context of the discourse in the subsequent paragraphs. For whether or not there is accuracy in such hearsay, some of his compatriots have zealously raised the volume of those whispers to that of a well broadcast shout, which has aided in creating the perception that the apparently former Mr. Turkoglou (son of Turk) is a practitioner of at least *some* of what he preaches.

In the purview of Evangelos Venizelos, the diminutive Balkan co-resident located just beyond Greece's northern frontier, in manifold ways, is unrecognizable; a stranger, not of the wandering or itinerant kind, but one who is here today and disturbingly, not gone tomorrow. Thus by way of compensation for tolerating the presence, as Mr. Venizelos would have it, of the paradoxical outlander, the latter, in a somewhat curious spirit of good neighborliness, is obliged to alter his form, specifically his appellation, to a shape befitting his alien content. One should not underestimate the cognitive potency involved in the charting of such a reimbursement, as it appears to have been arrived at, by an approach towards history akin to the public accounting methods which, during the course of the last few years, have made Mr. Venizelos's patria, renowned, the world over.

If you remain unconvinced, it is well worth adding to the case of Mr. Venizelos, by calling to mind that it is not unknown for a foreign minister to apprehend his or her employment title with literal zest, even to the extent of treating a time honored neighbor as a consummate alien. And that is not all, Mr. Venizelos, in what would have been *for him*, a deeply thought out proposition, as one would expect from a Professor of Law based at "Aristotle University," declared that the Arctic trespasser must abide by a set of ordinances, which among other matters, demands respect for minorities. To all appearances, Mr. Venizelos was motivated by an invincible yearning for all that is *pure*, just like his imagined homogenous homeland.

In response, a veritable verbal crash was heard, as if a tongue could be used to slap somebody down; that, at

any rate, is the conclusion to be drawn from the manner in which some inhabitants of the country Mr. Venizelos would have us regard as a malignant interloper, drew themselves up to their full height while shrieking about duplicity, charlatanism and so forth... Well Mr. Venizelos might understandably be forgiven, for believing it would not dawn on any of the presumably churlish inhabitants of a 'pseudo state-let' that they are in social practice, even if not by geography, considerably more proximate to Copenhagen.

It would be partially appropriate of Mr. Venizelos to riposte by shrugging his shoulders in association with the display of a sickly smile, as he has been seen to do on a previous occasion; for it is not *entirely* the fault of Greece, as a long time member of the continental club, that it enjoys a certain amount of liberty to regard its domestic exotics as non-existent... the administrators of the club must shoulder some of the responsibility and even after that has been noted, one should also at least consider the contention, that, as the word *hypocrisy* comes from the Greek, it is thereby the property of the Greek. It is a line of argument related to the logic used to require the northern neighbor's self re-designation. From this peculiar, though not quite unique perspective, as a Greek, Mr. Venizelos is well within his rights to use and abuse his discretion... to evince a stingy disposition and to advantageously proffer advice to the 'unsophisticated northerners,' with much warmth; some might even say, with an exceptionally sultry intensity.

Still not convinced? Neither am I. It seems to be time to change tack. Let us proceed by attesting, that if in the course of his public life, this product of a supposedly advanced yet ancient culture, has now and then attempted to play fancy with naked facts, one might safely assume he has never intentionally done so, unless it was for his own benefit. He evidently has no false or squeamish modesty when it comes to availing himself of measures which *might* make Brussels turn scarlet; for there are still an abundance of votes to be gained, from a constituency educated to believe it is the direct progeny of the ancient adulators of Zeus and that it is bordered to the north by uncouth intruders who speak a bizarre and misnamed idiom. Incidentally one must simply marvel at the didactic aptitude of a schooling structure which appears in general to have convinced Mr. Venizelos's constituency of children and grandchildren of refugees, about their ownership of a place-name due to their very distant but apparently no less direct antecedents, even though the exiles in question often conversed in a mode of expression quite distinct from their supposed forefathers and previously inhabited a different land.

But we digress, or do we? Well to put it more seriously than hitherto, it has been a tradition in numerous societies, modern and pre-modern, to single out internal and external strangers, who confuse and obscure boundaries which those seeking or already possessing power, find useful to present as necessarily and perfectly discernible. As indicated in the previous paragraph, focusing attention on people who do not fit within the lines drawn from the values underpinning a society, can deliver benefits from the ballot box.

It is of course true that the construction of the cultural, political and economic frameworks of all societies, more or less, manufactures strangers; so the problematic nature of the stranger tradition has much to do with the behavior of elites. Greek elites, like all holders of power, have their internal disputes, rivalries and incompatible interests, but they are as one in their disdain for the "Gypsy Skopians" and this filters through to the masses via the media and the education system.

Therefore it is more than likely that a multitude of Greeks will continue in the foreseeable future to negatively exoticize their northern neighbor. The Republic of Macedonia will continue to be viewed as a misnamed obscenity and Greece's Macedonian minority will remain officially non-existent. The fact that the maintenance and misuse of a mythical dogma of homogeneity reaching back to an ancient primordiality, apart from being of some short term electoral assistance to Venizelos & co, is also contributing to the rise of forms of fascism and the decidedly embarrassing presence of Neo Nazis in the Greek parliament, does not appear to have given the Venizelos's of Greece any desire to reconsider their attitudes.

George Vlahov

P.S. As an epilogue, some words from Carl Jung:

Every individual needs revolution, inner division, overthrow of the existing order, and renewal, but not by forcing them upon his neighbors under the hypocritical cloak of Christian love or the sense of social responsibility or any of the other beautiful euphemisms for unconscious urges to personal power.

If people can be educated to see the shadow-side of their nature clearly, it may be hoped that they will also learn to understand and love their fellow men better. A little less hypocrisy and a little more self-knowledge can only have good results in respect for our neighbor; for we are all too prone to transfer to our fellows the injustice and violence we inflict upon our own natures.

VENIZELOS: ADVENTURES IN "PSEUDOLAND"

By Dr. Chris Popov

Germany Disputes France's Name

Last month the German Foreign Minister, Frank-Walter Steinmeier, paid an official visit to France, the first by a German government official to that country since the beginning of the decades-long dispute over France's name which Germany considers to represent a threat to its territorial integrity. Germany claims exclusive rights to the name France and all its derivatives, given that the Franks (from whose name France derives) were a confederation of Germanic tribes occupying land in the Lower and Middle Rhine in the Third century. It views all attempts by the authorities in Paris to monopolise the name France to be part of a strategy to deprive Germany of its rightful historical legacy and to advance irredentist claims on lands that have been German since time immemorial.

Nevertheless, in an attempt to solve the dispute over France's name, Steinmeier travelled to Paris last month for a meeting with his French counterpart, Laurent Fabius. However, in order not to be seen to be granting any form of official German recognition to French claims relating to the name of their state and their relentless attempts to promote their language and culture as "French", Steimeier refused to hold any official meetings with his French counterpart at the French Ministry for Foreign Affairs and insisted that the meeting take place at the European Commission's offices in central Paris. He also insisted that there be no translation into French of his remarks at the official press conference with his French counterpart, lest he be seen to be giving credence to French claims that their language is in fact French. Moreover, he travelled to and left Paris in his own diplomatic vehicle in order to avoid landing at Charles de Gaulle Airport, the name of the founder of France's Fifth Republic.

The above account is of course fictitious, given that France and Germany have no dispute about the other's name, language and culture and have as mature members of the EU, long ago resolved any disputes over territory, political and economic relations.

Venizelos's Flight of Fantasy and his Demands

On 20 February 2014, Greek Foreign Minister, Evangelos Venizelos, paid an official visit to Macedonia in his capacity as representative of the Presidency of the Council of the EU, which Greece will hold until 30 June 2014. The stated purpose of his visit to Macedonia and five other countries in the region (Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia- Herzegovina, Albania and Kosovo) was to assess and encourage the progress being made by these countries on their path to full membership of the EU. However, during his short stay in the Macedonian capital Skopje, Venizelos ensured that the fictitious scenario described at the beginning of this piece was played out in all its absurdity. In order to defend "Hellenism's historical legacy" and to avoid giving any legitimacy to "Skopje's irredentism and falsifications of history", Venizelos refused to land at Skopje's "Alexander the Great" airport, refused to travel along the high-

way named "Aleksandar Makedonski", would only travel in a diplomatic vehicle on which the symbol MK was covered with black tape, refused to be photographed with his Macedonian counterpart, Nikola Popovski, in front of the Macedonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs as the panels in the background contained Macedonia's official name, Republic of Macedonia, and insisted that his speech in English at the European Union's Information Centre in Skopje not be translated into Macedonian so as to "save time."("Венизелос и Добрососедството", Dnevnik Online, 22 February 2014, http://dnevnik.mk/?ItemID=C6AE0E131342FE45BD4F187F65FD755E).

It is pertinent to add in this regard that in January 2014 Venizelos, in an address before the French Senate, had stated that the Macedonian language is pseudo-Macedonian and that according to Bulgarian scientific circles is a dialect of Bulgarian. ("Greek foreign minister: Macedonian Language is pseudo-Macedonian", Focus News Agency, 25 January 2014, http://www.focus-fen.net/news/2014/01/25/325238/greek-foreign-minister-macedonian-language-is-pseudo-macedonian.html).

One may legitimately ask how Venizelos managed to avoid seeing the "Welcome to the Republic of Macedonia" signs at the Macedonian-Kosovo border or the 27 metre high statue of Alexander the Great in Skopje's main square (quaintly named "Warrior on a Horse" by the Macedonian authorities to avoid "giving offence" to its southern neighbour) which is directly opposite the EU's Information Centre. Perhaps the good minister's minders placed black tape over his eyes as he was driven to and around Skopje so as to prevent him from being outraged by offending nomenclature, signs and monuments, in much the same way that folk legend has it that vampires avoid the Christian cross so as not to be destroyed. However, his minders obviously did not do their homework well enough before arrival as they put him up for one night at the "Aleksandar Palace" hotel. A Google search would have revealed that there is a Holiday Inn in Skopje!

Nevertheless, Venizelos was not to be deterred and after once again denigrating the Macedonian state, Macedonian language, culture and identity a la the Greek nationalist copybook, had the temerity to invoke good neighbourly relations telling his Macedonian hosts the following as reported by the Balkan Insight web portal on 21 February 2014:

Speaking in Greece's capacity as president of the Council of the European Union, Venizelos meanwhile insisted that the main obstacle to Macedonia's European perspective was not the "name" dispute alone but its "obligation to fulfill the Copenhagen criteria, and especially the major criteria of compliance with the principle of good neighbourly relations" - with Greece and Bulgaria.

