



The LOMA Chronicle

The League of Macedonian-Americans
Volume 2, Issue 1 * January 2018



IN THIS ISSUE:

Word Scramble.....	1
Community Corner.....	1
Who Was George Naumoff?.....	2-3
Official Statements.....	3-15
Opinion: Greek Delusions.....	15
Letter Campaign.....	15-20
Website Changes.....	20

Macedonian Word Scramble

Unscramble the following words in order to get the correct Macedonian word. The words are written in Cyrillic. To help you out, we have also included a word bank of the Macedonian words translated into English. Good luck!

English Word Bank

(not in order of appearance)

1. Friday 2. warm 3. green 4. child 5. mother
6. sun 7. village 8. month 9. five 10. how 11.
forest 12. table 13. heart 14. market 15. coffee

Scrambled Words in Macedonian

AACM
ЗОНЕЕЛ
ТПОЕК
ЛОПТО
ЖКААМ
ШАУМ
ЕЕДТ
ЗАРПА
ЕФКА
ЦСЕР
ТПЕ
ОАКК
ЛОСЕ
НЦСОЕ
СЦЕЕМ

COMMUNITY CORNER

- St. John the Baptist Macedonian Orthodox Church in New Port Richey (outside of Tampa Bay) hosts yoga for Macedonians every Friday at 7:00 pm
- Sts. Cyril and Methodius Macedonian Orthodox Church in Blasdell (outside of Buffalo) has Bingo on Thursday nights starting at 7:30 pm
- St. Mary's Macedonian Orthodox Church in Reynoldsburg (outside of Columbus) is having a "Stara Nova Godina" party on January 13th, starting at 7:30 pm
- St. Mary's in Ohio will also have a Vodici Celebration on January 20th at 7:00 pm with Ekstra Band performing all night long
- The St. Mary's Athletic Club of St. Mary's Macedonian Orthodox Church in Sterling Heights (outside of Detroit) has several basketball teams for youth of all ages. They are participating in the Orthodox Youth Athletic Association of Detroit and the 2017-2018 basketball season has begun.

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The LOMA Chronicle

The League of Macedonian-Americans
Volume 2, Issue 1 * January 2018



GEORGE NAUMOFF: A MACEDONIAN ICON IN MINNESOTA

Most Macedonian-Americans today haven't heard of George Naumoff. Yet, George was a leading Macedonian-American and an important labor organizer, progressive and socialist in Minnesota during the middle of the 20th century.

George was born in Drenoveni (Aegean Macedonia) in 1896 and ventured to America in 1910, joining his brother in sending money back to the "old country". But his brother returned to Macedonia in 1911 and for several years, George alternated between working on railroads and in car shops before moving to Minneapolis. In the early 1930s, shortly after his wife gave birth to their third child, George found himself unemployed. He decided to join the Communist Party and eventually started a Macedonian Workers Club.

By the end of the decade George was president of the Local 665 Union and in the 1940s he became president of the Minneapolis chapter of the Macedonian-American People's League (MAPL). In both roles he had a significant impact on his Macedonian and Minnesotan communities. While George's commitment to progressive causes was considerable, we will focus on George's involvement in the Macedonian Cause.

As a leading Macedonian, he organized Macedonians in Minnesota, wrote opinion letters to newspapers on Macedonian issues, and collaborated with Macedonians nationwide, including George Pirinski (MAPL national chapter president) and Stoyan Christowe (Macedonian-American author and Vermont senator). In the 1930s, MAPL had 70 Macedonian members in Minneapolis and they became very active in the labor union movement. George also represented MAPL at general labor, socialist and communist meetings in Minnesota.

The 1930s was a difficult economic period for Americans, which made organizing the Macedonians difficult. "This Macedonian Peoples League that we got," said George, "I'm telling you it was not an easy job ... The idea was to inform the American public that Macedonia was oppressed by the rulers there and all that stuff. But most of them was educating to become members of the country, citizens, to participate in the political -- and the union, to join where there is one, and to contribute, to work with them."

George certainly did his part in informing the American public about the oppression Macedonia faced. He explained the history of Macedonia in the *Star Tribune* in 1947, stating that the "Macedonian nationality has been recorded in history since the fourth century B.C." and that Macedonia eventually became "the cradle of Slavic culture."

But the point of his 1947 article was loud and clear: "The Bulgars, Serbs and Greeks took oppressive measures to obliterate the Macedonian name and denationalize its people," he wrote. He acknowledged that in Yugoslavia, Macedonia had found a republic, but he insisted that America shouldn't ignore the plight of Macedonians in Greece. "The Macedonians under Greek rule," he wrote, "...want a people's representative government and rights for minorities. They want national freedom...and they want a self-ruled republic."

In 1918, George had met Stoyan Christowe when they both were working on the Great Northern Railroad. They corresponded with one another for several years after parting ways. After some years of losing touch, George discovered that Stoyan had participated in the MAPL national conference in 1936 and they rekindled their correspondence.

Stoyan wrote to George in 1972 saying that he wanted to visit him in Minneapolis (Stoyan was



The LOMA Chronicle

The League of Macedonian-Americans
Volume 2, Issue 1 * January 2018



in Minnesota attending a government conference). The two met at a Ritz Hotel, and after George told Stoyan about his life since they had last seen each other, Stoyan said: "It's a long way since we knew each other, as youngsters; now at the age of seventy-two or seventy-three, you know. But you got your way, what you did, and I got my way." George agreed, but only had one question for his friend: "Stoyan, how the hell do you become a senator?" And Stoyan explained how it came to be. For George, everything written in Stoyan's books about Macedonia was a "revelation". He indeed respected the author and politician.

George died in the late 1980s. In addition to his contribution to the Macedonian Cause and the labor movement, he married Laura in the 1920s. The two had five girls together and "infused their children's lives with a rich Macedonian and Scandinavian cultural experience, love of family and friends, and the need to ensure rights for working people." (*From their daughter Donna's obituary.*)

LOMA acknowledges and appreciates Mr. George Naumoff's dedication to the Macedonian Cause, workers' rights and his local community. We hope this snippet of George will inspire others to become more involved in their communities and continue advocating for the Macedonian Cause.

LOMA WILL NOT RECOGNIZE AS THE BOC AS OUR MOTHER CHURCH

November 21, 2017

Brothers, Sisters, and Respected Members of the Macedonian Community:

It is with heavy hearts that we write this letter today. We Macedonians have been wounded and insulted by the one institution that has, until now,

offered shelter and protection for the Macedonian people, culture and identity.

The recent decision by the Macedonian Orthodox Church (MOC) to ask the Bulgarian Orthodox Church (BOC) to become our mother church is a blow to the Macedonian Cause and an affront to the efforts of our ancestors to attain our own Macedonian church, which has played a crucial role in fostering the development of the Macedonian identity in Macedonia and the Diaspora. The MOC may have strategic reasons for asking such of the BOC, but any response by the BOC in the affirmative or negative will harm the Macedonian Cause. The MOC has, in our eyes, delegitimized itself as an institution that represents the will and spirit of the Macedonian people by proceeding in such a manner: our soul has been compromised.

