

MHRMI

silence is not an option.



MACEDONIAN HUMAN RIGHTS MOVEMENT INTERNATIONAL

EFA-Rainbow (Vinozhito) and OMO "Ilinden" - PIRIN Thank MHRMI and AMHRC for Their Invaluable Support



Stojan Georgiev of OMO "Ilinden"-Pirin and Nase Parisi of EFA-Rainbow with members of MHRMI at the 'Macedonian Human Rights Week' luncheon in Toronto, Canada - June, 2009.

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EFA-Rainbow (Vinozhito) / OMO "Ilinden" - PIRIN - Press Release

Florina/Lerin and Blagoevgrad/Gorna Dzumaja - July 2, 2009

Following the tremendous success of MHRMI Macedonian Human Rights Week (June 14-21, 2009) and our visit to Australia (March 24-31, 2009), Vinozhito and OMO "Ilinden" - PIRIN would like to thank our partner organizations, Macedonian Human Rights Movement International and the Australian Macedonian Human Rights Committee for their invaluable support and dedication to the Macedonian human rights cause.

MHRMI hosted Nase Parisi, Vinozhito member and President of Greece's EBLUL (European Bureau for Lesser Used Languages) Committee, and Stojan Georgiev, co-President of OMO "Ilinden" - PIRIN, while AMHRC hosted Nase Parisi, Dimitri Ioannou (Vinozhito) and Stojko Stojkov, co-President of OMO "Ilinden" - PIRIN.

In addition to the events held with the Macedonian communities of Canada and Australia, meetings were held with government officials, international human rights organizations, and media in order to continue to globalize and promote human rights for the oppressed Macedonian minorities in the Balkans.

MHRMI and AMHRC provide vital financial and logistical support for Macedonian human rights activities. We call on Macedonians in Canada, the United States, Australia and throughout the world to support MHRMI and AMHRC in their tireless work in assisting Macedonians to achieve their basic human rights.

*The Press Offices
EFA-Rainbow (Vinozhito)
OMO "Ilinden" - PIRIN*



Greek Neo-Nazis disrupt presentation of the first Greek-Macedonian Dictionary in Athens

June 3, 2009

The presentation of the first Greek-Macedonian dictionary was brutally disrupted last night in Athens by a group of Greek ultra-nationalists belonging to the neo-fascist organization "Hrissi Avgi" (Golden Dawn).

A few minutes after the beginning of the event, which was taking place in the Foreign Press Association in Athens, the group invaded the premises shouting "This is Greece, traitors and homosexuals get out!", verbally and physically attacked the panellists, other participants, and the only TV crew filming the event. They also seized mobile phones and confiscated all material related with the promotion of the dictionary - books, informational leaflets and banners.

A video, released on You Tube, pictures the thugs as they take over the room, shouting in Greek: "Shame on you, it's disgraceful what is happening here... You drug-addicts, you have the nerves to present a "Macedonian" dictionary here ... We are throwing these books in the dust bin and all of you out, now! It's over! ... Let me see your mobile phones as you leave! .. You anti-Greek worms..."

The participants were effectively kept as hostages for almost half an hour and the assailants only left the building when they were informed that the police were on their way.

The police were not present at the time of the attack, although the Hrissi Avgi and other Greek "patriotic" organizations had publicly announced their intentions to stop the presentation by force.

The Greek mainstream media were also absent and the promotion was covered only by Alfa TV from the Republic of Macedonia.

Mr Athanassios Parissis, President of Greek member statecommittee of EBLUL, was speaking at the event and can be seen sitting at the right hand end of the table in the video.



Greek Neo-Nazis threatening and assaulting panelists at the conference.

Speaking to Eurolang today he said that: "The human rights movement in Greece, and the Macedonian activists in particular, are used to this kind of intimidation and attacks. Until yesterday we were also used to having strong police protection. Surprisingly, the moment that these attackers realized that the police were temporarily not there, they decided to act. They had a very specific plan, to terrorize and intimidate us and to stop the event, without a lot of physical violence, without blood."

He added: "We were calm, we did not react, we did not leave the room when they ordered us to, and by acting like this we effectively forced them to leave".

The dictionary- the life's work of the Aegean Macedonian Vasko Karadza who died in exile a few years ago- was published by "Zora" editions with the support of the Greek Member State Committee of EBLUL and the EFA-Rainbow party. It's considered to be the most comprehensive work of its kind and it's going to be followed soon by a Macedonian-Greek dictionary.