We are waiting for some material, concrete and tangible steps in this critical field of good neighborly relations," Venizelos said, adding that this "is a general European, international obligation". (Venizelos Sounds Upbeat on Name Dispute With Macedonia, Balkan Insight web site, 21 February 2014 http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/venizelos-macedonia-must-boost-friendliness-with neighbors?utm_source=Balkan+Insight+Newsletters&utm_campaign=508ab53421-BI_DAILY&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_4027db42dc-508ab53421-319684253)

Reaction of Macedonian Media, NGOs and Government

The Macedonian media was rightly scathing about Venizelos's conduct, while the organisation "Makedonski Manifest", which groups together intellectuals, writers and academics, suggested that Venizelos not be accorded the honour of being granted meetings with high state and government officials such as the Prime Minister, President, Foreign Minister and party leaders, but that he be received

by lower ranking officials in keeping with the lack of respect and racism that Venizelos and the country he represents have shown towards Macedonia and the Macedonians. They also suggested that Macedonian politicians meeting Venizelos should convey to him unambiguously that the Macedonian name, identity and language are not for sale and will not be bargained with. ("Отворено писмо од "Македонски маифест" до Венизелос", 24 Вести web site, 18 February 2014, http://24vesti.mk/otvoreno-pismo-od-%E2%80%9Emakedonski-manifest%E2%80%9C-do-venizelos). On the day of Venizelos's visit the World Macedonian Congress and several other associations staged a peaceful protest against his visit in front of the headquarters of Macedonia's government (Светскиот македонски конгрес одржа протест против Венизелос пред Влада, 24 Вести web site, 20 February 2014, http://24vesti.mk/svetskiot-makedonski-kongres-odrzha-protest-protiv-venizelos-pred-vlada)

In contrast to this principled approach, the Macedonian government rolled out the red carpet for the "honoured representative of the EU", in a show of servility which can only have further emboldened Greece and the EU to continue its policies of open and aggressive negation of Macedonia, its name and people. Venizelos was received by the President, Prime Minister and Foreign Minister no less and also held meetings with the leaders of the political parties SDSM and DUI. Rather than tackle head-on Venizelos's lies and manipulations (Greece itself is an abysmal failure when it comes to fulfilling the Copenhagen criteria) and his arrogant assertions that open questions related to good neighbourly relations, included "Skopje's irredentism and ideological use of history", the Macedonian government issued the following statement

"Macedonia remains committed to progress and positive developments in relation the EU agenda, as well as ensuring it stays strongly focused on the reforms linked to the process of EU membership, the best confirmation of which is the European Commission's recommendation for the start of accession negotiations which we have obtained on five occasions, which means that the Commission recognizes such progress. Premier Gruevski welcomes Venizelos's visit on behalf of the Presidency of the EU which represents a continuation of the visits to Macedonia as a candidate nation, as well as the intention of the Greek Presidency to organize a ministerial summit of the EU member nations and candidate nations in April. Premier Gruevski expressed the conviction that Greece's presidency of the EU would strengthen the EU's views on the Balkans in accordance with the Solun agenda." ("Venizelos lesno pomina", MKD.MK web site, 26 February 2014, http://www.mkd.mk/kolumni/venizelos-lesno-pomina)

President Gjorge Ivanov responded in a similar vein:

"Making possible the parallel consideration of the process for the solution of the bilateral matter and the process of accession negotiations for membership of the EU, which has proved to be a successful and positive

practice, will be of benefit not only to the Republic of Macedonia and the whole region, if such a procedure is implemented in our case".

Furthermore, President Ivanov told Venizelos that a solution of the name issue will only come about through a strict adherence to the framework within which the process is being conducted in the UN, respect for existing resolutions of the Security Council, the Interim Agreement, international law and the verdict of the International Court of Justice in The Hague. Ivanov added that matters related to identity and human dignity are not part of that framework and do not contribute to efforts aimed at finding a mutually acceptable solution. ("Venizelos lesno pomina", MKD.MK web site, 26 February 2014, http://www.mkd.mk/kolumni/venizelos-lesno-pomina)

The contrast between Venizelos's arrogance, disrespect and racism and the servility and careful diplomatic language employed by the Macedonian political establishment could not have been starker. In this regard, President Ivanov's view that negotiations about the name should and must not be used to negate Macedonian identity, language and culture betrays the misplaced belief that they can still be protected if Macedonia's name is changed. However, the fact that Macedonia has effectively been negotiating away its name, identity, language and culture for the last 22 years made it a fait accompli that the negator par excellence, Venizelos, would not only, incredibly, be invited to visit a state whose existence his country has been zealously striving to eradicate, but also treated with all the honour and dignity of an esteemed international diplomat, something which would most certainly not have occurred had the German Foreign Minister, Steinmeier, visited France in the imaginary circumstances described at the beginning of this article.

Whither the Name Dispute?

Greece has consistently and unambiguously shown these past twenty-two years that its primary strategic goal in relation to the Republic of Macedonia is to bring about the destruction of Macedonian identity, language and culture throughout the Balkans by bringing about a permanent renaming of the Macedonian state and its majority Macedonian population. Venizelos's visit to Macedonia was but the latest incarnation of this desire and goal. The official Macedonian reaction was to make an obsequious appeal to reason and international law, the UN process, the Interim Agreement and the Hague verdict in the vain hope that the international community would somehow lean on Greece to moderate its demands and come to an "agreement", all the while knowing that the EU and NATO, openly support Greece's position and have placed no pressure at all on it to respect the Hague decision. Moreover, Venizelos has made it crystal clear, by indicating that the name issue is not the main obstacle to Macedonia's accession to the EU, but rather the issue of the Copenhagen criteria and good neighbourly relations, that Greece and its loyal ally Bulgaria have no intention of admitting Macedonian to the EU and NATO, even were an "acceptable" solution on the name to be found.

So the basic choice remains, as has been pointed out innumerable times by this Review. Does Macedonia risk jeopardising its statehood, Macedonian identity and culture by changing its name to suit aggressive Greek demands as the price of entering NATO and the EU? One needs to factor into consideration that a name change which will be used by Greece as a springboard to eventually obtain the renaming internationally of Macedonians and their language and their further negation in Greece, Bulgaria and Albania.

Or will Macedonia renounce the shameful name negotiations, assert unequivocally to the world that a name change is completely unacceptable as a precondition for entry to NATO and the EU, and return to the UN to prosecute its right to be internationally recognised as the Republic of Macedonia, while at the same time charting a more independent and non-aligned political, economic and military course? If one is to judge by the treatment accorded to Venizelos in February, it is apparent that Macedonia will continue to try to appear "constructive" and "flexible" in future and thereby increase the pressure of the international community on it to commit ethnocide.

Dr. Chris Popov

EARLY ELECTIONS IN MACEDONIA 2014

By Dr. Vasko Nastevski

The Republic of Macedonia will be conducting general parliamentary elections on 27 April 2014. Despite parliamentary terms being guaranteed a duration of four years under the Macedonian Constitution[1], in Macedonia, it is unusual for a parliamentary term to run its full course as parliamentary elections are customarily held early, so the upcoming general ballot keeps faith with that practice. The following is a very brief snapshot of the peculiarities of Macedonian electoral life.

All indications suggest that on the Macedonian side of politics, the ruling VMRO-DPMNE will comfortably win the greatest amount of parliamentary seats, therefore giving them the opportunity to again form government. Within the Albanian political parties, DUI appears confident that it too, will secure the majority Albanian vote again. Of course, today in the Republic of Macedonia, it is quite normal to talk of political parties based on ethnic affiliation. The accepted wisdom is that Macedonian political parties seek and win only the Macedonian vote and likewise, Albanian political parties compete solely for the right to the Albanian vote. The Macedonian Parliament itself provides reports based on the ethnic composition of the Parliament. Currently 84 members of parliament are Macedonian (68.4%) and 25 are Albanian (20.3%).[2]

The consolidation of this ethnic/political bifurcation is partly the result of 'Western' intervention in the country and the imposition of the so-called Framework Agreement. As has been previously explored in the MHR Review, the Framework Agreement led to changes in the Macedonian Constitution that emphasised the importance of ethnic belonging rather than any sense of common citizenship.[3] Accordingly, having parallel civil societies functioning alongside each other and yet within the same country is to be viewed as an expected outcome. Accordingly, it is normal for Macedonians and Albanians to have their own demographic centres, education systems, culturally specific versions of history and their own ethnically-specific focused political parties. This perhaps also explains some of the statements and commentary coming from the respective political apparatchiks. For example, Bujar Osmani, described as a DUI spokesperson, stated that:

> *"These elections will determine who will be more influential in the next government - the*

> *[main ruling party] VMRO DPMNE or the DUI - which is why we ask for support from Albanians, so that we can win 25 seats."*[4]

The political ambition is clearly limited to winning the 'Albanian' vote. As noted, Albanian parties combined hold 25 seats in the Macedonian Parliament, so Osmani's entreaty is all about DUI becoming the sole political force representing the Albanian population in the Republic of Macedonia. Perhaps more mystifying is Osmani's assertion that achieving this quota may result in DUI being "*more influential in the next government*" over and above VMRO-DPMNE, despite that VMRO-DPMNE is likely to have more than double the amount of seats in the parliament relative to DUI. On this basis, Osmani's claims would fail based on simple arithmetic. But Macedonia post-2001 is a peculiar place. In numerous ways the Republic of Macedonia resembles a bi-national Macedonian-Albanian state. Moreover, the Albanian minority has gained a privileged status in that, relatively speaking, all other ethnic minorities are institutionally marginalised and thus Osmani's logic may not be so misplaced. DUI's 25 seats would represent 100% of the Albanian constituency, whereas VMRO-DPMNE will inevitably cede a large chunk of the Macedonian constituency to the other long-established Macedonian political party, the SDSM.

It is also important to add here, that in the situation of DUI winning 25 seats, any laws which would "*directly affect culture, use of language, education, personal documentation, and use of symbols*"[5]; the DUI alone would effectively have veto powers. This is one of the incongruities of the Framework Agreement, which imposed amendments to the Macedonian Constitution so that "*the Assembly makes decisions by a majority vote of the Representatives attending, within which there must be a majority of the votes of the Representatives attending who belong to communities not in the majority in the population of Macedonia*"[6]. Viewed in this context, Osmani's seemingly delusional predictions may turn out to be not too far off the mark.

Although, Osmani's optimism is somewhat contradicted by Macedonia's current Prime Minister, Nikola Gruevski, who has been quoted as saying that he needs a working majority of at least 62 seats in the 123 seat parliament. He was further quoted as asserting that:

> *"With that number, no one could blackmail us as a party, as a coalition, as the Macedonian people and nation".*[7]

Winning 62 seats in the Parliament would give VMRO-DPMNE a bare majority, meaning that in theory it could govern in its own right without the requirement to seek a coalition partner, which usually comes from one of the Albanian parties. However, it is

notable that in past elections where VMRO-DPMNE has obtained a clear majority in Parliament, it still 'chose' to form a coalition government with an Albanian political party. Why would this time be any different? Somewhat obliquely, Gruevski is reported to have gone on to state that:

> "If *VMRO DPMNE does not win 62 legislators, the DUI could either seek the Prime Minister's position, or that of speaker of parliament, or head of state.*"[8]

Frankly, this eventuality is difficult to imagine, even considering the amenability of the Framework Agreement towards the Albanian community. Maybe it is why Gruevski clearly qualified his language to suggest that DUI "*could ... seek*" one of the leadership positions. But so what? The only way for DUI to obtain one of the positions named is if Gruevski's VMRO-DPMNE acceded to such requests. This may be a case of scaremongering devised to sway swinging Macedonian voters. But then again, Macedonian Governments have previous form in such matters.