Our connection to the MOC is an expression of our cultural identity and serves as a means to remain connected to the Macedonian community and to honor the lives of our ancestors. For Macedonians in the Diaspora, our Macedonian churches are the last stronghold of our communities. Our churches form the bond that links us to one another – without these churches, we would have been absorbed into different identities and cultures, and we would have been wandering in the dark searching for light. In a world that Goce Delchev described as a battlefield for competing cultures, the MOC had prevented us from fading away – until now.

The idea of voluntarily submitting ourselves to the BOC and the idea that we would willfully allow the BOC (a political-religious institution founded in 1870 that used places of worship to convert Macedonians into Bulgarians) to become our mother is unjustifiable and intolerable. We cannot in good conscience follow the MOC into the BOC. Any Macedonian dedicated to the Macedonian Cause should also find such path unacceptable and deplorable. The designation of

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The LOMA Chronicle

The League of Macedonian-Americans

Volume 2, Issue 1 * January 2018



'mother' in and of itself is condescending and implies that the Macedonian Orthodox Church is a child that is subordinate to its so called 'mother'. A daughter cannot become a sister to her mother, as the MOC wants us to believe could eventually happen. Some in the MOC leadership insist that this is simply an honorary title and has no operational consequences for the MOC. We frankly do not see any honor in the designation and have to question how anyone, especially Macedonians, would feel honored by these actions.

The consequences of placing the MOC under BOC jurisdiction would be wide and far-reaching and could potentially cause a great schism within the Macedonian community. For example, Macedonian-Americans and other Diaspora Macedonians would view the Bulgarian domination of our spiritual center as a betrayal to the Macedonian Cause and the Macedonian people, and they may decide to secede from the MOC and form their own Macedonian Orthodox Church community, independent of the MOC. In this way, these Diaspora churches that represent about one-fourth of the worldwide Macedonian population would put tremendous pressure on the MOC to rethink their recent actions. We believe the Macedonian community and church would be better off without any 'mother', especially one like the BOC, who has actively worked against the existence of a separate Macedonian Orthodox Church and Macedonian identity.

If the MOC acknowledges the BOC as a mother church, the Macedonian churches in the Diaspora would consider uniting and seceding from the MOC. They would have no other option if they want to safeguard the Macedonian identity from the continual looming threat of Bulgarianization. We thus respectfully ask for your support in demanding that the MOC withdraw their letter to the BOC.

THE ANTI-MACEDONIAN GREEK "MACEDONIAN LEAGUE"

December 8, 2017

The so-called Greek "Macedonian League" is one of the most chauvinistic, prejudiced and intolerant Greek organizations in the world. Proof? In a November letter addressed to the Greek Foreign Minister, the Greek Macedonian League concluded: "In an eternal Macedonia, only one ethnicity can reside, the Greek."

Yes, you read that right: there is no room for non-Greeks in Greek-occupied Macedonia. In a territory that was never Greek until 1913 (Aegean Macedonia), the Greek Macedonian League actively supports depopulating the land of its ethnic Macedonians (as well as other ethnic groups) to create a homogeneous Greek society.

Unfortunately, this attitude has been shared by successive Greek governments for over a century. Greece has continuously assimilated Macedonians into the Greek ethnos and forcibly expelled many others who did not proclaim themselves to be ethnic Greeks. The Greek chauvinists have had an agenda of acquiring as much former Byzantine territory as possible ever since Greece became an independent kingdom for the first time in 1832, and it is obvious that the Greek Macedonian League advocates a continuation of this aggressive intolerance and ultra-nationalism.

But the Greek Macedonian League and Greece are scared of the truth; and that truth is that, in this world, there exists a group of people who call themselves Macedonian and who do not consider themselves to be Greek or anything other than Macedonian. Why does this scare Greece? Because it forces Greece to look in the mirror and admit that the reflection staring back at them is a lie; that their country is not a homogeneous nation of Greeks but rather an amalgamation of a variety of ethnic groups; and that Greece is in

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The LOMA Chronicle

The League of Macedonian-Americans

Volume 2, Issue 1 * January 2018



possession of something that does not belong to them – Macedonian territory and the Macedonian identity.

How do we know that Macedonia does not belong to Greece? Take the example of two girls who argued about ownership of a doll. Each girl claimed that the doll belonged to her and not the other girl. A judge told the girls he would cut the doll in half and give each girl a half. 'How does that sound?' asked the judge. The first girl ecstatically replied that she would gladly accept half of the doll. The second girl, however, was hysterical. 'Please don't cut my doll in half,' cried the girl. 'I won't be able to live knowing my doll is forever broken.' In that moment, the judge had no doubts that the doll belonged to that second girl, the girl who could not live without her whole doll.

Well, the case of Macedonia is not much different than that of the doll. In 1913, the Balkan Powers carved up Macedonia into three pieces and each were relatively content with their spoils. Greece was especially overjoyed that it acquired a vast swath of land practically void of Greeks and gladly let Serbia and Bulgaria rejoice in the acquisition of their Macedonian parts. Only the Macedonians wanted Macedonia to remain whole; only the Macedonians believed in a 'Macedonia for the Macedonians'. It makes us wonder, who would a judge award Macedonia to: the Macedonians, or the non-Macedonians? To those who wanted a united Macedonia, or to those who were content with a divided Macedonia?

However, for Greece and the Greek Macedonian League, claiming something that does not belong to them was only the first piece of the puzzle; the second has been to rid Macedonia of non-Greeks while implanting Greek bodies into Macedonian land and a Greek consciousness into Macedonians' minds. Unfortunately for Greece and the Greek Macedonian League, they have not

been wholly successful in their endeavors and the Macedonian ethnos still wanders through Greece in search of her Macedonian mother.

When are the Greeks going to start living in the 21st century and recognize that a Macedonian ethnicity does exist and that ethnic Macedonians do live within Greece's borders? When is Europe going to stop caving into the hate-based ideologies and discriminatory methods propagated by the Greek Macedonian League? Europe must give Greece an ultimatum: either join the 21st century by recognizing and respecting Macedonia's right to be Macedonia and acknowledge the Macedonian minority within your borders, or say goodbye to your European status. The European nations should have stood up to Greece 25 years ago, but they failed to act responsibly. It is time for these European powers to redeem themselves: Demand that Greece recognizes Macedonia and the Macedonian identity!

DO MACEDONIANS SUFFER FROM BATTERED IDENTITY SYNDROME?

December 8, 2017

To answer this question, we first must understand the concept of battered identity syndrome. This is not a term you'll find (yet) in any legal, medical or psychology textbook; but, as you'll see, it is a term that could likely apply to someone you know.

Battered identity syndrome is a condition experienced by individuals who, after lengthy periods of having their identity disrespected, degraded and denied, believe that they are the cause of such belittlement and that they are powerless in controlling their identity's destiny. Often, someone suffering from battered identity syndrome will first deny that his identity is being belittled; then, he will transition into believing his belittler is justified in his actions. Many individuals never survive past this stage.

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The LOMA Chronicle

The League of Macedonian-Americans
Volume 2, Issue 1 * January 2018



However, for someone who does, he eventually becomes aware that he is not to blame for his abuser's actions; and moreover, he realizes he has the power to either escape or halt the belittlement.

So, do the Macedonians suffer from battered identity syndrome?