Keynote speakers of the presentation were Professor Victor Friedman, Department of Slavic and Balkan Languages, University of Chicago, USA and Dr. Riki van Boeschoten, Professor at the Faculty of Social Anthropology, University of Thessaly, Greece.

Source: Eurolang




Do I have any rights?

MHRMI, AMHRC Welcome Upcoming United Nations Review on Greece's Human Rights Record

July 22, 2009

Macedonian Human Rights Movement International (MHRMI) / Australian Macedonian Human Rights Committee (AMHRC) - Press Release

Toronto, Canada and Melbourne, Australia - MHRMI and AMHRC welcome the upcoming United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (UN CERD) review on Greece's compliance (or non-compliance) with the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD). This will occur from August 10-11, 2009 in Geneva, Switzerland.

Greek Helsinki Monitor (GHM) and Minority Rights Group - Greece (MRG-G) will be presenting detailed reports on human rights abuses against Macedonians and other minorities in Greece. They have already submitted a joint report which is available at the Committee's website:

http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cerd/docs/ngos/GHM_Greece75.doc

As is the practice, they will also be presenting updated information including the acquittal of neo-Nazi author Costas Plevris and the failure to punish racist speech and attacks against Macedonians and other minorities, non-recognition and restrictions in the use of the Macedonian language, the illegal media ban and voting irregularities during Vinozhito's election campaign, and the ongoing blacklisting of Macedonian political refugees and human rights activists.

MHRMI and AMHRC call on Macedonians abroad to report to our organizations discrimination by border officials when trying to enter Greece, so that this information can be presented at the UN CERD review.

"This is a tremendous opportunity to demonstrate to the United Nations the hostile environment that Macedonians, Turkish and Roma minorities, as well as minority rights activists, face in Greece,"

said GHM Spokesperson Panayote Dimitras. *"Considering UN Independent Expert on Minority Issues, Gay McDougall's call for Greece to finally recognize its Macedonian and Turkish minorities, and respect Roma rights, we hope and expect that the UN CERD will follow suit. We are also very pleased that the Committee has decided to take up the issue of absence of effective prosecution of hate speech against minorities and migrants and the existence of outright neo-Nazi groups, in blatant violation of ICERD."*



UN Independent Expert on Minority Issues, Gay McDougall

www.symposiumcafe.com






REDEFINING THE CAFE EXPERIENCE




Can I speak my language?

MHRMI and AMHRC Call on Macedonians Abroad to Report Discrimination by Greece

May 10, 2009

Macedonians Macedonian Human Rights Movement International (MHRMI) and Australian Macedonian Human Rights Committee (AMHRC) - Press Release

Toronto, Canada and Melbourne, Australia - Following the publicity of Canadian-Macedonians' discrimination at the hands of the Greek Consulate in Toronto, Macedonian Human Rights Movement International (MHRMI) and the Australian Macedonian Human Rights Committee (AMHRC) call on Macedonians in the diaspora to contact our organizations to report on similar difficulties they have faced.

We ask for specific cases of discrimination by Greek Consulates and Embassies worldwide and border officials when trying to enter Greece.

Various governments, including Canada and the Czech Republic, have already confronted Greece about its blacklisting of ethnic Macedonians. Our organizations will continue to press this issue to government officials, international courts of human rights, media and other NGO's so it gains worldwide attention.

Greece consistently proves that it acts only in its xenophobic self-interest and will persecute ethnic Macedonians, and other minorities, regardless of where they live. MHRMI and AMHRC call on the international community to force Greece to immediately end this persecution and to finally recognize its large Macedonian minority.



Top Right: An example of Greek government discrimination - Greek border guards place stickers on vehicles entering Greece from Macedonia saying "RECOGNIZED BY GREECE AS FYROM", making it easier for Greek citizens to identify them.



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MHRMI and AMHRC Call on European Union to Reprimand Greece, Recognize Macedonia

June 20, 2009

Macedonian Human Rights Movement International (MHRMI) / Australian Macedonian Human Rights Committee (AMHRC) - Press Release

Toronto, Canada and Melbourne, Australia - Greek neo-Nazis attack Macedonians. Massive voting irregularities against Macedonian minority party. Will the European Union finally take concrete steps to reprimand Greece or will it continue to turn a blind eye and allow its member-states to be handcuffed by Greece's xenophobic policies?

Sandwiched in between these two recent events was European Commission Vice President Jacques Barrot's reference to the Republic of Macedonia as "Northern Macedonia". Apparently, the European Union even lends its support to Greece's extreme nationalistic agenda.