Then there is the main Macedonian opposition party, the SDSM, whose spokesperson had the following to say:

> "*Early elections do not depend on us. But if the ruling coalition partners continue to play a game of making alibis for elections, then that's it*".[9]

So basically, in spite of the 'tough' talk, SDSM's position is that if elections are called, then they will actually contest them. We also heard from one of the other Albanian political parties, the DPA, which is headed up by Menduh Thaci, somebody who remains on the United States blacklist as a specially designated person. People named on these lists are either linked to activities of rogue countries, or are individuals alleged to be involved in terrorism or narcotics trafficking.[10] Thaci's contributions to Macedonian electioneering are slightly curious. The following statement has been attributed to him:

> "*Things are clear. The favourite in the elections is the candidate of [the main ruling] VMRO DPMNE party, [current President] Gjorge Ivanov. Our goal is to enter the key second round*".[11]

He later goes on to state that if DPA win "*enough votes to enter the second round on April 27, the party might then advise its voters to abstain if they sensed that their Albanian rivals in the Democratic Union for Integration, DUI, were engaging in "undignified trading" with VMRO DPMNE*".[12] So effectively, the DPA appear to be entering the Macedonian presidential elections to win just enough votes to then be able to boycott the rest of the ballot.

It appears that much which would be seen to be 'exotic' by the parliamentary democracies of the English speaking world, is 'normal' for the "parliamentary democracy" of the Republic of Macedonia. A party wining only 25 seats in a 123 seat parliament expects to be in a position to be all dominant; the political party likely to win the majority of seats in the parliament fears having to compromise/relinquish the highest office position; the major opposition party is unhappy that elections have been called but is threatening to participate anyway and another party seemingly operating on the fringes has declared that it will participate in the elections so that it may exercise an opportunity to boycott. Whatever the ultimate outcome of the general elections in April, Macedonian politics will continue to maintain its 'topsy-turvy' nature for the foreseeable future.

Dr. Vasko Nastevski

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[1] See Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia, Art 63 – "*The Representatives for the Assembly are elected for a term of four years*", http://www.sobranie.mk/en/default-en.asp?ItemID=9F7452BF44EE814B8DB897C1858B71FF.

[2] Parliament of Macedonia website http://www.sobranie.mk/en/default-en.asp?ItemID=7B8A14698AF26C4EA3EBEE7D0B6797AC.

[3] Vasko Nastevski, 'In Review: the 2001 Civil Conflict in Macedonia and the Ohrid Framework Agreement, MHR Review, Issue 9, January 2012, pp.43-50.

[4] Sinisa Jakov Marusic, 'Macedonia Parties Mobilize Ethnic Supporters', Balkan Insight, 4 March 2014, http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/macedonia-parties-call-on-ethnic-mobilization-for-elections?utm_source=Balkan+Insight+Newsletters&utm_campaign=8db365b795-BI_DAILY&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_4027db42dc-8db365b795-319684253.

[5] Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia, above n 1, Amendment X(2), replacing Art 69, http://www.sobranie.mk/en/default-en.asp?ItemID=9F7452BF44EE814B8DB897C1858B71FF.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Sinisa Jakov Marusic, above n 3.

[8] Ibid.

[9] Sinisa Jakov Marusic, 'Macedonia Albanians Demand Early Elections', Balkan Insight, 28 February 2014, http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/macedonia-closer-to-early-elections?utm_source=Balkan+Insight+Newsletters&utm_campaign=f834a7b1e6-BI_DAILY&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_4027db42dc-f834a7b1e6-319684253.

[10] US Department of the Treasury, Office of Foreign Assets Control, Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons List, http://www.treasury.gov/ofac/downloads/ctrylst.txt.

[11] Sinisa Jakov Marusic, 'Macedonian Albanian Joins Presidential Race', Balkan Insight, 27 February 2014, http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/macedonia-albanians-enter-presidential-race?utm_source=Balkan+Insight+Newsletters&utm_campaign=c63710c6d1-BI_DAILY&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_4027db42dc-c63710c6d1-319684253.

[12] Ibid.

IDENTITY POLITICS

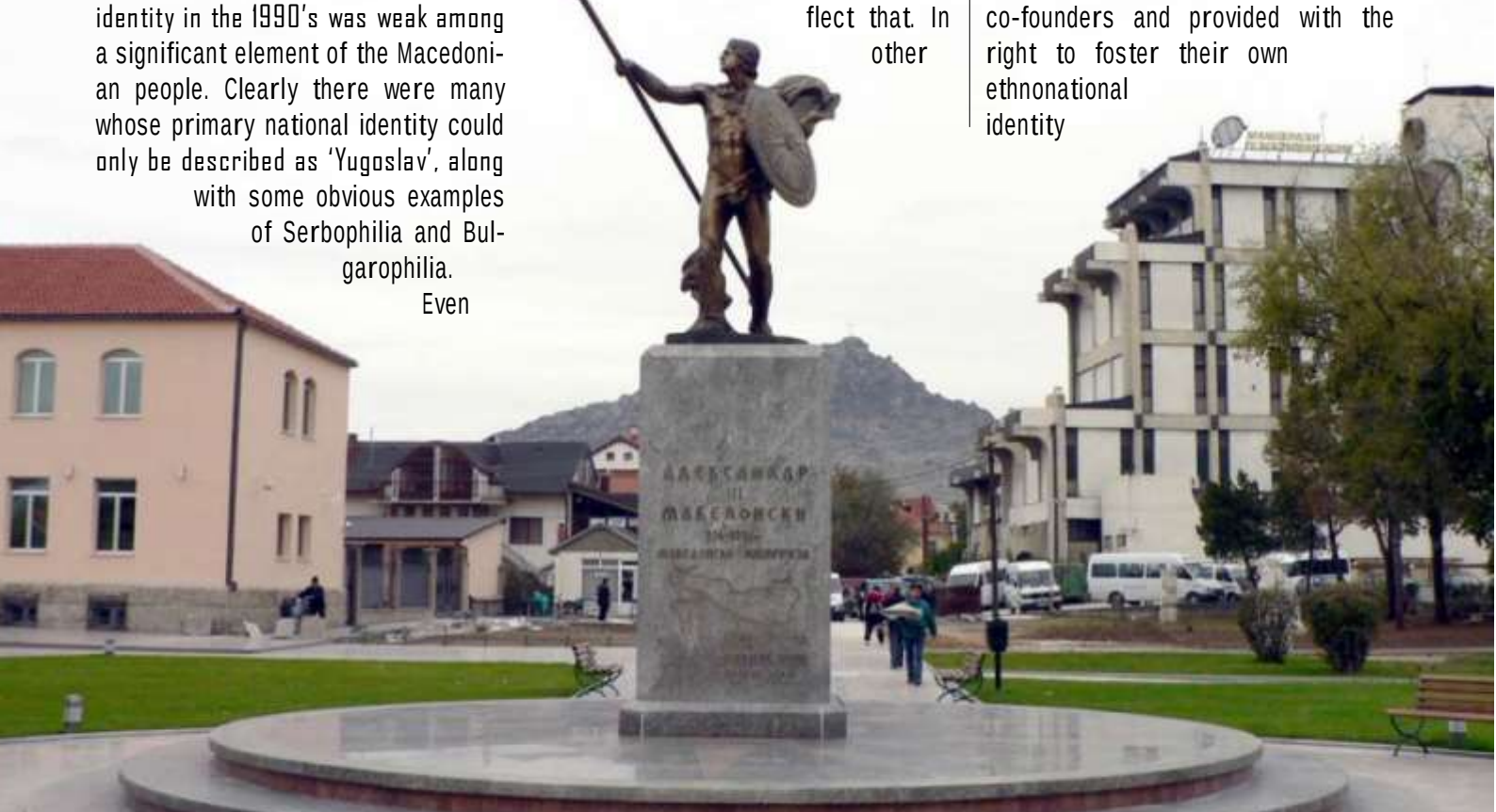
By Tom Vangelovski

Most states undertake processes known as *nation-building* and *nation-maintenance*, which have the purpose of ensuring the continual reproduction of national identity with every successive generation. These mechanisms are primarily used against threats to national identity from competing identities stemming from sub-ethnic and religious loyalties, and processes of localisation and globalisation.[1]

It is clear that these processes in Macedonia have been inconsistent and incoherent since independence. Rather than attempting to integrate minorities into wider society, Macedonian nation-building efforts focused on the Macedonian community itself. This was perhaps a necessary strategy as Macedonian identity in the 1990's was weak among a significant element of the Macedonian people. Clearly there were many whose primary national identity could only be described as 'Yugoslav', along with some obvious examples of Serbophilia and Bulgarophilia. Even today some of these tendencies continue to exist among Macedonians, although perhaps to a lesser degree.

One of the key ingredients that were missing from the Macedonian nation-building project was an attempt to integrate its minority communities, particularly Albanians, into wider Macedonian society and encourage them to accept a Macedonian civic identity (i.e., primary loyalty to the Macedonian state and society based on their Macedonian citizenship, while retaining their cultural and linguistic heritage). Because of a failure to do so, Albanian extremists were able to promote the idea that the Albanian community is not a part of Macedonian society and that the political structures of the state and its institutions should reflect that. In other words, these extremists wanted to form a bi-national state in which Macedonians and Albanians would be co-founders and equal partners.