For several decades, the Macedonians have been told by a variety of people that they are not Macedonians. Greeks, for example, insist that Macedonians are Slavs or Skopians or FYROMians – but certainly not Macedonians. Greece also insists that Macedonia's real name is South Serbia or West Bulgaria or Vardarska – but certainly not Macedonia. Bulgaria, too, insists that Macedonians are not Macedonians but are rather Bulgarians with a Bulgarian language and history. In decades past, Yugoslavia drilled into the Macedonians that they were Slavs or Yugoslavs; and the Serbs perpetuated the notion that Macedonians were South Serbs.

Thus, Macedonians have certainly endured long periods of having their identity constantly denied, degraded and disrespected by a multitude of actors. However, undergoing such belittlement is only one aspect of battered identity syndrome. To fully suffer from the condition, one must also exhibit the symptoms, which include blaming oneself for the belittlement and believing that one is powerless to assume control of his own identity. Do the Macedonians exhibit these symptoms?

Unfortunately, today's Macedonians could be described as the textbook case study for battered identity syndrome. For example, when Greece protested Macedonia's name, Macedonia agreed to sit under 'T' instead of 'M' at the United Nations headquarters. When Greece didn't like Macedonia's flag, Macedonia agreed to change it. When a European official referred to Macedonia as FYROM and then as Skopje, Macedonia's prime

minister smiled and remained silent. When Macedonia's foreign minister was asked if he had any red lines when it comes to negotiating Macedonia's name with Greece, he replied that he prefers green lights. When the European Union implied that Macedonia could not join its brotherhood until Macedonia came to an understanding with Greece, a Macedonian professor wrote that Macedonia should consider adopting a new identity for the sake of Balkan harmony. When the new Macedonian government came in to power this past year, they agreed to change Macedonian history books to appease Bulgaria's views on Macedonian identity, and they began considering renaming and removing landmarks throughout Macedonia to appease Greece's view on the Macedonian identity.

But the symptoms are not just exhibited by Macedonian officials and intellectuals. When Macedonians protest in the streets or celebrate weddings, they wave and carry a flag that was not chosen by them and has no historical connection to their identity. When Macedonians talk about their allies in the world, they refer to their 'Slav' brothers in Russia. When Macedonians listen to music, they turn off traditional Macedonian folk songs and tune into Serbian turbo folk. When Macedonians talk about making something out of their lives, they dream about fitting into multi-cultural Europe and ignore caring for their historical motherland.

The evidence is overwhelming. The Macedonians have accepted their belittlement as being of their own creation, and they demonstrate this by consistently attempting to amend their identity so to ward off the abuse. However, like a wife who strives to lose more weight or speak less often to appease her abuser, the abuse continues and often escalates. The Macedonians believe that they are at fault for the way others disrespect, degrade and demean their



The LOMA Chronicle

The League of Macedonian-Americans

Volume 2, Issue 1 * January 2018



Macedonian identity. And the Macedonians religiously believe that they are helpless when it comes to naming their own country, choosing their own flag, interpreting their own history, and celebrating their own culture.

The Macedonians undoubtedly are suffering from battered identity syndrome.

So how do we Macedonians cure this condition?

The first step is recognizing that we are indeed being belittled. We Macedonians must realize that it is demeaning for our nation to be the only one that negotiates its name, flag, history and culture. We Macedonians must acknowledge that it is disrespectful for someone to refer to us by a name that we haven't chosen for ourselves. We Macedonians must accept that it is humiliating to conduct business with the very same people who deny that we exist. If we realize that something is wrong, then we can acknowledge that something must be done to right this wrong.

Second, we Macedonians must understand that we are not at fault – we Macedonians did not cause Greece, Bulgaria and Europe to act this way. Before and after Macedonia's independence from Yugoslavia, we Macedonians used the only name we've ever called ourselves and we celebrated the only culture and history that we've ever known to be true for ourselves. Something so democratic, positive and real cannot be the reason for such unprincipled, negative, and surreal reactions by Macedonia's Balkan neighbors. For example, Greece's insecurities, troubled history and xenophobia are the reasons why Greeks demean, degrade and disrespect the Macedonians. Greece is the reason why Greece belittles Macedonia, not Macedonia. Once we understand that we are not at fault, then we can think about how to defend against our abusers.

Third, we Macedonians need to realize that the power to defend our identity and to combat

belittlement is within our control. When someone calls Macedonia 'fYRoM', we should correct that individual by saying, 'Excuse me, it's Macedonia!' When someone asks us about our opinion on the name negotiations, we should respond that the Macedonian name and identity are not for sale. When a Macedonian is threatened by European officials with a non-existent European future, a Macedonian must insist that the only future he needs is a democratic and principled Macedonian one, not an unfair and compromised European one.

Further, we Macedonians must not fear the fabricated consequences of expressing our identity. For over two decades Macedonians have let our identity slip away; this has only created more problems for Macedonia. Whether it's the Macedonian economy, political landscape or general societal conditions, Macedonia's regression is directly correlated with an explosion of Macedonians fleeing from their identity. If we Macedonians were to regain control of our identity – our name, culture, language and history – then the Macedonian society and economy will have the necessary foundation to flourish.

Battered identity syndrome should not be taken lightly: we Macedonians suffer from it and most of us still do not know it. Women who suffer battered woman syndrome often end up killed at the hands of their abusers. The Macedonian identity may suffer a similar fate if we Macedonians don't quickly become aware of our condition and realize that we have the power to do something about it.

Fellow Macedonians: let's cure ourselves, together.

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The LOMA Chronicle

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Volume 2, Issue 1 * January 2018



MACEDONIA MUST NOT FALL INTO GREECE'S MOST RECENT TRAP

December 10, 2017

The League of Macedonian Americans asks the Macedonian government and Macedonians worldwide not to fall into the trap set by Greek Prime Minister, Alexis Tsipras.

In a meeting with Bulgarian, Serbian and Romanian officials, Mr. Tsipras conveyed that an outcome to the so-called name dispute would be forthcoming if Macedonians refrained from claiming that they were the “only descendants of the ancient Macedonians.” If the Macedonians were to do that, suggested Mr. Tsipras, then a name for Macedonia that is agreeable to all of Macedonia’s neighbors could likely be found.

LOMA, however, recognizes three misleading and concerning aspects of Mr. Tsipras’ comments. First, on a technical note, Mr. Tsipras hints that it is not only Greece that has a problem with Macedonia’s name. He speaks about a name that is acceptable to each of Macedonia’s neighbors. But no other Balkan government has publicly claimed it is against Macedonia being called Macedonia. These governments have only ever acknowledged that the name dispute is a drag on the Balkan Peninsula. They still refer to Macedonia, however, as Macedonia. The only Balkan government (or world government, for that matter) that has a problem with Macedonia’s name is Greece. The rest of the world could care less what Macedonia calls itself.

Second, Mr. Tsipras thinks that it is up to other people to determine Macedonia’s fate, including the Macedonian name and identity. This is contrary to all international values and principles advocated by the United Nations and the European Union. The difference between the Macedonians and the Greeks is that the Macedonians believe that a people has the right to determine its own name, identity and culture.

That’s why Macedonians, for example, have no problem with the Greeks calling themselves Greeks, even though the history of modern Greece has very little cultural or ethnical correlation with ancient Greece. We believe Greece has the right to determine its own name, identity and culture, and to interpret its own history, without interference from others.