Greece refuses to accept the existence of ethnic Macedonians and the constitutional name of the Republic of Macedonia. Consequently, Greece vetoed Macedonia's entry into NATO in 2008, its economic embargo crippled Macedonia's economy in 1992, and its persecution of its Macedonian minority receives worldwide condemnation, including a recent United Nations report and several European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) judgments against it.

However, the European Union allows its member-states, notably Greece, to ignore ECHR rulings without fear of retribution.

Greek neo-Nazis have taken advantage of the Greek government's racist policies and the EU's lack of response. On June 2, 2009, neo-Nazis attacked Macedonians and other participants at the launch of a Macedonian/Greek dictionary at the Foreign Press Association in Athens.



EFA Rainbow (*Vinozhito*) participated in European Parliament elections on June 7, 2009 amidst a hostile environment for members of the Macedonian minority. Although required by law, media access was denied, EFA-Rainbow activists were harassed, party posters, leaflets and DVDs were confiscated, and countless ballots were destroyed.

According to the OSCE/ODIHR, it has "deployed a group of experts to assess the 4-7 June elections to the European Parliament" but "will not observe election day proceedings."

Nase Parisi, EFA-Rainbow member and President of Greece's EBLUL (*European Bureau for Lesser Used Languages*) Committee stated,

"It is ironic that no monitoring of election irregularities took place in Greece because, as a member of the European Union, it is supposed to be a "model" for developing countries and new democracies to aspire to. Potential EU members go through intense scrutiny during their elections. Current EU members must not be given a free pass".

Macedonian Human Rights Movement International and the Australian Macedonian Human Rights Committee call on:

- 1. The European Union to reprimand Greece and enforce its ECHR judgments***
- 2. Macedonia to cease all negotiations with Greece over the name dispute***
- 3. Immediate international recognition of Macedonia's constitutional name***



MHRMI

We take these liberties for granted every day

Action Alert: MHRMI And AMHRC Protest "Macedonian Slav" Reference By The Associated Press

June 12, 2009

Macedonian Human Rights Movement International (MHRMI) / Australian Macedonian Human Rights Committee (AMHRC) - Press Release

MHRMI and AMHRC call on Macedonians worldwide to voice their displeasure to the Associated Press. Please send your letters to info@ap.org with copies to info@mhrmi.org and mail@macedonianhr.org.au.

MHRMI/AMHRC response to the Associated Press

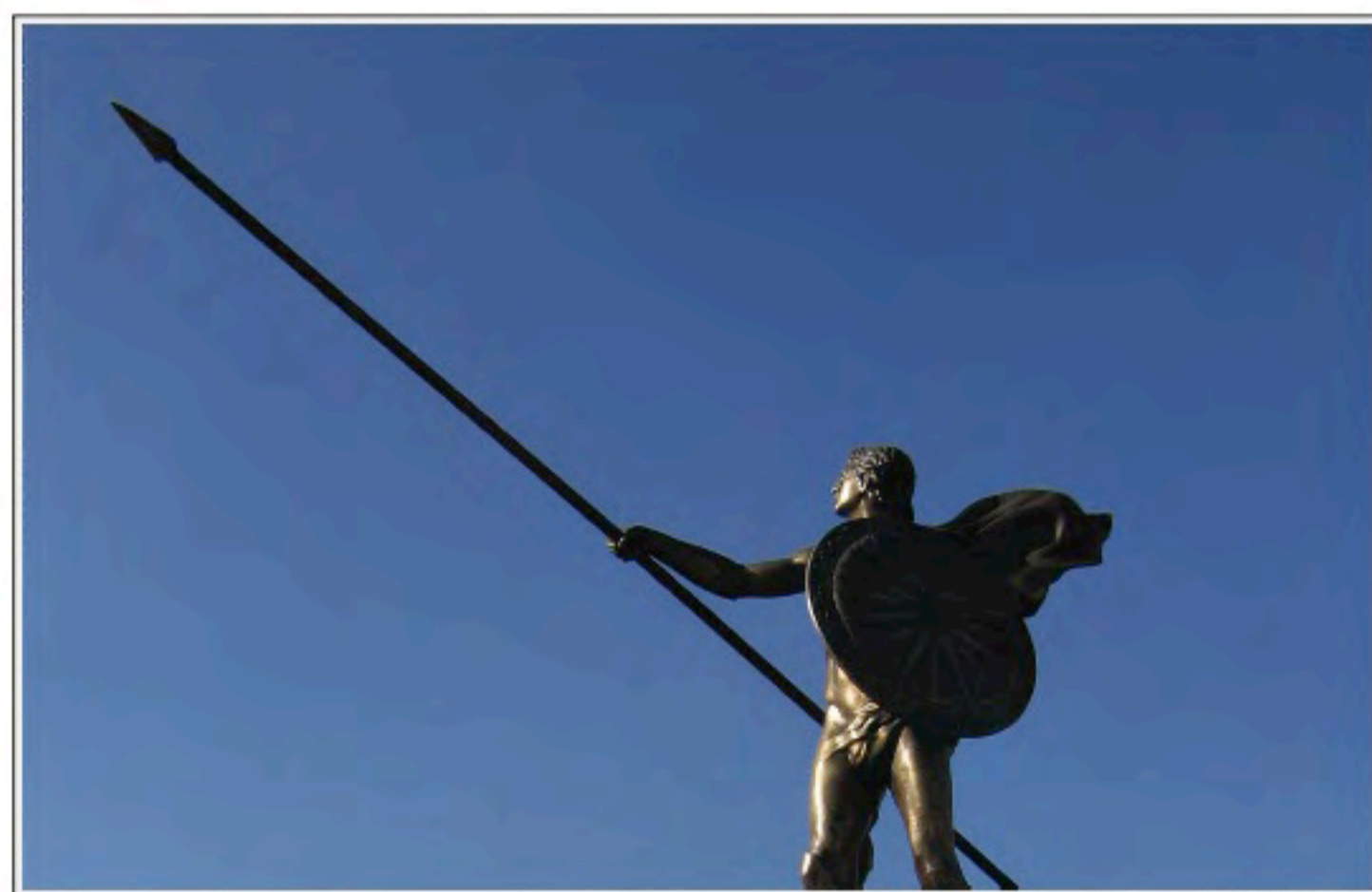
Toronto, Canada and Melbourne, Australia - The best defence is a good offence. Biased AP writers Konstantin Testorides and Elena Becatoros employed this strategy in their June 8 article "Alexander the Great's statue stirs Balkan passions".