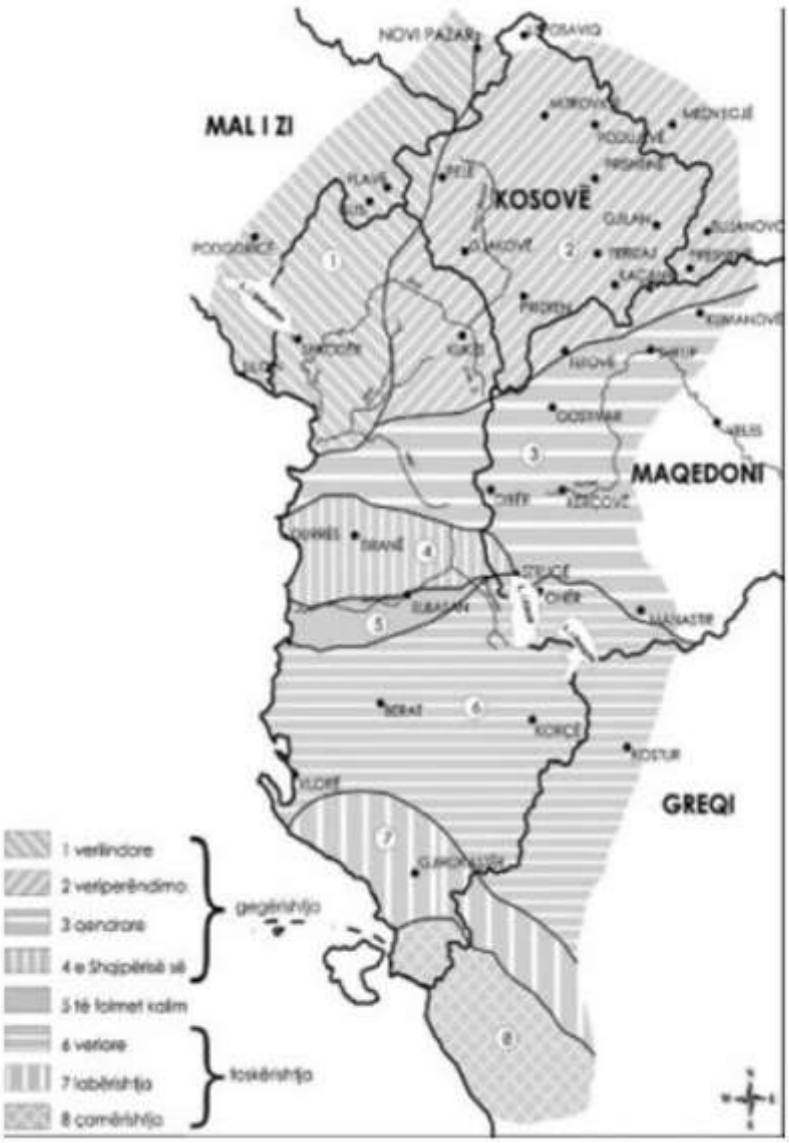
While the Macedonian Government focused on an ethnonational Macedonian nation-building project, it left the Albanian community to undertake its own nation-building exercise. The Albanian political and cultural elites did this informally until 2001, when it was institutionalised through the Framework Agreement and the subsequent constitutional amendments. These overriding legal documents have fundamentally changed the character of the Macedonian state from a nation-state of the Macedonian people to a multi-national state in which separate, co-equal nations (Macedonian, Albanian and others) are regarded as co-founders and provided with the right to foster their own ethnonational identity



regardless of how much it competes with the idea of Macedonia as a unitary state. What's more, nation-building/maintenance in post-Framework Agreement Macedonia is almost exclusively undertaken at the local level where minority communities control municipal councils and their budgets, allowing them to use state funds for these purposes.

However, there are some national-level examples, particularly in education. Whereas Macedonian school children learn about Macedonian ethnonational history, Albanian school children learn about the history of Albania and the Albanian people living in Kosovo and Macedonia as a version of their own ethnonational historiography. For example, the latest history textbooks provide two disconnected versions of ancient history in separate chapters of the same textbook.[2] Ancient Macedonian history is explored through a chapter on the Ancient Macedonians, culminating in the conquests of Alexander the Great. Ancient 'Albanian' history is explored in another chapter on the Illyrians, who are claimed to be closely related to the Dardanians, with the implication that both are ancestors of the modern Albanians. Both the ancient Macedonians and the Illyrians/Dardanians are described as indigenous to the territory of Macedonia and no attempt is made to explain or verify the competing claims. The one textbook offers both communities a historical narrative that is used as a basis for their competing claims to territory and indigenous nation status, further segregating the two communities.

Also of interest is the Albanian-language studies textbook for the fourth grade. This textbook, in addition to containing Albanian literature and the history of famous Albanian writers, also provides information about important historical Albanian heroes and events and includes as a learning exercise, the national anthem of Albania.[3] Further, while the Macedonian language studies textbooks teach the history and dispersion of the Macedonian language, Albanian language studies textbooks do the same for the Albanian language. Here we see competing accounts as to the geographical dispersion of their respective speakers and in the Albanian language textbook, a map showing the supposed geographic dispersion of Albanian dialects that virtually coincides with what Albanians consider to be 'Greater Albania'.[4]



Albanian language Map from a 6th grade textbook in Macedonia

Outside of the education system, various grandiose building projects for the purpose of nation-maintenance are underway, including two competing city squares within the capital Skopje. The first is a complete redesign of the city centre, known as Macedonia Square, by providing it with a Baroque facelift and including a large number of statues of historical Macedonians such as revolutionaries from the 19th and 20th centuries (along with questionable personalities from neighbouring states and certain unnamed statues used for quasi patriotic purposes, however, that is a separate discussion). Various 'triumphal arches' named after historical battles and places have also been built and it is envisaged that a large Orthodox Cathedral will be constructed. To rival this project, the Albanian populated municipality of Čair, located within

the City of Skopje, has embarked on its own reconstruction project. The Čair authorities plan to extend the Skanderbeg Square[5], making it the largest in the capital. The inclusion of a large statue of Skanderbeg on horseback, which travelled through Albanian populated towns in Macedonia on its way from Albania to Skopje, has become a centrepiece of the square.

These projects are not limited to the capital, they extend across the country. Bitola, Prilep, Ohrid, Tetovo, Gostivar and Struga have notable projects of their own. In these areas, nation-building/maintenance is also accompanied by the practice of marking out 'national territory'. The use of flags, monuments and religious buildings and objects, along with the use of ethnonationalist nomenclature for public spaces such as streets, squares and villages are a key mechanism for both.

Of particular note are the number of new mosques being built in Albanian populated municipalities and the large crosses being erected in Macedonian populated areas. Although they have genuine religious significance, they also send a strong political message – 'this town belongs to us'. While largely symbolic in the ethno-religious struggle between Macedonians and Albanians, these religious objects have at times led to actual conflict. A typical example is the events of last year in the village of Oktisi, with a population of 4,500 (predominantly Macedonian Muslims) located in the Municipality of Struga.

This particular incident involved a dilapidated Church (St. Nikola) in the centre of the village, for which the Church hierarchy had obtained municipal approval to knock-down and rebuild. Work had been progressing for a number of months without any controversy until rumours began to circulate the day before Bishop Timotej was due to bless the new Church's foundations that Albanians and Macedonian Muslims were planning to disrupt the event.[6] Macedonians from the region organised fairly quickly through social media and kinship networks and the next day, an estimated 400 of them from Misleševo, Moroišta and Vevčani marched into Oktisi with the Bishop. They were met by close to 800 Albanians and local Macedonian Muslims who had already surrounded the church to block the Macedonian procession. Reports suggested that the majority of Muslim demonstrators were Albanians who had bussed in from surrounding villages, though the Imam called for local Muslims to come and assist from the minaret of the local Mosque during the confrontation.

Police managed to push back the Macedonian group, while allowing the Albanians to block access to the construction site; however, the tense standoff lasted several hours. Many protesters from both sides came clearly armed with pistols and batons, while some had brought automatic rifles (though these were kept in vehicles away from the main confrontation). The situation could have easily escalated into a violent clash, but the Macedonian procession decided to withdraw and open and engage in discussions on resuming construction at a future date. Currently, there are no signs that construction will restart in the near future, with Albanians and Macedonian Muslims firmly opposed. Some reported that the sudden opposition to renewing the church after months of work was the result of radical Islamists who are known to have influence and followers both within Oktisi and the neighbouring villages of Labuništa and Podgorci. While extremists may have influenced this particular confrontation, the general trend is certainly leading to more of these instances between Macedonian Christians and Albanian Muslims (who have coaxed many Macedonian Muslims to join their cause).

Inter-community conflict between Macedonians and Albanians has existed for many decades. However, this conflict has intensified since independence and particularly since the implementation of the Framework Agreement, which has allowed Macedonians and Albanians to foster separate, competing and irreconcilable national and religious narratives, strengthened through the use of public funds. In the final analysis, it is unclear whether Macedonia can even integrate its Albanian minority. Ali Ahmeti, speaking to journalists in March 2001, made his ethnonationalist vision and his view of Macedonian identity quite clear:

The struggle that we began has one aim – to remove Slavic forces from territory that is traditionally Albanian.[7]

Tom Vangelovski

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[1] A very good discussion of the concepts of nation-building and nation-maintenance is provided by P. Kolstø, "National Symbols and Signs of Unity and Division", Ethnic and Racial Studies, Vol. 29, No. 4, 2006, pp. 676-701; and A. Smith, "National Images and National Maintenance: The Ascendancy of the Ethnic Idea in North America", Canadian Journal of Political Science, Vol. 14, No. 2, June 1981, pp. 227-257.

[2] K. Adžievski et al, Istorija za VI oddelenie od devetgodišnoto osnovo obrazovanie, Ministerstvo za obrazovanie i nauka na Republika Makedonija, Skopje, 2011.

[3] R. Petro & N, Pepivani, Gjuha Shqipe, Shtepia Botuese Albas, Tetovo, 2009.

[4] Various territories that this map identifies as containing Albanian-language speakers bears little resemblance to historical or actual reality, see A. Hamiti & I. Hamiti, Gjuha Shqipe: Per Klasen VI, Ministerstvo za obrazovanie i nauka na Republika Makedonija, Skopje.

[5] Albanians consider Skanderbeg a national hero.

[6] The author was undertaking research in Struga at the time and is an eyewitness to these events.

[7] Think.mk, Proektot golema albanija e vo polna parea, 10 September 2013.

JOIN THE MACEDONIAN BONE MARROW DONOR DRIVE

Macedonian Donor Drive
Tuesday 15th April, 4-7pm

Due to the huge success of the 1st Donor Drive on the 4th March, the Australian Bone Marrow Registry are kindly offering us the opportunity to organise a 2nd Bone Marrow Drive on Tuesday 15th April. Please continue to get behind this important cause. We are already beginning to make a difference.

In October of last year a healthy member of our Macedonian community, Mitre Kralevski, was diagnosed with Leukaemia. Leukaemia and other related blood disorders often require bone marrow transplants for the best chance of a cure.

This unfortunate experience has uncovered the sad reality that of the 20 million people on the world wide bone marrow registry, there are only about 300 Macedonians. As bone marrow types tend to be grouped along ethnic lines, this should be a concern to the greater Macedonian community within Australia and around the world.

With this information now brought to our attention we should be thinking about our own family members. One day it could be your child, your sister, your brother, and their best hope would be other Macedonians on this registry.

As a community we need to come together NOW. Joining the registry is a simple blood test and if you are ever a successful match, donating bone marrow is now done as a blood donation.

Due to the low number of Macedonians on the registry, The Australian Bone Marrow Donor Registry have kindly offered to send three qualified nurses as a free service out to our Macedonian community. They have offered to come to our Macedonian church to take these blood samples so we can begin to make a difference.

To register as a donor you need to be between the ages of 18 and 45 and complete a quick questionnaire. If eligible, a blood test is then your only requirement. It takes only 15 minutes to potentially save someone's life.

The Macedonian Donor Drive will take place:
Date: Tuesday 15th April
Time: 4-7pm
Place: Macedonian Church in Hoppers Crossing,
12-14 Lentini Street, Hoppers Crossing 3029.