The Greeks, on the other hand, believe that others have the right to determine someone else’s identity, name and culture. For example, because some British and Western observers erroneously interpreted that the Greeks of the 18th and 17th century were like the Greeks of past, and because they further wanted to rebuild an ancient Greek civilization to demonstrate the supposed European roots of democracy, Greek society began to believe that they were a carbon copy of this ancient civilization. The Greeks let someone else determine their identity and then assumed that identity in its entirety; the Macedonians accepted the Greeks’ right and will to determine their past, present and future in this manner. We Macedonians accepted this because we believe that only Greece and the Greeks have the power to determine their own affairs.

The Greeks think differently and believe that others have the right to interfere with the internal affairs of another country. What the Macedonians name their country and their language, and how the Macedonians interpret their history, is not up to the Macedonians, according to Mr. Tsipras and the general Greek line of thinking. For them, it’s up to Greece and other Balkan neighbors to chart Macedonia’s course. Macedonians believe that this makes a mockery of democratic principles and internationally adopted values – only the Macedonians should be able to determine their fate, which includes interpreting their own history, naming their country and language, and deciding how to shape their societal institutions. Greece should respect Macedonia as an equal and

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The League of Macedonian-Americans

Volume 2, Issue 1 * January 2018



treat her fairly; not bully her into succumbing to Greece's perspective of the world.

Third, Mr. Tsipras did indeed lay out a cunning trap for the Macedonians to fall into. To many Macedonians, it may seem reasonable and worthwhile to acknowledge that other people could be descendants of the ancient Macedonians. Based on historical evidence of Alexander the Macedonian's conquests and other world migration patterns, it is undoubtedly true that descendants of the ancient Macedonians are scattered throughout the world. Macedonians don't normally deny this historical fact and are proud of Macedonia's historical world influence. Thus, in the first place, we question why Mr. Tsipras even suggests that Macedonia officially admit to something so obvious.

But we know that Mr. Tsipras really wants Macedonians to acknowledge that the Greeks are direct descendants of the ancient Macedonian name. (Because Macedonia has never asked or forced Greece to change its northern province's name from 'Macedonia' to something else already shows that Macedonians accept Greece's right to interpret history for itself.) Yet, as Mr. Tsipras' reasoning goes, if Macedonia officially acknowledges that Greece also has a right to the Macedonian name, and that Macedonia is not the only one with a right to that name, it then means Macedonia will have to agree to sharing that name with Greece. By agreeing to share that name, Macedonia will then have to agree not to selfishly hoard the Macedonian name by suggesting that Macedonia is the only Macedonia.

Therefore, to make clear that the Macedonia is not the only Macedonia, and to make clear that Macedonia's citizens are not the only ones who share in Macedonian history, culture and identity, Macedonia will have to accept a qualifier to its name, whether it be Northern, Upper or Vardar Macedonia. The only question

left for negotiations after a qualifier is agreed upon, would be deciding whether this new name should be enshrined in Macedonia's constitution or used only in the international arena. Yet, either result would spell doom for the Macedonian identity.

The League of Macedonian Americans therefore asks the Macedonian government and Macedonians worldwide to seriously consider the implications of Mr. Tsipras' request. What Mr. Tsipras' offers us is not a gift or a compromise, but a proposal for how to submit to Greece. What Mr. Tsipras' offers the world is not a vision of democracy and self-determination, but a vision of oppression and manipulation.

We must reject Mr. Tsipras' request both for the survival of the Macedonian identity and the sanctity of self-determination worldwide.

THE ECFR'S RIDICULOUS COMMENTARY ON GREECE'S AGGRESSION TOWARD MACEDONIA

December 13, 2017

The following is LOMA's response to the European Council on Foreign Relations' (ECFR) Kalypso Nicolaidis' and Veton Latifi's analysis of how to change Macedonia's name.

ECFR statements from the article "Resolving the Macedonian Name Dispute: Prospect for Transformative Mutual Recognition" appear first. LOMA's responses follow. The link to the article is here:

http://www.ecfr.eu/article/commentary_resolving_the_macedonian_name_dispute_prospect_for_transformativ

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Volume 2, Issue 1 * January 2018



ECFR: "What should be the new name of the Republic of Macedonia...?"

LOMA: There are other questions you should be asking instead, such as: "Should Macedonia be forced to change its name?" or "Why is the European community allowing Greece to incessantly insult international principles and values?"

ECFR: "...currently referred to as the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM)?"

LOMA: If you are going to humiliate Macedonia and the Macedonians, do it correctly: it is currently referred to in certain international institutions as 'The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia'. Ridiculous, we know, but in ECFR's version, Macedonia would be seated next to Finland at the United Nations. In reality, Macedonia is seated next to Thailand. No offense to Finland or Thailand, but Macedonia should be seated between Macau and Madagascar.

ECFR: "While the Republic of Macedonia (or FYROM) promotes the intuitive principle that countries ought to choose their own names..."

LOMA: This is not simply and only an intuitive principle; it is a principle found in the U.N. Charter (specifically, Chapter I, Article 1.1 and Chapter I, Article 2.1).

ECFR: "In order to grasp this opportunity, discussions on a deal should be grounded in the principles of freedom, responsibility and mutual recognition."

LOMA: The ECFR highlights three principles that should lay the groundwork for discussion on Macedonia's future name. LOMA has three questions: 1. How can ECFR speak about the principle of freedom when they do not acknowledge that Macedonia has the freedom to choose its own name as all other European nations have done? 2. Is it responsible to continue

ignoring the will of a population who has not acted aggressively toward Greece since its independence but has instead appeased Greece's unrealistic fears by changing its flag and constitution? 3. Regarding mutual recognitions - Macedonia recognizes that Greece has a province it calls Macedonia; when will Greece recognize Macedonia is a country called Macedonia? It's not hard, folks.

ECFR: "While the deal needs to be respectful of historical and identity concerns, people must ultimately free themselves from these concerns."

LOMA: Ah, now we see. Freedom doesn't mean freedom; it means purposeful and directed ignorance. To ECFR, freedom means ignoring the real problem: Greece's denial of the existence of an ethnic Macedonian identity. To ECFR, forcing someone to change how he identifies his homeland is not disrespectful; instead, it's another day at work.

ECFR: "The leaders of the two countries, but also their publics, have a responsibility to the next generation..."

LOMA: LOMA absolutely agrees! We do have a responsibility to the next generation. We have a responsibility to ensure that the most valued principles in the world - self-determination and equal rights for all - are upheld and protected for the next generation.

ECFR: "each side needs to recognize not only the other side's identity stories, sovereignty concerns and territorial integrity fears"

LOMA: The issue has never been about sovereignty or territorial integrity. Territorial integrity was simply Greece's fabricated excuse to the world in the early 1990s. Greece claimed that a country of 2 million people, who lacked basic weapons, was going to attack a country with 10 million people who was also a NATO member. Then again, unless Greece was afraid



The LOMA Chronicle

The League of Macedonian-Americans

Volume 2, Issue 1 * January 2018



that this newly independent Macedonia would find an ally in a supposed phantom “ethnic Macedonian minority” that Greece wouldn’t admit existed within its borders... It must not be easy pretending that your country is ethnically pure.