Testorides and Becatoros evoke Greece's racist stereotypes of Macedonians while accusing the Republic of Macedonia of the very same tactics employed by Greece.

Ironically, the article begins by stating "As an exercise in nation-building, Macedonia's latest effort is pretty audacious...". By building a statue of Alexander the Great?

Since its inception as a state in 1830, Greece has been "masterful" at building its "nation" from a mix of ethnic groups by violently and forcibly assimilating them, and by clinging to a non-existent link to ancient Hellenism. It then has the audacity of claiming that its nation is ethnically pure. A dangerous notion to say the least. Especially for the oppressed minorities within its borders.

Testorides and Becatoros seem to think that building a statue of Alexander the Great is akin to declaring war on Greece. The tensions between the two nations are a result of Greece's refusal to accept the existence of ethnic Macedonians and the constitutional name of the Republic of Macedonia.



Because of the name dispute, Greece vetoed Macedonia's entry into NATO in 2008, its economic embargo crippled Macedonia's economy in 1992, and Greece persecutes its Macedonian minority while receiving condemnation by the European Court of Human Rights, the United Nations, and the international community as a whole. Comparable to the European Union "weighing in" and referring to the statue project as "not helpful"?

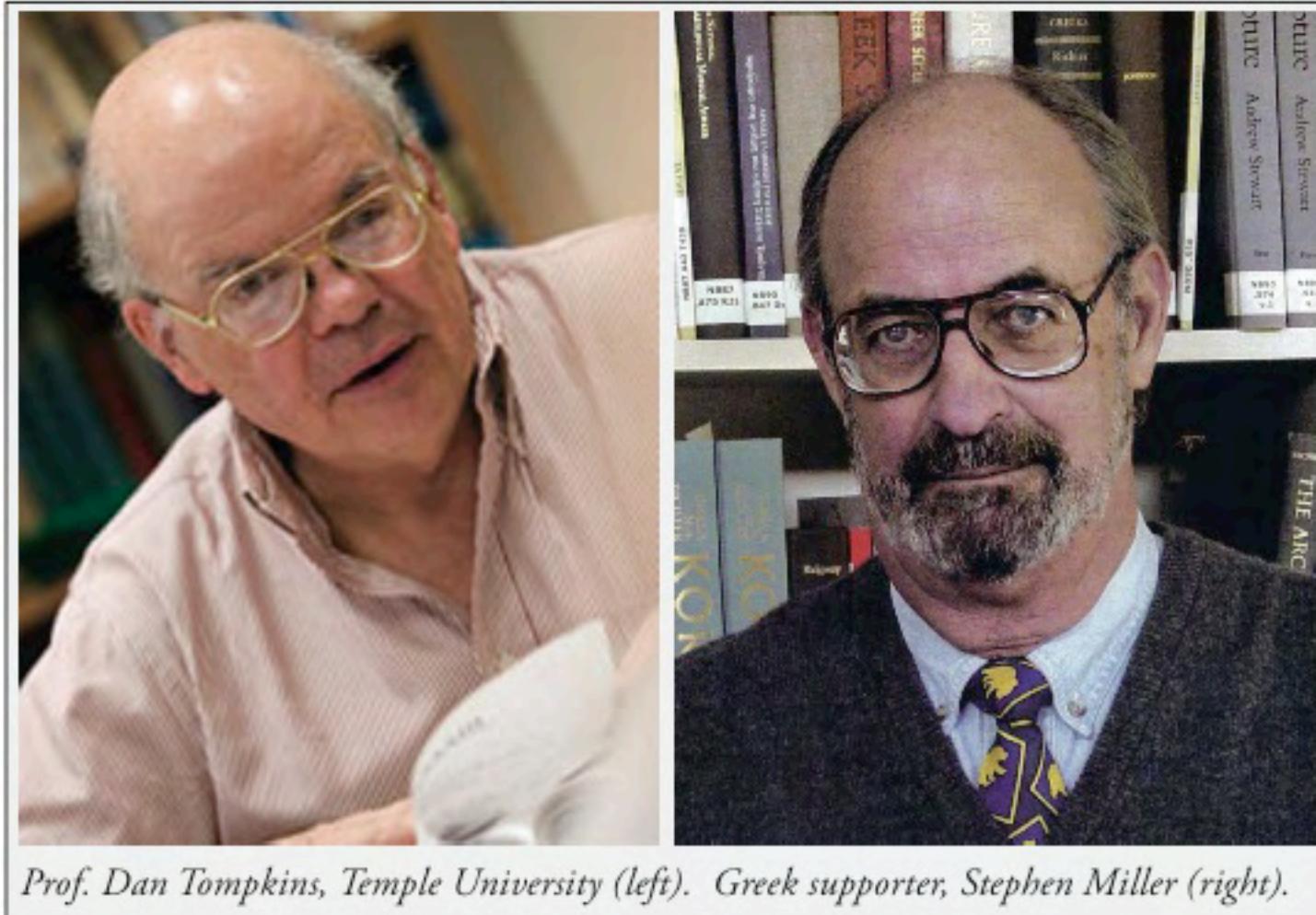
A slew of irrelevant arguments follow in the hope of convincing readers that the erection of this statue will have catastrophic repercussions.