To participate in this community action please book by sending your name, phone number and preferred time to:
MacoDonorRegistry@gmail.com

Let's join together as a community to help save the lives of our current generations and generations to come.

VINOZHITO AND THE DIFFICULTIES ON PARTICIPATING IN ELECTIONS

By Dimitri Jovanov

Numerous people often ask questions about the participation of Vinozhito in elections. The manner in which such questions are posed indicates that many of them assume the process of standing in elections to be much easier than it really is: *Why don't you do this!? Why did you get so few votes!? Why there and not here!? Why, why, why!?* It is easy to be an armchair critic. In this article we shall attempt to present some of the factors which make participating in an election campaign and the electoral process in general, a very difficult task for Vinozhito.

In Greece, there are 20,000 electoral departments and if a party wants to ensure a completely accurate picture of the results, then it needs to be able to send representatives to all of the departments – from Thrace to the Peloponnese and the islands, in order to scrutinize the process of counting the votes. Moreover, it is widely known that the Greek establishment despises Vinozhito and that it often fails to make Vinozhito voting cards available at numerous voting booths. Thus members of Vinozhito need to travel from village to village and town to town in an effort to visit at least some of the thousands of voting booths in order to confirm the presence of Vinozhito voting cards.

The electoral laws in Greece require a party to gain a minimum of 3% of the total vote for the election of a single candidate. So if we take Greece as possessing around 10 million voters, 3% is equivalent to 300,000 votes. This is an exceedingly large number for a small party like Vinozhito. Other EU countries are dispensing with such laws as unfairly excluding peripheral groups from the democratic process. For example, a similar law in Germany was recently annulled, but in Greece, it still applies.

Another problem intentionally imposed by the governments led by the major parties in order to limit the participation of minor parties is related directly to the actual voting process. Even though the state appears to permit candidates to stand without the payment of a fee, in reality it is very expensive to do so. This is because the state exacts a payment for the production and distribution of the voting cards for every party to every voting booth. This is a legal requirement and the fee amounts to over 20,000

Euros. In other words, that fee is a minimum requirement for a modest form of participation in the electoral process; it does not include the finance needed for posters, flyers, transportation costs, the organization of meetings etc.

The state electoral laws unequivocally state that all parties, big or small, have the right to three video presentations on all the major television channels, in order to make their platforms known. All the same, in practice, that right is denied to Vinozhito. In the past, some channels have chosen to put the Vinozhito video on at a useless time, like 3am; others refused to air it at all. The latter was the case in the last European parliamentary elections. Vinozhito took legal action against the offending channels, though the Greek "justice" system ultimately failed to punish them appropriately.

In the previous European election Vinozhito produced 10,000 DVD's with the intention of mailing them to voters. In order to save on costs the DVD's were manufactured in neighboring Bulgaria. Upon attempting to transport the DVD's across the Bulgarian border, members of Vinozhito were brought to a halt and the DVD's were confiscated by the Bulgarian authorities, even though Greece and Bulgaria are members of the EU; which means there are no legal issues and that such border crossings are duty free. It would not be a fanciful stretch for one to assume that the Greek and Bulgarian authorities cooperated in the confiscation of the DVD's, considering their cooperation in general, on the negation of Macedonians.

Never-the-less, the most scandalous aspect of the difficulties which confront Vinozhito every time it participates in an election, is the misappropriation of its votes. The anecdotal evidence for such deceit is widespread and convincing. For example, at the European elections held in 1994, Vinozhito officially gained nearly 8,000 votes. The real figure however, must have been much higher and we shall mention two emblematic examples, directly associated with the 1994 elections, in order to demonstrate our point.

A few months after the 1994 elections, an individual visited Vinozhito's offices in Lerin [Florina in Greek] and explained the following:

I am from a village in the region of Voden [Edessa in Greek] *and was present during the counting of the votes in my village. I was present in the capacity as a representative of the Communist Party. Your party, Vinozhito, gained 44 votes and yet officially, they gave you only four votes. I was too scared to say anything....*

Another individual from the Kukush (Kilkis in Greek) region declared the following to Vinozhito party officials:

I am Greek on my father's side and Macedonian on my mother's. I am a school teacher and was employed in my mother's village which is located in the Kukush region. At that time I was not very aware of the issues around Macedonian matters and I was employed as a vote counter in that village. The day before the elections they told us that a Skopian [a derogatory term in reference to ethnic Macedonians] *party is participating and that it needs to be destroyed. I agreed, because at that time, as I mentioned, I understood nothing. In that village, Vinozhito gained 78 votes, but officially they were given only three. Large scale stealing. Though at that time I agreed with that stealing, with that criminal act. I didn't know any better.*

It is not difficult to imagine that the *official* number of votes received by Vinozhito, would have been very much higher if the whole state and para-state were not continually attempting to destroy the party.

On top of all that we have mentioned above, if one also takes note of the fact that all members of Vinozhito are volunteers and that among the Macedonians in Greece there is still apprehension about the possible negative consequences of supporting Vinozhito, then it is clear that the difficulties facing Vinozhito are immense. In spite of all that, Vinozhito has managed to find ways to participate in all the European elections to date and continues to struggle, with its very modest means, for the human rights of Macedonians in Greece and beyond.

Dimitri Jovanov (Ioannou) is a member of Vinozhito and the editor of *Nova Zora* a monthly pro-Macedonian human rights newspaper distributed throughout Aegean Macedonia and beyond: http://novazora.gr/

Translated from Macedonian by George Vlahov of the AMHRC.

GREEK HUMANIST HARASSED BY RACIST AND ANTI-SEMITIC AUTHOR

19 February 2014

Panayote Dimitras is the Spokesperson of the Humanist Union of Greece and a human rights activist, founder of Greek Helsinki Monitor.

Greek Helsinki Monitor filed a complaint against Konstantinos Plevris after the publication of his book *The Jews: The Whole Truth* (2007) in which he wrote that Jews are "subhuman" and criticized the Nazis for "not ridding Europe of Jewish Zionism". P. Dimitras appeared as a witness in a later trial against the book under the Greek anti-racist law and was afterwards accused of defamation and perjury by K. Plevris.

During a hearing of a separate trial against a newspaper publishing parts of the book, K. Plevris approached P. Dimitras and told him "you have started to annoy me and you will feel what fascism means, because as you know I have declared that I am a fascist". Indeed, in his book, K. Plevris declared to be "Nazi, fascist, racist, anti-democrat, anti-Semite".

Since then, P. Dimitras was sued on several occasions by K. Plevris, amongst other because he mentioned in a later trial that he had threatened his life. The numerous charges against P. Dimitras are all based on the same grounds – defamation or perjury – despite the numerous convictions of K. Plevris for anti-Semitism. The NGO World Organisation Against Torture has called K. Plevris' actions "judicial harassment". The organisation reports collusions between K. Plevris and some persons in the judicial system, explaining on the one hand why some trials against P. Dimitras could happen despite a lack of legal grounds and, on the other, why K. Plevris was acquitted of incitation to racial hatred in 2009 (see the report of the OMCT).

The European Humanist Federation expresses its full support to Panayote Dimitras in his struggle against all forms of hate speech, intolerance and discriminations. Voices like his are particularly important in a context of crisis where populist, racist and fascist views are openly expressed.

OMO ILINDEN PIRIN AT THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF EFA – EUROPEAN FREE ALLIANCE 2014

By Alexander Spassov

The European Free Alliance (EFA) general assembly took place in the capital of Galicia (an autonomous province in northern Spain). EFA is a political party with representatives in the European Parliament and it also functions as an umbrella organisation that gathers 40 progressive nationalist, regionalist and autonomist parties throughout the European Union (EU). These parties, including OMO Ilinden Pirin, defend the identity of regional populations.

During the opening of the assembly, which took place in Santiago de Compostela, Ana Miranda, a candidate from the Bloque Nacionalista Galego (BNG) in the upcoming EU elections, quite firmly stated: "We need to defend the right to self-determination for the future...we need to decide for ourselves."

At a subsequent press conference, BNG spokesperson Xavier Vence, further clarified the meaning of self-determination:

It is essential that we all put the problem of the stateless nations and the need to recognise the political rights of people on the European agenda. The EU (European Union) must contribute to consolidate the democratic principle of self-determination and oblige Member States to guarantee it effectively.

This year's catch phrase is indeed *It's time for Self-Determination* as it aptly encapsulates the party's mood in the run-up to the European elections, considering the historic independence referendums that are to be held in Scotland and Catalonia.

Tasmina Ahmed-Sheikh, who is a SNP EP (Scottish National Party) election candidate, delivered an enthusiastic speech on this year's Scottish independence referendum stating that: "The Yes campaign is on course to win...Our time is here, our time is now, our future is here to take and we must seize it."

In relation to Catalonian independence, Jordi Sole from ERC (Republican Left of Catalonia) asserted that: "Catalans are not afraid of freedom, the pro-independence movement is here to stay... When we are independent we will build one of the most socially and economically advanced countries in Southern Europe."

In other activity, the delegates, including the representative from OMO Ilinden Pirin, gave a majority *Yes* vote in favour of EFA membership for *Sorbian Lausitzer Allianz*. The Sorbs of Germany (a minority with a 1600 year history in the region around Dresden and Cottbus in Germany) are under continuing assimilatory pressures and their environment is being devastated by open-cast coal mining activity.

Also noteworthy was the election of a new observer member: Altro Sud from southern Italy and the election of the progressive Basque party, Aralar, as a full member.

Next year's assembly might be held in the Lausitz, in the land of the Sorbs, Germany. OMO Ilinden Pirin will again participate and develop further its activities for a better Europe, where people may decide for themselves about their identity and future.

By Alexander Spassov who is a member of OMO Ilinden Pirin, a political party active in the struggle for the rights of the Macedonian minority in Bulgaria. It has been banned since 2000, despite a 2005 European Court of Human Rights Judgement ruling that the decision was a violation of the European Convention on Human Rights. For more information please visit www.omoilindenpirin.org.

THE POETRY OF KOCHO SOLEV RATSIN

By Dr. Michael Seraphinoff

We live in an era when communism and its adherents are in general disrepute. If this reputation has been earned in the excesses of Stalin and Mao and such betrayals as that of the Macedonian people during the Greek Civil War, it still does a disservice to the many brave, dedicated and idealistic young people who struggled and died in the ranks of the communist movement, all in the name of creating a better world. The efforts of communist activists advanced the cause of human rights, economic and social justice and the struggle against state tyranny. However, in those places where communists actually gained state power they often disgraced themselves through their own abuses of power.

Macedonians, like other peoples, joined the party in the absence of other outlets for their idealism. In our own day and age men like Kocho Ratsin, no doubt, would have found more options for their challenging of the excesses of global monopoly capitalism or institutionalized racism or human rights violations. Obviously, many of the causes that Ratsin worked for are still in need of champions today, and I have no doubt that a 21st century Ratsin would have found a rightful place as a socially conscious poet and political activist.