ECFR: “the so called ‘Macedonian minority’ in Greece”

LOMA: Several international commissions and studies have found that a Macedonian minority does indeed exist in Greece. What’s with the “so called”?

ECFR: “For example, agreement on a name will immediately allow for a start of EU negotiations and lifting the veto on membership of NATO - both to be conducted under the new permanent name.”

LOMA: Why does the principle of self-determination not apply to Macedonia? Why is one member-country allowed to violate U.N. principles and force another country to submit to its interpretation of history and identity (e.g., the modern Greeks believe that they, and only they, are the descendants of both the ancient Greeks and the ancient Macedonians)? Why will the E.U. and NATO allow one country to interfere in the internal affairs of another? Why can’t the E.U. and NATO revisit its veto policies and end this nightmare for Macedonia? I imagine answers to these questions are what will immediately allow for a start of E.U. negotiations and membership into NATO; that is, assuming Macedonia will still want to join organizations that cannot and will not even stick up for basic rights and freedoms.

ECFR: “Monopoly of Identity: Only Macedonia”

LOMA: How do you arrive at the conclusion that Macedonia being called only “Macedonia” is a monopoly of identity? Have today’s Macedonians prevented Greeks from identifying as Macedonians or as Greek Macedonians? Has

today’s Macedonia prevented Greece from using symbols related to any point in Macedonia’s history? Furthermore, why do all your solutions deal with changing the name of Macedonia (the Republic of Macedonia) but not the Macedonian province in Greece? Moreover, if the Republic of Macedonia did not exist, would those who live in Greek Macedonia call themselves Macedonians and only Macedonians, or still refer to themselves as ethnic Greeks, as they do today?

ECFR: “Ethnicity: Slavo Macedonia, Slav Albanian”.

LOMA: “Slav” does not represent ethnicity. “Slavic” represents a language family. “Macedonian” represents an ethnicity. Just some points of clarification in case you are still using Greek-published 19th century history books.

ECFR: “Chronology: New Macedonia”

LOMA: Macedonia was divided in 1913; it would be inappropriate and inaccurate to label one piece “new” when they are the same age. Moreover, “Greek Macedonia” has never been its own country. Macedonia has. So, which Macedonia would really be the new one? But it seems like Greece’s real concern is upholding its imaginary ties to ancient glories so that its constructed national identity doesn’t implode on itself. Well, we’ll tell you what Macedonia will let Greece do: Greece can call its province of Macedonia “Ancient Macedonia” or “Old Macedonia” or whatever else it wants. It would follow, then, that Macedonia won’t need to change its name and Greece can feel like it is protecting its history and identity. You know why Macedonia will let Greece do that? Because Macedonia doesn’t interfere in the self-determination of other nations.

ECFR: “‘Macedonia’ should not be monopolized as an identity marker by any of the states of that region.”

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The LOMA Chronicle

The League of Macedonian-Americans

Volume 2, Issue 1 * January 2018



LOMA: Macedonia is not monopolizing the name. Greece can call its northern province whatever it likes.

ECFR: "But here is the twist: as part of sharing the overall "Macedonian" identity, we must mutually recognise and respect our different (national) versions of what this identity might mean."

LOMA: There are Macedonians who refer to themselves as ethnic Macedonians; and there are those who refer to themselves as ethnic Greeks. A Greek knows he is a Greek and a Macedonian knows he's a Macedonian. In the western hemisphere, Canada and the U.S.A share a regional name (North America); the U.S.A. has America in its name; and US citizens identify as Americans while Canadian citizens identify as Canadians. Ethnic Americans have not infringed on the Canadians' right to identify as Americans in a regional sense. Similarly, the Macedonian region is shared by an ethnic people who call themselves Macedonians, and other ethnic groups who don't call themselves ethnic Macedonians. No one's identities are tarnished.

ECFR: "Let them be free whoever wants to proclaim: I am Macedonian too."

LOMA: Everyone is already free to proclaim: "I am Macedonian." Greece, however, wants "I am Macedonian" to really mean "I am Greek."

ECFR: "But Greeks on their side hear this as a technical and disingenuous argument which leaves the identity problem intact."

LOMA: So, the name negotiations are about negotiating identity?

ECFR: "But if someone introduces herself as from Luxembourg, how many will guess that she might be from Belgium?!"

LOMA: So, Macedonia must be forced to change its name and identity because Greeks are too lazy to say, "I am from Macedonia, Greece" or "I am from the Macedonian province of Greece" or "I am from Greek Macedonia"? Today's Macedonians should be punished and their rights revoked because Greece doesn't want to be inconvenienced by having to explain where they are from?

ECFR: "One qualifier is to leave "Republic of Macedonia" intact, as in Republic of Macedonia (Skopje)"

LOMA: Would Macedonia have the right to rename its own capital 'Macedonia' so that Macedonia can call itself "Republic of Macedonia (Macedonia)"? Or would Macedonia first have to consult Greece's history books to find the correct name for its capital?

ECFR: "Slavic Macedonia has to do with a distinction based on ethnicity, Slavs vs Greeks"

LOMA: Again, "Slav" is not an ethnicity. "Macedonian" is an ethnicity. So, in the end, such a name would force the ethnic Macedonians to change their identity into what Greece perceives to be the Macedonians' identity. Can we start calling the Greeks "Vlahobanians" to reflect many Macedonians' perceptions about the ethnic roots of modern Greece? This might be a fair compromise: "Slavic Macedonia" and "Vlahobanian Greece".

ECFR: "Vardar (confusingly, also the Greek name for the river Axios) raises more problems than it solves, as significant parts of the current territory of the country were administrated by the Serbs as Vardarska Banovina before WWI"

LOMA: Let's not spread misinformation: the Serbs never administered today's Republic of Macedonia as Vardarska Banovina before WWI. It wasn't until the late 1920s that "Vardarska Banovina" came into the Serbian vernacular.

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The LOMA Chronicle

The League of Macedonian-Americans

Volume 2, Issue 1 * January 2018



ECFR: "Northern and Upper (with different connotations) are perceived as a more neutral geographical variant so far, not offensive to either side"

LOMA: It is very offensive – we are not Northern Macedonians and we are not Upper Macedonians. Did we mention self-determination?

ECFR: "Proponents – including us – argue that this simply underlines a factual point and implies a positive connotation, like New York or New Zealand."

LOMA: And New York's and New Zealand's citizens are, respectively, called New Yorkers and New Zealanders, not Yorkers and Zealanders. New Macedonia's citizens would be 'New Macedonians' and not 'Macedonians'.

ECFR: "But by implying that Macedonia is a civic not an ethnic nation, New Macedonia would encapsulate a message in a name: this is a modern nation indeed looking to the future and not to the past."

LOMA: Why not apply this logic to all Balkan countries? If Macedonia's name must imply that it is a civic and not an ethnic nation, then Greece should make the similar distinction, as should Serbia, and Albania, and Bulgaria. Why not just change all countries' names to indicate they are civic states and not ethnic states? LOMA has a great solution for that: Civic Country #1, Civic Country #2, Civic Country #3, Civic Country #4...

ECFR: "these Macedonians will have to accept that Greeks must feel unthreatened by whatever permanent international name they agree to."