Last, but certainly not least, Testorides and Becatoros refer to "Macedonian Slavs". A strategy employed by Greece to negate the ethnicity of Macedonians. There is no ethnic group in Macedonia that refers to itself as "Slav". The Macedonian population in the Republic of Macedonia, throughout the Balkans and the world, is simply that, Macedonian. Any other term is insulting and follows the official Greek policy of denying the legitimacy of the Macedonian nation, and denying the existence of its large Macedonian minority.

We trust that the Associated Press will not make such an error again.

MHRMI

Macedonians around the world wish they could



Prof. Dan Tompkins, Temple University (left). Greek supporter, Stephen Miller (right).

June 16, 2009

*Macedonian Human Rights Movement International (MHRMI)
/ Australian Macedonian Human Rights Committee (AMHRC)
- Press Release*

The AMHRC and MHRMI wish to report that we have sent our response to all of Professor Miller's co-signatories. We have also sent it to a number of other academics working in this field. One of these other academics was Professor of Ancient History, Daniel Tompkins of Temple University in Philadelphia. To read Tompkins' response, along with responses of other supporters, please visit: http://www.mhrmi.org/news/2009/june16_e.asp

*A Response to Professor Stephen G Miller by the
Australian Macedonian Human Rights Committee (AMHRC)
and Macedonian Human Rights Movement International
(MHRMI)*

9 June 2009

Dear Sir/Madam,

We write to you in regards to the letter to President Barack Obama dated 18 May 2009 which you appear to have co-signed in your capacity as a scholar of Graeco-Roman Antiquity. (www.macedonia-evidence.org)

The purpose of this letter was to ask Mr. Obama to reverse US recognition of the Republic of Macedonia under its constitutional name. Putting aside the absurdity of referring to ancient history as a basis for conducting present-day foreign policy, the letter itself epitomizes Greece's irrational, and dangerous stance on the Macedonian issue.