Nowadays we have access to a considerable body of works of Macedonian literature by way of the internet. Even if you do not live near a major university outside of Macedonia, you can access on the internet a considerable range of works of most of Macedonia's major authors, if not some of the most recent works of young authors. In a search for information about Kocho Ratsin, for example, the website diversity.org.mk offered the following essential information about the life and works of Kocho Ratsin: (b. Veles, 1908 – d. Lopushnik, 1943) – poet, storywriter, publicist and essayist. A founder of contemporary Macedonian literature. One of the most prominent Macedonian intellectuals between the two worlds wars. His poetry makes a radical transition from a poetics of the oral [tradition] to a poetics of modern poetry. [Some of his poems] have a social dimension, while others have more of an elegiac dimension.

He contributed with [others in] the left intelligen[tsia] in former Yugoslavia, publishing his essays and poems in magazines in Zagreb, Belgrade, Sarajevo, Lubljana. He was persecuted and sentenced as a result of his revolutionary and anti-regime activity. He died tragically during the war. He published his first poems in Serb-Croatian.

Since 1936 he used the everyday Macedonian language, [specifically] the Veles dialect. Editor of the newspaper *Iskra*, illegal organ of the CPY for Macedonia. Author of the collections of poetry *White Dawns*, published in Samobor near Zagreb, 1939, *Anthology of pain* (written in 1928 and published after his death), [other works published after his death include] *Poems*, Skopje, 1945, books of prose, poetry and essays (*Prose*, 1952, *Poetry and prose*, 1954, *Dragovit Bogomils*,1948). There are only parts of his novel *Poppy* (the manuscript was burned in 1942 by the Serbian police).

One of my favorite poems of Kocho Ratsin that combines both the socially conscious and the elegiac is the short poem from *White Dawns* entitled "Lenka":

Ленка

„Биљана платно белеше…“

Откако Ленка остави
кошула тенка ленена
недовезена на разбој
и на наломи отиде
тутун да реди в монопол
лицето и се измени
веѓи паднаја надолу
и усти свиа кораво.
Не беше Ленка родена
за тиа пусти тутуни!
Тутуни – жлти отрови
за гради – китки розови.
Прва година помина
грутка в срцето и легна,
втора година намина
болест ја в гради искина.
Трета година земјата
на Ленка покри снагата.
И ноќе кога месечко
гроб и со свила виеше
ветерчок тихо над неа
жална и тага рееше:

„Зошто ми, зошто остана
кошула недоткаена?
Кошула беше дарована…“

"Biljana washed the laundry..."

When Lenka left
The thin linen shirt
Unwoven on the loom
And went off to
Sort tobacco for the syndicate
Her face changed
Her eyebrows drooped
And her mouth grew rigid.
Lenka was never born
To be wasted by tobacco!
Tobacco- yellow poison
For a rose pure breast.
After the first year passed
A hard lump lay in her heart.
After a second year
A sickness tore at her breast.
In the third year Lenka
Lay folded in the earth.
And at night when her moon-lit
Grave is veiled in silk
A breeze softly wafts over her,
Offering the sad lament:

"why did I leave
the shirt unwoven?
A shirt that was to be my wedding gift..."

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INTERVIEW WITH SIMON (SPIRÉ) DAMEVSKI

By John Tsiglev

An interview with a different kind of Artist. An Artist of life. A musician of the soul. A 'Disco King' who hasn't lost any of his 'Rock n Roll'!

I normally only interview Artists of the typical persuasion. Artists who fit into the wobbly mould of the traditional definition of an Artist. However, for many years, I've longed to tell the amazing story of the 'triumph of spirit' over extreme adversity of my life-long friend Spiré.

I consider Spiré a brother, and I recall all the prejudices and stigmas coming out of our community relating to his changed physical condition after his tragic workplace fall which left him in a wheelchair. Spiré and I have known each other our whole lives. We grew up together as kids on the fringes amongst the Sharpies, Bogans, Wogs and Yobos of our then outer burb. A veritable melting pot of personalities, provocateurs and protectors. We had our own little community which was sort of like the glamorized, stereotyped 'Happy Days' and 'Stand by Me' movie variety. Many of us never expected Spiré to remain so steadfast and positive after such hurt. For me personally, he constantly reminds me that life is amazing.

JT: Spirché my brother. How are ya son?

SD: What do you say? How do you start off these things??

I'm going well now after a long stint of recovery time...

JT: Good to hear brother, I always like to see ya in top form!

I know you were a bit reluctant about doing this interview, but don't worry, I'll be gentle on you!

SD: You know how I am, a bit humble about these things and I don't think I'm deserving of all this unnecessary attention

JT: If anyone is deserving of the attention, it's you.... You don't have to be a celebrity to deserve a little attention!

I vividly remember the exact moment when I heard the news of your fall. It was a beautiful sunny Saturday. It wasn't too long after I got married and came back from a few months of travelling overseas. Not long before, we were talking about going to Europe together as you had also been over there recently and we both thought Paris and Ohrid were fantastic and we wanted to get back there as soon as physically possible. An unexplainable heartbreak swept over me when I learnt how serious your condition was.

It seems to me like it all happened another lifetime ago. Do you also get that same feeling?

SD: Well, I certainly do... Let me think about it a bit..... The first 3 years were extremely trying on my physical well being, which then translated to me feeling like I was never going to move forward and living a life of fulfillment and enjoyment. So yes, that does seem so long ago, but it's amazing how there's a point where you just get on with living and all the pain and anguish just starts to fade away from memory and you start enjoying life with a new perspective..... It's definitely different, but no less enjoyable...

JT: Well, you're definitely not one to play the victim card, and I commend you for that.

SD: No matter how hard you believe you're stuck in a rut, you can always find positives in the places where you least expected... For instance; before my accident I was a bit of a workaholic who lived a fast-paced lifestyle of work-hard, play-hard, whereas now I've learnt to find a good balance between work and perusing my lifelong interests.... I used to work to live and I thought there was no other way, however now I just live... I live for the pleasure of the moment.

JT: Carpe diem brother... Bravo. I think I've learnt a bit of that from you too!

SD: Well, people have to realize it's just not all about money. You can give me 100 million tomorrow and it won't change my situation. Though I do believe it might make it easier for a number of people around me

JT: On TV we repeatedly see the tragic stories of how wounded soldiers have to deal with life after battle. I consider you to be a soldier too. You too have had to battle for your life.

How did you feel when you realized that you couldn't move your legs?

SD: Well, not moving your legs is just the tip of the iceberg.... That's mainly what other people just see and think about... But there are so many other underlying issues, impairments and complications that people don't know about or are unable to see... It's no different to the iceberg I mentioned, you only see a bit of the top, but you don't know what's going on underneath the surface! When you see me in the wheelchair, you only see 10% of my disability...

JT: I don't see any physical disability... Maybe you're a bit crazy, but hey, you've always been that way!

SD: Yeah crazy, but here's just a few examples of what a person with a spinal cord injury must endure everyday

without getting too much into the nitty -gritty: Loss of bladder and bowel control, vulnerable to pressure sores, very susceptible to infection and bone breakage etc...etc....

JT: Bloody hell!! You're a true Partizanets be... Like your forefathers before you! See, you are a soldier after all! Bloody battler!

Spirché, I remember all the stories you were telling me about the way certain 'naïve' people talk 'r e a l l y s l o w w l l l y' to you when they see you in a chair... as if you have an intellectual disability and are a lesser person. Some even stopped seeing you. I personally regard them or pigeon hole them as the same type of people who can't deal with their own insecurities.

How does this, or did this make you feel?

SD: Well, to tell you the truth, I just saw it as their issue more than mine. I didn't let it bother me so much, although it affected people around me who cared for me, more so. For instance, one time a relative called and when I answered the phone, they were shocked and surprised that I could answer the phone and actually engage in a conversation with them... "Wow, you can answer the phone, that's just amazing!"... Ha ha ha.... And I just said, "sure is, and I can do other things too!" (Note: we both burst out laughing).... This didn't really bother me but my mum was very disappointed in her relative's ignorance.

JT: Gee, what a bunch of tikfi! Have you experienced anything like this in public?

SD: Many times. The first wedding I attended after my accident was the most insensitive to this day, especially for my uncle who was helping me get around. My uncle and I were in conversation when someone put their hand on my shoulder from behind and said "Didn't you learn from your father?" (my father who passed away not long before due to spinal cancer, which in turn also left him in a wheelchair). My uncle was not only distraught by the comment, but was absolutely furious and would have taken it further if I hadn't calmed him down! I was just relieved and happy to be out and about again after my year long ordeal in hospital and rehab to let someone's ignorant comments bring me down and ruin the occasion! Though it did ruin my uncle's evening.

JT: Le le, I never heard of that story? I was thinking of another one which we probably shouldn't mention here!

SD: People never cease to amaze me!

JT: I honestly can't believe how you made it through some of the absolute hell you had to endure. I struggle to keep my nerve after just visiting hospitals, let alone staying in there for months at a time and under torturous conditions.

How did you survive it all and what gave you the will to live?

SD: Plain and simple.... It was seeing the faces of the people I love and care for. And I was really looking forward to spending good times with all of them again!

JT: Well I hope my face was one of them?

SD: Proof is in the pudding!

JT: I always described you as a 'Nightclub King' before your accident. A bit of a Macedonian John Travolta from Saturday Night Fever! How hard was it for you to have to change your whole outlook on that scene, through no fault of your own?

SD: I just started to look at the things I can do rather than dwelling on the things I can't do. So in turn I found different avenues to replace the old drive I had for the whole "going out" scene. I still get out (let loose) heaps, however I now do it differently but in a no less enjoyable manner.
JT: You sure do brother. We've had many a crazy night out together!

SD: Like I said, "Proof is in the pudding"!

JT: You are a carpenter by trade who was taught by the brilliant and very missed 'Big George Damevski' (your father who I can still hear calling me Johnka, driving his Falcon with one hand and eating Semki with the other), and you were on the job when you had your fall. Your dad, I should also mention, volunteered a massive amount of expertise and time building and setting up Macedonian Community buildings in the early days, such as helping with the building of the Preston Mak Soccer Club and then being a photographer for the club.

Do you miss the job, not only for the job itself, but because of the history of growing up around it?

SD: Yeah, I do miss it in certain ways, but I thoroughly enjoy what I do now. Due to my condition I had to look into different professions and I started to realize that I had a whole bunch of options that I could pursue.

JT: Yep, you've become a bit of web/pc guru over the past few years. You have a massive fan in my son Limche, who is in great awe and thankful for helping him out with all his gaming requirements (note: as I'm drafting this he's pestering me in the background; "Ask Chiche Spiré how I can get a cheat MOD to work in Minecraft and how to change my characters!") It was almost like a little bit of serendipity which occurred after your accident. I believe it came to you because of your optimistic outlook as you spent countless hours trying to get back on track.