LOMA: Why? We Macedonians will not apologize nor concede our name and identity so that Greece can feel comfortable with itself. Macedonia's existence is not a threat to anybody.

Greece's feelings are irrelevant: respect for the U.N. principles of self-determination and equal rights trump all. Unless, of course, the U.N. Charter emphasizes feelings over realities. Can you double check for us?

ECFR: "The story should also be about what is actually changing"

LOMA: Well, when you believe that nations are simply constructs, then inventing stories to change a nation's identity makes sense. As long as those inventions are manufactured outside of a country's borders, similar to how Western Europe manufactured the Greek nation in the 18th and 19th centuries, right?

ECFR: "Other options would entail a Macedonian referendum immediately after the agreement, asking whether Macedonian citizens agree to starting negotiations with the EU and entering NATO under this permanent name to be enshrined in the Constitution."

LOMA: Does the European Community advocate using bribery to settle all regional disputes, or is Macedonia a special case?

ECFR: "Why not build a brand new Centre for Macedonian Exchanges on the point at the boundary between the three countries which, if one visits today, appears ominously as the middle of nowhere (near Tumba Peak in Belasica)."

LOMA: Interpreted another way: Why not involve Greece and Bulgaria in determining the name, identity, history and future of Macedonia and the Macedonians?

The ECFR should not comment on Macedonian affairs until it refamiliarizes itself with some basic notions of democratic principles and human rights. Maybe then it can agree that Greece's dispute with Macedonia is not only silly, but



The LOMA Chronicle

The League of Macedonian-Americans
Volume 2, Issue 1 * January 2018



dangerous, disrespectful, illegal and unprincipled.

MORE MACEDONIAN LEADERS SHOULD JOIN METROPOLITAN PETAR IN DEFENDING THE MACEDONIAN IDENTITY

December 19, 2017

Earlier this week, Metropolitan Petar (Diocese of Prespa and Pelagonia) said that Macedonians will not give up the Macedonian name. "We will not give up our name," said Metropolitan Petar, "and every attempt to change it is futile. It is in vain that every attempt is made to change the name of our homeland, because if you do not have a name then you do not exist as such." LOMA agrees with Metropolitan Petar and calls on all Macedonian leaders to publicly commit to defending the Macedonian name and identity. If our name changes, then so does our identity.

Macedonians worldwide must continue voicing their discontent with Macedonia's government's prolonged willingness to negotiate Macedonia's name and identity. Leading Macedonian policymakers will persist with discussing a change to Macedonia's name so long as Macedonians remain quiet and assume that their leaders are acting in their best interests. Only with a unified and sustained pressure can we succeed in preserving our name and identity.

While LOMA believes that Macedonia's economic, judicial and political spheres need significant reform, we also believe that Macedonia should not sacrifice its basic rights and freedoms to join organizations that do not seek to treat her fairly and equally. Whether or not EU and NATO memberships are worthwhile Macedonian goals is not for LOMA to say; but joining these institutions at the expense of the Macedonian name and identity would be an

insult to the principles and values for which those institutions purport to stand.

LOMA hopes that more leading Macedonian figures join Metropolitan Petar in defending the Macedonian name and identity. We ordinary Macedonians must continue applying pressure on those internal actors that are willing to render meaningless the sacrifices of our ancestors. Together we must insist that the only rightful name for Macedonia is 'Macedonia' and that the only acceptable identity is the one and only identity that we have ever known - the Macedonian identity.

LOMA CONDEMNS MACEDONIAN VICE-PREMIER ANGIJUSHEV

December 26, 2017

LOMA unreservedly condemns Macedonia's Vice Premier, Kocho Angjushev, for stating that he is willing to accept Northern, Upper or New Macedonia as a name for Macedonia. Mr. Angjushev believes that a compromise on Macedonia's name is necessary for Macedonians to join the EU and NATO and that Macedonian officials have a responsibility to find a solution to the name dispute. However, Mr. Angjushev is absolutely wrong - as a high-ranking government official, Mr. Angjushev has a responsibility to defend Macedonia's name at all costs, and not exchange it for illusions of economic opportunity and security.

A famous Founding Father of the United States, Benjamin Franklin once said: "Those who would give up essential Liberty, to purchase a little temporary Safety, deserve neither Liberty nor Safety." It would serve Mr. Angjushev well to heed the advice of Mr. Franklin: Macedonians should not sacrifice their right to self-determination in order to join institutions that are not willing to treat them fairly and equally. Mr.

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The LOMA Chronicle

The League of Macedonian-Americans

Volume 2, Issue 1 * January 2018



Angjushev, as a Macedonian official, has an obligation to stand up for the Macedonian people and for their liberties by not succumbing to the chauvinistic and discriminatory agenda pushed by Greece, and by not trading in the Macedonian name for membership into elitist organizations. Mr. Angjushev should have the courage to stand up and say: "If the EU and NATO want us, then they will have to accept us as equals."

Mr. Angjushev's comments are an affront to Macedonia and the Macedonian people. With his comments, the Macedonian nation and identity has been dealt another blow. Mr. Angjushev draws a red line at changing Macedonia's identity, but fails to realize that changing our name will change our identity. When will Macedonian officials and citizens realize that the power to determine their destiny lies in their own hands and not in the ultimatums of Greece and Europe?

Macedonians can have their liberty, security, prosperity, identity and name – they simply just have to demand it. If our ancestors could give up their lives for our freedom, then we can at least respect those sacrifices by not reversing our ancestors' successes and progress. For all Macedonians who have two legs and a voice: stand up and speak up! Our name is Macedonia and it will not change!

OPINION: GREECE SUFFERS FROM SERIOUS DELUSIONS

Greek officials have made plenty accusations against Macedonia. They've insisted that Macedonia has territorial ambitions against Greece; they've stated that Macedonians are usurping Greek history by claiming a connection to ancient Macedonia; and they've argued that Macedonia is spreading lies about a "supposed" Macedonian minority in Greece. The Hellenic Republic will stoop to any level in order to

prevent Macedonia from achieving cultural, social and economic development

These (false) inflammatory comments can be boiled down to several Greek insecurities and delusions. What are the four biggest delusions (or illusions) that Greece suffers from? 1) Greece thinks it has the right to dictate another country's name and identity; 2) Greece believes its inhabitants are pure descendants of the ancient Greeks; 3) Greeks believe that Greece consists of only ethnic Greeks; and 4) the Greek government thinks Greece is an important player in European and world politics.

Let's make things clear for Greece with four matching realities: 1) Only Macedonia has the right to determine its name and identity and Greece has no right to force another country to change its name; 2) Greece's modern inhabitants evolved from successive migrations and occupations from the north, south, east and west; 3) Greece's modern society includes a plethora of ethnic groups, including Greeks, Macedonians, Vlachs, Albanians and Turks; and 4) the European and world powers only think about Greece when they're looking for their monthly payments.

So, Greece: please seek help in curing your delusions. The Balkan Peninsula and the European continent will be much better off once you leave fantasyland and embrace reality.

LETTER TO EDWARD JOSEPH

December 13, 2017

Dear Mr. Edward P. Joseph,

This letter is regarding your recent article in The National Interest about the Macedonian name dispute. The League of Macedonian Americans (LOMA) appreciates your relatively unbiased approach to understanding and explaining the

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The LOMA Chronicle

The League of Macedonian-Americans

Volume 2, Issue 1 * January 2018



complex political and historical issues between Greece and Macedonia. Western analysts generally lack the proper awareness regarding this issue and generally suggest ancient history or territorial ambitions are the underlying issues driving this dispute.