AMHRC & MHRMI Report Support from Academic World for their Response to Prof. Miller

Greece refuses to accept the existence of ethnic Macedonians and the constitutional name of the Republic of Macedonia. Consequently, Greece persecutes its Macedonian minority and its actions are condemned by the European Court of Human Rights, the United Nations, and the international community as a whole.

The author of the letter, Professor Stephen Miller, has even publicly called on Greece to annex the Republic of Macedonia.

Our organizations have taken the opportunity to not only deal with these issues, but to also address relevant matters on ancient and modern Macedonia. Please see our attached response.

We ask that you carefully consider our position and re-examine your endorsement of the above mentioned letter.

Yours sincerely,

*Australian Macedonian Human Rights Committee
Macedonian Human Rights Movement International*

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 MHRMI


 Are you ready to help?

Blatant Greek Racism Broadcast on National Television

June 3, 2009

E.F.A. - Rainbow / Macedonian Human Rights Movement International (MHRMI) / Australian Macedonian Human Rights Committee (AMHRC) - Press Release

Lerin/Florina, Greece - "Simply raising the issue of the Macedonian minority in Greece causes Greek citizens and politicians alike to react in outrage." This statement made by MHRMI was on full display on March 10 on Greek TV station "Alter" in an episode entitled "Invisible World".

EFA-Rainbow member and President of Greece's EBLUL (European Bureau for Lesser Used Languages) Committee Nase Parisi, EFA-Rainbow member, Pavle Filipov Voskopoulos, and Greek Helsinki Monitor member Grigoris Valianatos represented the "non-existent minority" view, while New Democracy MP Iordanis Tzamtzis, PASOK MP Panagiotis Sgouridis, LAOS MP Athanasios Plevris, and professor of history Mixalis Chrisanthakopoulos exemplified the official Greek position of attacking minority rights activists rather than admitting their actual existence.

The show began with a conspiracy theory that anyone acknowledging Greece's human rights abuses against Macedonians and other minorities are "working against Greece." This was followed by claims that UN Minority Rights Expert Ms. Gay McDougall, who recently called on Greece to recognize its Macedonian and Turkish minorities, was "paid by Americans" and that UN Mediator Matthew Nimetz, "works for George Soros", who "creates minority problems".

The accusations of being "paid by Americans" then turned toward EFA-Rainbow members, followed by personal attacks against Macedonian minority activist Father Nikodim Tsarknias.

Emerging from the uproar caused by the mention of Macedonians were statements like "there is no Macedonian language" and "they are dangerous", referring to Macedonian political refugees, now in their 70's, who left Greece as children during the Greek Civil War and who were subsequently stripped of their citizenship.

The EFA-Rainbow and GHM members called for public education in the Macedonian language, for Greece to adhere to the European Court of Human Rights judgements against it, and for the recognition of the Macedonian and Turkish minority in Greece.

Pavle Filipov Voskopoulos stated on air, "*We believe that the state should respect the rights of minorities ... we together with all the democrats of Greece must work together to fight for democracy and want to speak now to our people ... and to say dosta da se plasete ...*" (Translated from Macedonian – "Stop being afraid...")

The Macedonian language was broadcast on Greek national television. It exists.



EFA-Rainbow member, Pavle Filipov Voskopoulos telling the Macedonians in Greece to "Stop being afraid...", live on Greek national television.



MHRMI

Please help us secure human rights
for all Macedonians.

“Hellenic Post” Sabotages EFA-Rainbow (Vinozito) Recent Election Campaign

June 24, 2009

In order to fill the “void” resulting from the Greek media black-out of EFA-Rainbow’s election campaign, in the weeks leading up to the European elections of 7 June 2009, the party mailed out promotional material to voters in Northern Greece. The material was sent via the state-owned “Hellenic Post” and included a letter, a DVD and ballot papers.

Yesterday, the party was informed by the Florina/Lerin office of “Hellenic Post” that there was a package waiting to be picked up in the name of EFA-Rainbow (Vinozito).

When party officials went to the post office they were shocked to see that the package was a sack of letters that had not been delivered. The letters included bundles of letters sent to whole villages that had been returned to the Post Office.