Would you say this is true, or are you just a clever little cookie who's good at everything? Come on Mr. Modest...tell me the truth?

SD: I like to say I'm good at everything, but in fact, I'm just good at most things! Ha ha ha (note:

we both laugh and pat each other on the back!)

JT: Tell all the readers out there about some of the inspiring help you've provided to people with disabilities, including all the invaluable sexual therapy work you so love to talk about with me!

SD: Ha ha ha, I'm not going to share any of the sexual inadequacies you have with your readers and fan base.

JT: Ha ha ha.

JT: Ok Mr. Modest, you don't have to brag! I'll just brag a little for you and say that Simon has helped countless young people with spinal injuries cope with many of the physical and psychological hurdles they must endure due to their changed physical condition.

SD: Along the journey (note: Mr. Modest buts in) I've met a lot of inspiring people who also help and have inspired me to greater things. There are many inspirational people all around us, but a lot of them go unnoticed.

JT: Hey Spirché, remember the time we were at an event in the city and a lady parked in a disabled parking spot and you said; "The next able person who does this is going to be confronted"..... Then, just like that, a seemingly spritely guy effortlessly jumped out of his flashy car in the next disabled parking spot. We were like, "What the F*#k?" and you yelled out to him, "Hey, that's a disabled parking!" He didn't even blink an eyelid or say anything back, pointed to his disabled parking permit, and then stepped around from his car. We then realized that he had prosthetic legs! We just went silent and thought "Oh shit!!"... He didn't say a word, even though you were in your chair!

Firstly, I've got to say, that it infuriates me to no end when I see a smart-arse park in a disabled spot, but I don't say a word or pass judgment these days in case they have a hidden condition.

How do you feel about it all and has your attitude changed after our little (massive!) embarrassment?

SD: Prior to the aforementioned experience, just like you, it used to infuriate me, though now I don't prematurely pass judgment!

JT: Ha ha ha, yeah I'm not a Premature Judgmentor these days either.... But seriously, it just goes to show you don't judge someone on their physical attributes!

JT: Have you found our (Macedonian) community to be more naïve about your disability, or are they all pretty much the same?

SD: In my experience I've found that the Macedonian community is no different to any other community.

JT: Well, I guess that's a good thing? Sort of? I guess?

You had a little moment of celebrity a couple of years ago. Tell us about the television commercial you were in, and also, would you consider doing work like that again?

SD: Yeah, I've done a few stints to promote awareness over the years, such as television appearances on Postcards, Parks Victoria and Yarra Trams to name a few. I had a great time doing them and I'd happily do it again if time permits.

JT: Excellent. It's all a bit of good fun and it's good to hear that you're spreading awareness about the many things people with disabilities can still get up to, which I guess leads me in to my next question....

You've managed to get married, travel to some incredible and remote places around Australia and the world, and you still do the things you've always loved doing, like fishing, camping, 4 wheel driving etc.

Have you found some of these experiences challenging which 'able bodied' people might take for granted?

SD: Life is challenging for *everybody* regardless of your situation. I've had no choice but to adapt, and once I got out there, I realized how much I could actually do and achieve. I believe

many people underrate their own abilities to deal with adversity.

JT: It's amazing how much positivity can be found in the dark depths of hurt if you push through and stay true. I also love hearing about your remote 4 wheel drive expeditions to places many of us able bodies fear to, excuse the pun, tread!

SD: It's all about mindset and having a positive outlook.

JT: I know there are a whole lot of things I've forgotten to ask you which will come to me later.

JT: Is there anything I've overlooked which you'd like to mention or talk about?

SD: Ask me the next time we're out having a drink together, and I'll let you know then!

JT: Spirché, to me, you're more 'able bodied' than most able bodies I know. It's always a pleasure and an honor to be able to share your continually positive story with our greater Macedonian Community.
There was a poignant quote from a European film which I can't recall the name of??...It went something like: "Hurt people, Hurt people". Which is true I guess to some extent, but in your case I'm going to rephrase it and say; "Hurt people, Heal people".

Spiré..... A true survivor who found his new feet, and they're holding him up just fine, thank you very much.

SD: Thanks greatly for the opportunity and remember, "Don't let fools drag you down to their level, because they'll beat you with their experience"..... "And having a conversation with a fool is like playing chess with a pigeon".... He he he....

JT: Yeah, and don't take up the disabled parking spots if you don't have to! he he he (note: much laughter between us)

Lots of love brother Spirché

OTTOMAN MACEDONIA BETWEEN THE DILEMMAS AND FLUCTUATIONS OF GREEK NATIONALISM

Dr. Dimitar Ljorovski Vamvakovski

The modern Greek state was created in 1830; this is when the process of the construction of the Greek nation began in earnest. The state institution was constructed with the aid of powerful European patron states, which were hoping to gain more control over the south-east Mediterranean. However, the process of constructing the Greek nation and its identity did not strictly begin or end in the 1830's. Indeed Greek nationalism would go through significant changes during the rest of the 19th and the early 20th centuries.

The period at the turn of the 18th into the 19th century was one of dramatic transformations involving the modernization of much of the cultural, economic and political life of Europe. Undoubtedly of crucial importance in the rise of nationalism on the Balkan Peninsula - in some places sooner than others – were social influences derived from western Europe. The spirit of freedom or liberty emanating from the French Revolution possessed an unlimited horizon and was understood by various social groups as offering a means to liberate themselves from all kinds of oppression. It was a time during which there occurred an intensive admixture between modern Western notions of nationalism on one side and the local particularisms which were a product of Orthodoxy and the Ottoman millet system. On account of that it is often asserted that the Greek nation-state was a product of an "historic compromise between traditional values and the importation of Western modernity" (Koliopoulos & Veremis, 2002:4).

This is the reason why in numerous modernist theories of the nation, certain of the criteria are universal, even though there are some specificities that nations possess, which impact upon their creation and future development.

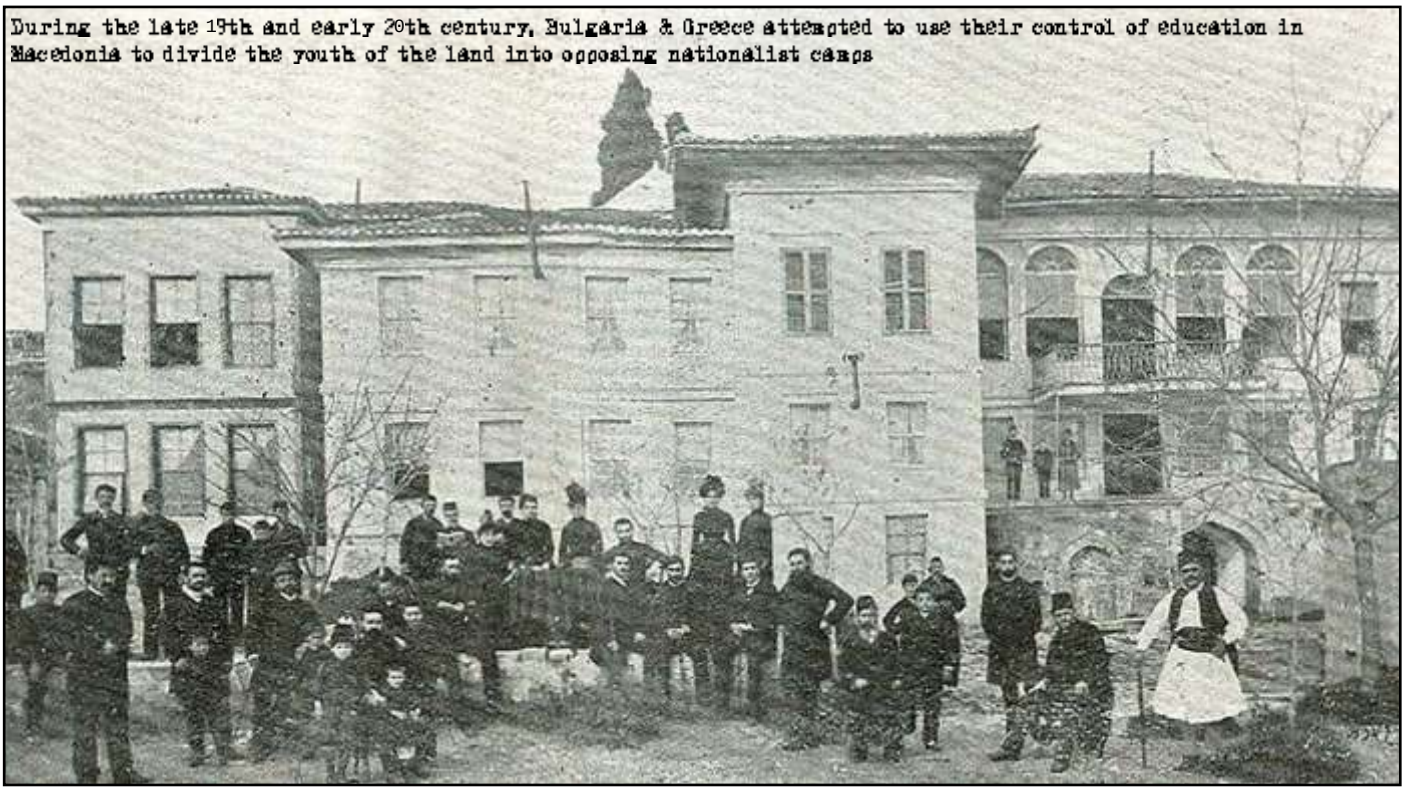
The latter was emphasized during the 1960's when the rise of anthropology resulted in a paradigm shift in thought on the social phenomena known as nations and nationalism. Thus, for example, Eric Hobsbawm quotes a definition of the nation as follows: "the community of the citizens of a state, living under the same regime or government and having a communion of interests; the collectivity of the inhabitants of a territory with common traditions, aspirations and interests, and subordinated to a central power which takes charge of maintaining the unity of the group; the people of a state, excluding the governing power" (Хобсбаум, 1993:23). On the other hand, national identity is a complex phenomenon, often based on an emotion, i.e. consciousness, derived from sharing a language, religion, history, origins, culture and habits with the other members. According to Anthony Smith, national identity is multidimensional and it will always be based on more than one of the above mentioned commonalities (Smit, 1998:29-30).

Today it seems that for the largest number of members of the Greek nation, to be a Greek, means to speak the Greek language, to be a member of the Orthodox Church and live on territory which had been inhabited by Greek forefathers. According to Peter Mackridge, this view is based on the belief of Greeks "that their church links them to the Byzantine Empire, while their language is the connection to Classical Greece and also Byzantium" (Mackridge, 2009:9). In essence the nation is a living organism, dependent on the vicisitudes of history and the Greek nation has not been able to avoid the transformative effects of time.