Still, we believe you missed the mark on a few fundamentals aspects. In a nutshell, both your premise and conclusion are incorrect. The title of your article indicates that the name Macedonia is Macedonia's biggest problem. However, while this is how it has been framed repetitively, Macedonia's biggest problem is not its name. Rather, Macedonia's biggest problem is that it is surrounded by Balkan countries that challenge its name and identity, and who have for decades struggled with one another to be in possession of Macedonian territory. While this may seem like semantics, or an inconsequential difference, framing the problem as Macedonia's name (and not as the Balkan reaction to the name, identity and existence of Macedonia) redirects problem-solving initiatives away from navigable paths under the direction and guidance of accepted international principles.

Second, by acknowledging the actual problem is not Macedonia's name but Greece's attitude toward Macedonia, a solution to the name dispute does not reside in the naming and renaming of lands and peoples. The solution to the problem is not to find a mutually agreeable name; the solution is for Macedonia and Macedonians to be accepted into the international community as equals in the brotherhood of nations. How the international community gets to a point where Macedonia is treated equally and fairly is the unanswered question. Still, the focus should not be on how to change Macedonia's name; the focus should be on how to change Greece's attitude.

Getting from that premise to that solution involves recognition of two key themes:

Macedonia's right to self-determination, and the history of Greek ambitions. You briefly touched on the latter in your article, so we will begin with the former.

The United Nations Charter offers this as part of the U.N.'s purpose:

To develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, and to take other appropriate measures to strengthen universal peace.

The so-called Macedonian name dispute has repeatedly been categorized as a political dispute. However, the basis of this dispute has been rooted in the lack of equal rights for Macedonians (both as a minority in Greece, but moreover in the Macedonians' relations to other peoples) and Greece's interference in Macedonia's right to self-determination. These two principles are enshrined in the U.N. Charter, but are generally ignored by Western observers when analyzing the name-dispute. Ignoring them has only empowered Greece to continue violating these principles. Why do most analysts ignore these two irrevocable principles?

Macedonians call themselves Macedonians not simply because they want to differentiate themselves from others; they also call themselves Macedonians and their country Macedonia because that term was applied – sometimes officially, sometimes not – to the land the Macedonian people live on. The Macedonian people (especially throughout the last 150 years), repeatedly and increasingly insisted on only being called Macedonians without any qualifiers. According to international principles, only the Macedonians can determine how to identify themselves and their country. While it is a valid point that there exist Bulgarians and Greeks who call themselves Macedonians (and we will set aside how that phenomena came to be), these

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The LOMA Chronicle

The League of Macedonian-Americans

Volume 2, Issue 1 * January 2018



people still call themselves Bulgarians or Greeks on top of referring to themselves as regional Macedonians. If the Macedonian ethnicity and country did not exist, then these people who inhabit parts of geographical Macedonia would still call themselves ethnic Bulgarians or ethnic Greeks.

Thus, there is no need to change Macedonia's name, or add a qualifier to it, on two grounds: a) the U.N. recognizes the principle of self-determination, and that principle should be applied to the case of Macedonia; and b) Macedonia's and the Macedonians' right to self-determination does not interfere in other peoples' rights to self-determination (i.e. there are no other peoples who want themselves and their country to only be called Macedonia and Macedonians).

Greece, however, by forcing Macedonia to change its flag and accept a humiliating international name (The fYRoM), and by suggesting that Macedonia should reconsider its interpretation of its own history, has interfered both in the internal affairs of Macedonia and with the Macedonians' right to determine their own identity, history and destiny. Greece, by placing an embargo on Macedonia and blocking her from entering international organizations, demonstrated that there can be severe, tangible consequences when a nation demands self-determination and equal rights. These events, along with a weak international reaction to this injustice, has set a precedent that makes a mockery of the entire European and U.N. system of governance and peace-preserving efforts. It demonstrates that power does indeed trump rights and freedoms in the 21st century.

Since the 1990s, Greece cited territorial ambitions on the part of Macedonia as constituting the real underlying issue. Yet, Macedonia has no capability, and its people no desire, to invade and recapture Macedonian territory in Greece. (Even

if the Macedonians did harbor such desires, officially changing names would not result in this feeling's disappearance; it would instead fuel Macedonian irredentist agendas.) Such a conquest is unfeasible and undesirable – Macedonia is small and weak, and the Macedonian minority in Greece is pacifist (but not passive). The Macedonians do wish to see a recognition of a Macedonian minority in Greece and an acknowledgement that Macedonia has a right to call itself Macedonia and its people Macedonians; but these desires amount to no more than asking to be treated fairly and equally. They ask for Macedonia and Macedonians to be treated how the U.N. demands all peoples be treated.

Second, although the Greek Civil War needs elaboration, the events of the Greek Civil War are not the "deep origins" of the current dispute. These origins extend to the Greek Megali Idea of the late 19th and early 20th century, where Greece intended on capturing lands in today's southern Albania, southern Macedonia, southern Bulgaria and western Turkey in order to establish a great Greek kingdom. This territorial conquest was never

fully realized; but the second aspect of the Greek Megali Idea centered on creating a homogeneous Greek state, which the Greek chauvinists were more successful in accomplishing. For example, population exchanges with Turkey and Bulgaria completely changed the demographics of Greek Macedonia; and throughout World War II, the Greek Civil War and the following decades, Macedonians were driven out in the tens of thousands. All of this was accomplished in the name of creating and maintaining an ethnically pure Greece.

Although the Greek Civil War exposed the fragility of the homogeneous Greek ideal, it also showed that human rights were ignored for political aspirations on both Greece's, as well as

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The LOMA Chronicle

The League of Macedonian-Americans

Volume 2, Issue 1 * January 2018



Europe's, behalf. Macedonians' part in the Greek Civil War did not initially or wholly focus on a unified Macedonia. The movement became about a unified Macedonia only once the Macedonians realized that the fascist Greek government not only would not recognize the Macedonian identity, but brutally discriminated against people who did not speak Greek or have a Greek consciousness. Yes, Tito's Yugoslavia did capitalize on the situation for political purposes; but the Macedonian peoples' grievances were independent of Tito's aims and would have developed without his support. The Macedonians' pitfall in the greater geopolitical context, however, was that they could only find an ally in the Greek Communists.

The Macedonian situation in Greece of the 1940s can find an inexact parallel with the Kosovo situation of the 1990s. In Kosovo, an international coalition bombed Serbia for what was labeled as an ethnic cleansing campaign. In actuality, Serbia had been excessively and brutally cracking down on Albanian separatist ambitions, which were reignited in the 1980s after Slobodan Milosevic revoked Kosovo's autonomy. The Albanians (or more narrowly, the Kosovo Liberation Army) instigated for independence, which caused a Serbian reaction, which caused a NATO reaction. In many ways, however, the Greek ruling government in the 1940s treated the Macedonians much worse than the Serbians treated the Kosovo Albanians, and the Macedonians were striving for something much different than the Albanians.