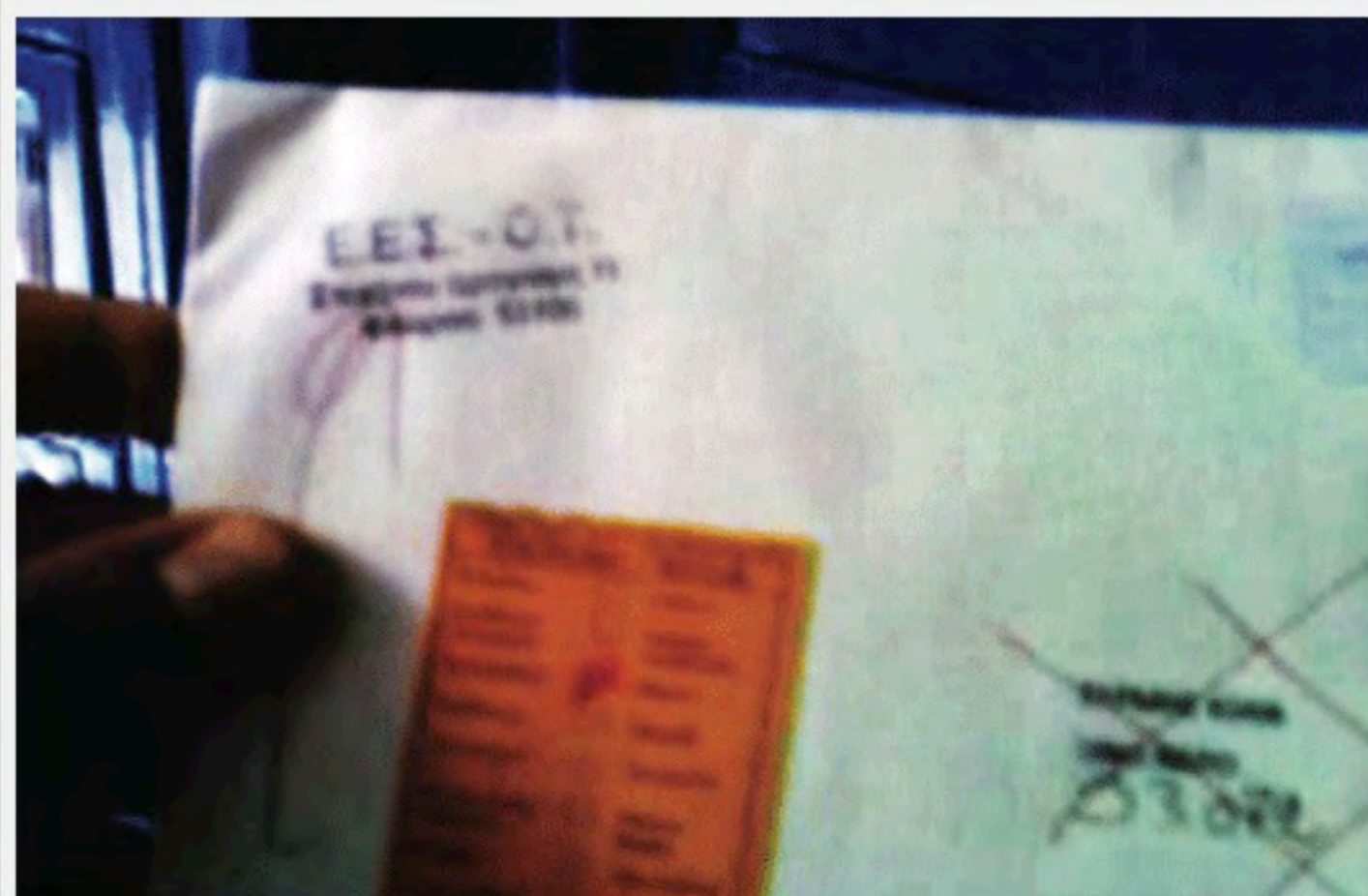
Evidence of this scandalous incident can be found on YouTube:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vITC4OQjLwM>

EFA-Rainbow (Vinozito) condemns this interference by “Hellenic Post” in the election campaign. It is yet another example of the sabotage by Greek state organs against EFA-Rainbow (Vinozito), the political party of the ethnic Macedonian minority of Greece.

The party will be making an official complaint to “Hellenic Post” and will demand an explanation as to why the letters were not delivered. Legal action is also being considered to address this potentially criminal act.

*The Press Office
of EFA-Rainbow*



EFA-Rainbow (Vinozito) campaign letters, undelivered by “Hellenic Post”.

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Prime Minister Harper appreciates Macedonia

Source: *The Hill Times* - March 2, 2009

Re: "In Harper's Ottawa, it's politics, politics, politics, politics all the time..." (*The Hill Times*, Feb. 16, p. 22).