Yet, in the social sciences, there remain a number of unanswered or only partially answered questions in relation to Greek national identity and the development of the Greek nation. For example, who were the Greeks? Were they Hellenes, Rum or Greeks? Which territories are Greek? Is religion the most important factor in being a member of the Greek nation? Should only the Greek speakers of the Ottoman Empire be considered Greeks or should all members of the Orthodox Church at that time be regarded as Greeks? According to the Greek historians, Koliopoulos and Veremis, these and similar questions have been seldom posed and even when they were, they remained unanswered. However that may be, today there is a wealth of historical material which aids in answering some of those questions, more thoroughly.

According to Mackridge, Greek nationalism went through two overlapping phases. The first is referred to as the liberation phase and it begins prior to the formation of the Greek nation state; while the second phase began with the formation of the state. Liberation nationalism is said to have continued after the formation of the state, in the form of irredentism. It was maintained both with and without the support of state institutions, as was the case with the efforts to "liberate" Crete and Macedonia during the 19th century (Mackridge, 2009:15; Mackridge adds that liberation nationalism may be defined as dynamic, while state nationalism can be characterized as more concerned with maintaining the status quo).

It was the dynamism of Greek libera-



tion nationalism which led to pretensions on Macedonia and its people via the use of national myths during the 19th century, which created a *new* picture of Macedonia – one that presented it as an in integral part of the Greek nation. Yet in a sense, this was the easier part of the job. In relation to the other Balkan pretenders, the Greeks were the first to define Macedonia as nationally theirs – using data selectively to argue that they possess a "historical right to Macedonia" by packaging ancient Macedonia as part of Greek national territory. Yet even by the late 19th and early 20th century, it was only a select educated class of Greeks who considered Macedonia to be an "historic Greek land" and who possessed a certain amount of historical knowledge about it; for the vast majority of Greek citizens, Macedonia was largely unknown.

In any case, the much more difficult task for Greek nationalism was to "prove" that Greeks constituted the largest ethnic group in Macedonia. The facts on the ground clearly demonstrated that the Slavic speaking Christian population (as it was often referred to at that time) was the largest and during the second half of the 19th century, it began to develop a Macedonian identity that distinguished it from the Greeks, Bulgarians and Serbs.

Until around 1870, the stance of Greek nationalism was generally to refer to the majority population of Macedonia as "Bulgarians" or "Slavs" though at that time, these terms did not possess an ethnic underpinning. Indeed, it was policy to regard their "Christian brothers" in Macedonia, on the basis of their Orthodoxy, as "Greeks". However, matters slowly began to move in a very negative direction for Greek nationalism.

At first, Greek foreign policy did not view as particularly dangerous, the rise of a Macedonian intelligentsia and a church school movement spreading the message of a Slavic linguistic renaissance and particularity (for more on this, see Pococ, 2010:102). But, with the arrival of Bulgarian nationalism, via the formation of the Bulgarian Exarchate Church in 1870 and the creation of the Bulgarian principality in 1878, there ensued Bulgarian claims upon the inhabitants and territory of Macedonia. Thus Bulgarian and Greek national ideology entered into a direct confrontation and this brought about a drastic reformulation of Greek politicking towards the "Macedonian question". The existing Greek nationalist arguments to do with religion and language [even though Greek was not widely spoken in Macedonia at that time, the Greek language had for a period, been the dominant language of instruction at schools in Macedonia, because of the power of the Patriarchate – Ed] in relation to the "Slavs" of Macedonia would no longer suffice.

Even though Greek nationalism continued to use the Orthodoxy of the Patriarchate in Istanbul as a means to 'prove' the Greek character of Macedonia, its main task became to struggle against the rise of the Exarchate in Macedonia.

Moreover, 'historical origins' and consciousness now became crucial factors in "proving" the Greekness of Macedonia's inhabitants. Such arguments were combined with Orthodoxy in an effort to minimize in appearance at least, the importance of language. Thus Athens began to officially assert that those who remained under the jurisdiction of the Patriarchate are truly "Greeks"; if not by language, then by their "origins and national consciousness". Accordingly, the nationalistic elite and national institutions in Athens created a historical construction whereby it could be "proved" that the majority of the inhabitants of Macedonia were Greek by origin. This story was used most commonly among the population of Macedonia, especially during the years of the so called "Macedonian struggle" (1904-1913). Namely, the argument went that the Macedonians had been Greeks from ancient times, but with the arrival on the Balkans of the "Slavs", they were "Slavicised" and that it was "finally time" for them to be Greeks again.

Amongst many, an example of that type of propaganda can be noted in the case of the former IMRO commander in the Kostur region, Kote Hristov from the village of Rula, who was encouraged by such "arguments" to work for the Greek side in the armed propaganda struggle, by the Patriarchate Bishop of Kostur, Germanos Karavangelis (Каравангелис, 2000:16). The ultimate result was a change in the terminology used by Greek nationalism which began to refer to Macedonians as "Slavicised Greeks" or "Slavophone Greeks".

This new ideological basis would go on to play an important role for Greek nationalism in "proving" the "Greek character" of Macedonia. It is a national myth which was used in conjunction with other propagandistic activities, especially during the armed struggles, early in the 20th century. It was a tool in the final aim of the basis of Greek foreign policy – the "Great Idea": an irredentist expansionist notion with the aim of making Macedonia and its Orthodox population a part of the Kingdom of Greece.

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Dr. Dimitar Ljorovski Vamvakovski – translated from Macedonian by George Vlahov.

Bulgarian boarding-school in Salonika 882

"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 промениј нашето име?

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

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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?

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НАШЕТО ИМЕ Е МАКЕДОНИЈА

SCENES FROM THE RECENT MLADI BILBILI AND VINOZHITO TOUR OF AUSTRALIA

During the month of February, the AMHRC, in cooperation with the Macedonian Community of Western Australia Inc, the Macedonian Community of Adelaide and South Australia Inc and the Macedonian Orthodox Community of Wollongong, organized a tour around Australia, involving the popular five piece Macedonian folk band from the Lerin region of Aegean Macedonia: Mladi Bilibili. They were accompanied, by members of Vinozhito, Pando Ashlakov, the current mayor of the village of Ovchareni, Lerin region and Dimitri Jovanov, the editor of Nova Zora.

The tourists were hosted at Macedonian community centres in Perth, Adelaide, Wollongong, Geelong and at Neret Receptions in Melbourne, by the AMHRC. The tour ended with a picnic at the Whittlesea Showgrounds in Melbournes outer north, which was hosted by the AMHRC and Lerin FC.

Full houses, updates on the latest Macedonian language educational initiatives of Vinozhito and vibrant performances of classic Macedonian folk songs. Special thanks must go out to the following members of the AMHRC sub-committee which managed the tour so well: Con Filin, Tase Filipov, Con Talidis and David Vitkov.

KORG

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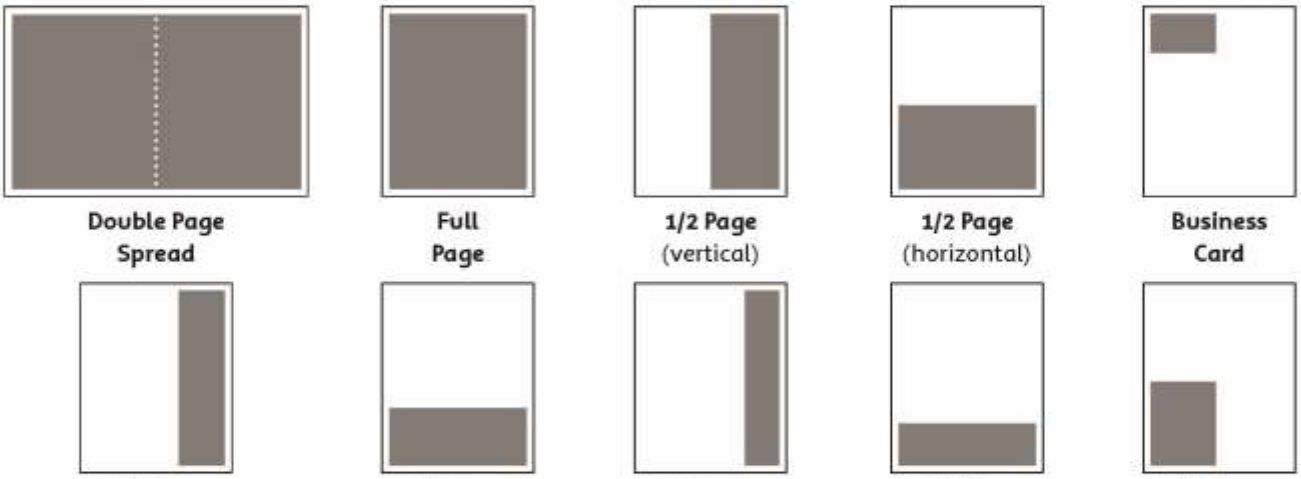
An ideal way for businesses to financially support the human rights of Macedonians throughout the world is by becoming an advertiser in the *MHR Review*, the joint official publication of the Australian Macedonian Human Rights Committee (AMHRC) and Macedonian Human Rights Movement International (MHRMI).

When you advertise your business, products and services in the *MHR Review*, you make a difference every day by providing the necessary resources to help proud Macedonians meet their ongoing challenges.

The *MHR Review* is a full-colour A4 size quarterly publication containing a mix of news, interviews and feature articles from local and international correspondents. Distributed in both print format and electronically via email, the AMHRC and MHRMI websites, various internet forums and social media networks, the combined distribution/readership of the *MHR Review* has grown to well over 8,000 within Australia, Canada and internationally.

Advertising in the *MHR Review* is a great way to promote your business, products and services to the international Macedonian community and also play a significant role in defending the human rights of all Macedonians.



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Australian Macedonian Human Rights Committee (AMHRC)
Ph: +61 3 9329 8960 | Email: info@macedonianhr.org.au

MHRMI
Macedonian Human Rights Movement International (MHRMI)
Ph: 1-416-850-7125 | Email: info@mhrmi.org

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

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:

AUSTRALIAN MACEDONIAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE

Address	Suite 106, Level 1 55 Flemington Rd North Melbourne, 3051
Telephone	+61 3 9329 8960
Email	info@macedonianhr.org.au
Website	www.macedonianhr.org.au

MACEDONIAN HUMAN RIGHTS MOVEMENT INTERNATIONAL

Address	157 Adelaide St. West, Suite 434 Toronto, Canada M5H 4E7
Telephone	1 416 850 7125
Email	info@mhrmi.org
Website	www.mhrmi.org

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

Website	www.macedoniansinalbania.org

EUROPEAN FREE ALLIANCE—RAINBOW

Address	Stephanou Dragoumi 11 PO Box 51, 53100 Florina/Lerin, Greece
Telephone	+30 23850 46548
Email	vinozito@otenet.gr or rainbow@vinozito.gr
Website	www.vinozito.gr

OMO ILINDEN PIRIN

Address	Bulgaria, Blagoevgrad 2700 Zk 'Elenovo' bl 6 v. Bar. 6 p.k. Mechkaroovi
Email	omo_ilinden_pirin@yahoo.com
Website	www.omoilindenpirin.org

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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