Albanians in Kosovo, ever since the Ottoman Empire's disintegration, wanted autonomy or independence. Macedonians in Greece, after realizing that Greece's 1920s population exchanges with neighboring countries complicated the quest for independence, instead resorted to demanding good administration, essential freedoms and basic rights. The

Macedonians had less freedoms and rights than the Kosovo Albanians, and the Macedonians desired much less than the Albanians. Yet, the international reactions were much more favorable in the Albanian context than the Macedonian context; and the international perception of the two situations were dramatically skewed because of the different political context of the two situations: Macedonians' association with the Communists in the 1940s, and the end of the socialist-communist Yugoslavian (and Soviet) era in the 1990s.

Hence, we discover that the problem truly is not Macedonia's name. The problems are that Greece has refused to acknowledge Macedonia's right to self-determination; the European Union and the United Nations have not held Greece accountable for its actions; those same two international institutions hold Macedonia to a different (and unequal) standard compared to other nations; and the greater political context has less to do with Macedonian and Greek politics and more to do with global U.S., European and Russian geopolitics. If we recognize that these are indeed the problems, then we will

recognize that a permanent, peaceful solution does not reside in finding a mutually agreeable name; but it instead hinges on Greece, the U.N. and the E.U. consistently applying the principles of self-determination and equal rights to all peoples, in all situations.

The goal should not be to satisfy Greece or Macedonia. The goal should be resolute and consistent adherence to and application of the values and principles that govern our global society.



The LOMA Chronicle

The League of Macedonian-Americans
Volume 2, Issue 1 * January 2018



LETTER TO THE ECONOMIST

December 23, 2017

Dear Editors of The Economist:

The League of Macedonian Americans (LOMA) is deeply offended by The Economist's article entitled, "Why Macedonia Still Has a Second Name." The article is riddled with inaccuracies regarding Macedonia's history and Greece's problem with Macedonia's right to self-determine its own name and identity, and it continually refers to Macedonians with derogatory and discriminatory terminology.

First, the article muddles the truth about the peoples who populated Macedonia throughout history. When listing the inhabitants of Macedonia during Ottoman occupation, the article lists a plethora of peoples except the Macedonians, who composed the largest ethnic group in Ottoman Macedonia. The article also fails to acknowledge that one's Ottoman identity as a Greek, Bulgarian or Serbian was related not to national or ethnic identity, but rather to Church affiliation. The Greek, Bulgarian and Serbian governments sent in churches, schools and armed bands into Macedonia in order to convert the Macedonians to their respective national causes.

On a related note, the article does not describe the population exchanges in northern Greece (also known as Aegean Macedonia or Greek Macedonia) that occurred after the First World War. Hundreds of thousands of Christians from Turkey and mainland Greece were imported into northern Greece in the 1920s and 1930s, while tens of thousands of Macedonians were forced into Bulgaria and Turkey. During and after the Greek Civil War, tens of thousands more Macedonians were kicked out of Greece, and thousands more were forcibly relocated to other parts of Greece. So, while Greece today demands that only Greeks can claim a Macedonian name

and identity, it must be remembered that most Greeks in today's northern Greece have no historical connection to Macedonia and that the Macedonians that were expelled from Greece do have such connection.

Second, the article refers to Macedonia's "majority-Slav population". This is a discriminatory and inaccurate term. Yes, the Macedonians speak a Slavic language, but that does not make the Macedonians 'Slavs.' Most Irish and Americans speak English, which is a Germanic language, but the Irish and Americans do not identify as English or Germans. Likewise, the Macedonians are not 'Slavs' just because they speak a Slavic language. The Macedonians are a people whose identity and culture has been influenced by a variety of factors. The term 'Slav' is used by the Greeks to negate any connection we Macedonians have with Macedonia; it's the term Greeks use to deny us our identity.

Furthermore, the Macedonians did indeed have a strong Macedonian identity before the creation of Yugoslavia, contrary to what the article suggests, and this is well-documented in hundreds of sources. The article continually accepts the Greek point of view when it refers to us as 'Slavs' without even acknowledging how deeply insulting it is to Macedonians. Many Macedonians were murdered and exiled while being called 'dirty Slavs' by Greek soldiers. The Economist wouldn't refer to black people as 'Niggers' or Mexicans as 'Spics'; the editors should equally refrain from using hurtful and insulting terminology when writing about the Macedonians.

Third, in explaining the history of Greece's dispute with Macedonia's name, the article conveniently ignores that Greece placed an embargo on Macedonia to choke Macedonia into changing its flag and constitution. Including this important fact in the analysis would help better explain how a seemingly ridiculous dispute has

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The LOMA Chronicle

The League of Macedonian-Americans
Volume 2, Issue 1 * January 2018



real-life, serious consequences. Greece placed an economic embargo on a country that chose its own name and flag and claimed it did so because this country of 2 million people, without

any significant military equipment, was going to attack a country of 10 million people that also happened to be a NATO member. This embargo, as well as Greece's blockage of Macedonia into NATO, has had severe impacts on Macedonia's economic and social development. But the article simply focuses on Macedonia's desire to name statues and buildings after ancient Macedonians, and thus attempts to shift the absurdity of the situation squarely on Macedonia. However, The Economist should acknowledge that Macedonia's increased infatuation with ancient Macedonia is a reaction to Greece's chauvinism and not some delusional, nationalist Macedonian aspiration.

Finally, the article fails to emphasize the most important aspect of this dispute: the denial of a country and people to self-determine their own name and identity. By ignoring the critically important principle of self-determination, international institutions such as the UN, NATO, and the EU have failed to treat Macedonia fairly and equally to other countries. This violation of international principles enshrined into the UN Charter is a fundamental aspect of the name dispute that cannot and should not be left out of an analysis on Greece's problem with Macedonia. Every nation has the right to determine its name, identity, history and future, and The Economist should acknowledge that Greece and the world are continually denying this right to the Macedonians.

LOMA calls on The Economist to focus less on poorly researched, disingenuous and attention-grabbing articles and instead put the necessary effort into presenting the facts and arguments fairly and in a manner that do not insult the Macedonian people.

WEBSITE CHANGES

LOMA has made some significant changes to our website:

1. The website's new domain is now www.leagueofmacedonians.org.
2. We have added a Community page, which is a community center for all Macedonian-Americans to connect and learn about other Macedonian communities throughout the U.S. The page includes a calendar of events for many Macedonian churches and groups throughout the States, as well as links and information on sports, dance and other types of groups.
3. There is now a Culture & History page that currently has six sub-pages. Two of these pages include two free books (one on Macedonian identity and one on Macedonian immigration); pictures and articles from the early 20th century; as well as language lessons and free sheet music.
4. Our Advocacy webpage is our center for actions defending our name and identity. We have Official Statements and Letter Writing Campaigns.
5. On our About Us - Get Involved sub-page, we have a comment and feedback form that you can complete to better help guide LOMA's mission.
6. The LOMA Chronicle will now be a quarterly issue.
7. Much more to come next quarter!

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO CONTRIBUTE TO LOMA'S MISSION, PLEASE E-MAIL US. WE NEED PEOPLE TO WRITE LETTERS, ORGANIZE EVENTS AND PROMOTE OUR CULTURE. WE APPRECIATE ALL FEEDBACK.

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