I want to respond to Evan Sotiropoulos' criticism of Prime Minister Stephen Harper's visit to the Macedonian community.

It is ironic that Mr. Sotiropoulos criticizes the Conservative government for political "pandering" when it's the Liberals who have perfected it.

The Conservative government did something that the previous Liberal government refused to do—recognize the Republic of Macedonia under its constitutional name. In doing so, Canada finally joined over 120 other countries who had already taken this logical step.

To pander to its supporters among the Greek Canadian community, the Liberals denounced Macedonia's recognition, and allowed its long-serving MP, Jim Karygiannis, to publicly make inflammatory comments about Macedonians.

To show its appreciation to the Conservative government, the Macedonian community invited Stephen Harper and Jason Kenney to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the United Macedonians Organization of Canada. They gratefully accepted and arrived after attending Chinese New Year celebrations earlier that evening.

But where is the controversy? Mr. Sotiropoulos does not agree with Canada's recognition of a country under its constitutional name. What right is more basic than that of self-identification?

Or did he want Mr. Harper to choose which ethnic community events he will attend while turning his back on others? The Macedonian community are proud Canadians and greatly appreciate the freedom afforded them in this country after living through severe oppression, mostly at the hands of the Greek government.

However, Mr. Sotiropoulos does not discuss the present human rights abuses that Macedonians face because of the xenophobic policies of the Greek government. Instead, he takes us back to ancient times and discusses Alexander the Great in the context of this modern "debate." Irrelevant. But to indulge Mr. Sotiropoulos



"Macedonians Welcome Prime Minister Harper." Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper and MP Jason Kenney pose with Dragi Stojkovski-president of the United Macedonians Organization of Canada, Father Trajko Boseovski and members of 'Ensemble Makedonka' folk dancing group at the United Macedonians 50th Anniversary Gala.

for a moment, it is Macedonia that has existed since antiquity, while Greece was created in the 1830s.

Greece is in no position to dictate anything based on history. More to the point, should we be governed today based on arbitrary interpretations of ancient history?

The nonsensical name dispute was initiated by Greece in order to continue its policy of non-recognition and persecution of its large Macedonian minority.

Mr. Sotiropoulos refers to the United "Macedonians" Organization, but he can't even get past his own admitted bias and refer to Macedonians without first placing the word in quotation marks. Mr. Sotiropoulos' contempt for Macedonians is deplorable and ironic. Two decades ago, one could not dare mention Macedonia to a Greek apologist without invoking a heated debate on the very existence of Macedonia. How curious that now they claim that "Macedonia is Greek."

Bill Nicholov
President

Macedonian Human Rights Movement International
Toronto, Ont.

MHRMI

Human Rights Week June 14-21, 2009



MHRMI Human Rights Week opened with a meeting at St. Clement of Ohrid Macedonian Orthodox Cathedral, with Macedonian community leaders from across the GTA in attendance.



Stojan Georgiev and Nase Parisi were graciously greeted by the Macedonian community in Windsor, ON. The event was successfully organized and hosted by members of St. Nikola and was the first time Macedonian human rights activists had visited their community, one of the largest in North America.



The whirlwind week of meetings and conferences ended off with the MHRMI Human Rights Week Luncheon, held at St. Clement of Ohrid. Hundreds of people came out to hear the Macedonian activists speak, and thanked them for everything they have done to help the oppressed Macedonians in Bulgaria and Greece.



Can I speak my language?

Imagine if you could lose your job, risk imprisonment or even death just for speaking a different language in public or declaring your ethnic identity.

Not possible? Think again.

Macedonians in the Balkans continue to face this kind of persecution every day and it is going to continue until enough voices around the world demand it to stop. Freedom should not be a privilege.

The Work of MHRMI

Throughout its history MHRMI has worked to achieve our goals through two means: education and advocacy.

We strive to bring the plight of the Macedonians to the attention of the world.

We have done this through:

TARGETED ATTENDANCE AT INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS CONFERENCES

MEETINGS WITH GOVERNMENTS, KEY INTERNATIONAL POLICY-MAKERS AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

REPORTING AND PUBLISHING ON THE HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES SUFFERED BY MACEDONIANS

Only by appealing to those who have the power to effect change, can we reasonably expect the world to begin righting the wrongs inflicted upon Macedonians for generations.

We envision a world free from oppression.

Your silence is not an option.

Freedom Of Speech. Freedom Of Religion. Freedom Of Assembly.

We take these liberties for granted every day. Macedonians around the world wish they could.

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