

Hellenic Electronic Center (HEC)

A Non-Profit Organization Registered in the US

with 37,000 Hellenes as members and 36 Hellenic

associations in the US and abroad

September 29, 2008

The following letter is in response to the historical and political falsehoods put forward by Risto Stefov in his September 28 commentary. The commentary is appalling being filled with separatist falsehoods and misinformation of the kind that Greece specifically cites as a reason for blocking NATO and EU

membership for the government in Skopje. This commentary openly refers to the Greek province of

Macedonia as "occupied" territory, thus Mr. Ristov provides Greece a valuable service for openly

advocating what most political and diplomatic officials in Skopje attempt to hide, that their government

claims the Greek province of Macedonia that was and has been associated linguistically, culturally,

geographically, and historically with Hellenism.

The province of Macedonia was part of the Greek speaking Eastern Roman Empire (known today as

Byzantium) when it was conquered by the Ottoman Turks in the fifteenth century. Having been Greek

throughout recorded history dating back to the Classical period, its Greek Macedonian population was

liberated by the Greek Army during the Balkan Wars. Any contrary assertions put forward by Mr. Ristov,

are demonstrably false as can be proven by credible historical sources and accounts. The names of

towns and villages in Macedonia have always been Greek, and the implications of Mr. Ristov that

Macedonia contained any Slavic names or identities is blatantly false.

The 1995 film "Before the Rain" (recently released on DVD format) unwittingly exposes the falsification of

history by parties from Skopje. In 1995, the justice of the Greek grievances against Skopje were proven

by the support given to Greece in light of the accords that were reached that year. That Skopje was forced

to remove the Macedonian Sun of Vergina (which is displayed by Slavs in Skopje in the aforementioned

film) proves positive that Slav claims to the Macedonian heritage are false. Furthermore, this same film

features a Slav character asserting that Byzantine Emperor Basil II defeated alleged "Macedonians" when

in fact the famed ruler defeated Bulgaria in the eleventh century (hence the epithet given to him "Bulgar

Slayer").

Mr. Stefov's commentary dwells into the realm of what can only be classified as an advocacy to violence

when he concludes that Slavs "should struggle to separate from Greece". Hence this concluding line

taken into consideration with the countless anti-Hellenic provocations emanating from Skopje

such as

claiming Alexander the Great and falsely portraying Macedonian culture as Slavic rather than Hellenic

proves positive the fanatical and slanderous motivations of the government in Skopje and its proponents

abroad. As for the fantasy of Mr. Stefov that Greece, Bulgaria, Serbia, and Montenegro went to war to

establish a so called "Macedonian" State, he produces no evidence whatsoever.

Theodore G. Karakostas

TKarakosta@aol.com

Member of HEC Executive Council

www.greece.org

American Chronicle(online magazine)

by Risto Stefov September 28, 2008 When we speak of Macedonia most of us think of the Republic of Macedonia but what most people don't know is that there is more to Macedonia than just the Republic of Macedonia. It's a matter of fact that 51% of Macedonia's geographical territory was annexed by Greece and another 10% was annexed by Bulgaria by the August 10th, 1913 Treaty of Bucharest. So by virtue of physical size most of Macedonia today is under Greece. Also by virtue of its physical territory we can assume that more Macedonians live in Greece than in the Republic of Macedonia. The Republic of Macedonia, by the way, occupies

39% of geographical Macedonia.

So when we speak of the Macedonian people it must be understood that we speak of the ethnic Macedonian people, not just of those living in the Republic of Macedonia, but of all ethnic Macedonians living in all of geographical Macedonia.

Another thing most people don't know is that most Macedonians living in the Diaspora today are from the Greek part of Macedonia.

It is estimated that there are 200,000 Macedonians living in Canada or perhaps more since Macedonians have been coming to this country since the late 1800's. More than 150,000 of these Macedonians have come from Greece. They have been coming to Canada to work and return home to invest their savings but since the failed Macedonian uprising against the Ottoman Empire in 1903 more and more have been coming to Canada to stay.

There are many Macedonians also living in the USA and Australia, perhaps in the hundreds of thousands, who also left Macedonia under similar circumstances as economic or political refugees.

Despite what Macedonia's neighbours the Greeks, Bulgarians and Albanians claim, the Macedonian people from the entire region of geographical Macedonia, including the regions today occupied by Greece, Bulgaria and Albania, came together as one in 1903 and fought against the Ottoman Empire for their liberty and to create a Macedonian State. Unfortunately due to the superiority of the Ottoman military and due to lack of assistance from the outside world, Macedonians failed in that task. This however did not mean that Macedonians gave up their struggle for freedom and independence.

After their failed uprising many Macedonians placed their hopes for liberation on their neighbours but that too was a great mistake. The Ottomans were indeed driven out of Macedonia during the first Balkan War of 1912 by the combined actions of the Greek, Serbian, Montenegrin and Bulgarian armies but instead of liberating the Macedonian people as promised, these states (Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria) occupied Macedonia and partitioned it amongst themselves. Since then up to 1991 Macedonia remained occupied and under the control of foreign hands, more ruthless than those of the Ottoman Empire.

In 1991 the part of Macedonia that was originally occupied by Serbia, by referendum, declared its independence from the Yugoslav federation and became a free and sovereign state called the Republic of Macedonia. The parts occupied by Greece, Bulgaria and Albania remain under foreign control to this day.

Besides occupying and annexing Macedonian territories without the consent of the Macedonian people, Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria over the years also committed many atrocities against the Macedonian people. The Greeks for example burned many villages and murdered and exiled their inhabitants as documented by the 1913 Carnegie Endowment Inquiry. Later Greece exiled tens of thousands of Macedonians because they refused to pledge allegiance to the Greek State. Even later they exiled still more Macedonians because they happened to be of the

Muslim faith and replaced them with twice the number of Christian Turkish colonists from Asia Minor. At about the same time Greece implemented a number of policies to change the Macedonian people's names and make them Greek sounding. Greece, in an attempt to show the world that Macedonia was Greek, changed all the Macedonian peoples' and place names including village, town and city names as well as lake, river, road, valley and mountain names and made them Greek sounding. A little later Greece banned the Macedonian language and made it illegal to be spoken and fined people for speaking it. These were people who spoke no other language but Macedonian. During harder times Greek authorities imposed heavy fines, beat, fed castor oil to them and jailed Macedonians for speaking the Macedonian language, the only language they knew.

After the Greek Civil War (1946-1949) tens of thousands of Macedonians including 28,000 children ages 2 to 14 were exiled from Greece, had their citizenship taken away and had their properties confiscated. More than half of these people are now living in Toronto, Canada.

Canada's recognition of the Republic of Macedonia by its constitutional name has given these Macedonians some comfort that there are people in the world who still care but it is not enough to repair the injustices perpetrated by the Greek State over the years.

For some Macedonians it has been more than five generations of exile while patiently waiting for Greece to make things right.

Judging by how Greece and the Greek people behave nowadays however it appears, at least to this observer, that Greece has no intention of making things right for the Macedonian people. If Greece does not make reparations soon and continues to abuse and torment the Macedonian people then Macedonians have no choice but to want to separate from Greece and join the free Republic of Macedonia.

It has been proven over and over and over again that there is no justice in Greece for the Macedonian people so the only option left to them is to seek justice for themselves by removing themselves from the Greek yoke. It is clear at least to me that Greece fears this will happen but does not have the courage to take proper action to make it right.

Macedonians have shown for many generations that they can co-exist with other ethnicities but have refused to accept subordination. Macedonians can live in Greece as equals to the Greeks but not as their subordinates. Unfortunately after one hundred years of living under Greece, Greece has made no effort to better the condition for Macedonians living there. Greece has proven its cruelty towards the Macedonian people by its hostile acts not only in Greece but worldwide. So I ponder, what does the future hold for the Macedonian people? One and only one thing comes to mind! If Greece does not reverse its injustices and make things right there is but one choice for the Macedonian people; struggle to separate Macedonia from Greece.

You can contact the author at rstefov@hotmail.com