

## LANGUAGE IN EXILE: THE MACEDONIANS OF TORONTO

A MAN WAS LEADING HIS DONKEY THROUGH THE STREETS OF A VILLAGE NEAR KOSTUR (KASTORIA), SHOUTING AT IT IN MACEDONIAN, WHEN UP COMES A GREEK POLICEMAN WHO HAULS HIM TO THE POLICE STATION BECAUSE HE IS SPEAKING MACEDONIAN, A FORBIDDEN LANGUAGE. 'WHAT DO YOU HAVE TO SAY FOR YOURSELF?' ASKS THE POLICEMAN. THE MAN ANSWERS, 'WELL, AS FOR MYSELF, OF COURSE I ONLY SPEAK GREEK, BUT I JUST CAN'T GET THIS ASS TO UNDERSTAND IT.'

MACEDONIA IS NOT AN ETHNICALLY, BUT ONLY A GEOGRAPHICALLY DEFINED REGION, THE LARGEST PART OF WHICH IS IN GREECE. . . . ARCHEOLOGICAL FINDINGS IN CONJUNCTION WITH LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS AND THE DISCOVERY OF LARGE NUMBERS OF INSCRIPTIONS WITH GREEK NAMES PROVE BEYOND A DOUBT THE GREEKNESS—CULTURAL, ETHNIC, AND LINGUISTIC—OF MACEDONIA.

(letter to the editor, *Globe and Mail*, Toronto, September 1991)

The Macedonian language is a potent symbol of ethnic identity not only in those countries of the Balkans where it is spoken, but in diaspora as well. Macedonian identity has been denied in Bulgaria and Greece where sizable Macedonian populations live as well as publicly by some factions in (former) Yugoslavia during the current period of instability.<sup>1</sup> The recognition of Macedonian as a distinct language and ethnicity is still debated today not only in the Balkans, but its authenticity is being argued by certain ethnic groups in Canada and other countries where large numbers of Macedonians

live. In this article I am focusing on problems of language maintenance and ethnic identity among Macedonians in Toronto.<sup>2</sup>

The battle that took place in Southeast Europe for recognition of the Macedonian language, for schooling in Macedonian, and for a standard language made the immigrant generation of Macedonians in Canada particularly sensitive to the role that language plays in ethnic identity. Younger speakers, however, who have access to Macedonian language instruction through the heritage language programs, church schools, evening classes, and a course at the University of Toronto, seem to define their Macedonian identity by other criteria. Toronto, as the largest center of Macedonians outside of Macedonia, offers a fertile environment for studying questions of their self-identity, language and cultural maintenance, and language contact. Because the community is made up of people who arrived during different historic eras from Greece, Bulgaria, and Yugoslavia, each country having varied policies towards minority language rights in general and Macedonian in particular, three points of reference are necessary in order to understand the problems facing the Macedonian community in Toronto and the current state of the Macedonian language there: First is the history of the Macedonian language in the Balkans; second is the interaction of Macedonian with English in the Canadian context; and finally is the relationship that exists between dialect use and standard language.

Problems of ethnic identity and language maintenance are not unique to the Macedonians, but are shared by many groups in Canada. The dynamic of French-English relations and official Canadian governmental policies of bilingualism and multiculturalism have led to the creation of the heritage language programs mentioned above; that is, programs for teaching various native languages in the schools under the auspices of the Board of Education. While recognizing the importance of helping a multiethnic population preserve its wealth of languages and cultures, the governmental policy of multiculturalism, which purports to advance the language and culture of these diverse ethnic groups seems—at least in the case of Macedonians—to help foster some aspects of cultural awareness,

but not to bolster the use of minority languages (Cummins and Danesi 1990:15).

In cross-cultural studies on ethnic communities in Canada this pattern of language shift and redefinition of ethnicity is typical (Cummins 1984:82-85). Whereas studies of other immigrant communities in North America have focused on similar problems, e.g., the loss of cultural identity, the redefinition of ethnic identity as the language and culture of the host country become dominant, or the alienation of generations caused by different cultural and linguistic expectations, the study of Macedonian offers some particularly interesting sociolinguistic problems. The Macedonians differ from speakers of many other languages in Toronto who have a more cohesive sense of ethnic identity based on a common country of origin and linguistic allegiance, if not active knowledge of a standard literary language. The Macedonian standard language was not codified until 1945 and, consequently, many native speakers of Macedonian have little or no knowledge of it. Though much could be written on the development of the Macedonian language in Greece, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, and Albania, I will focus attention here on the first two countries since the majority of Macedonians in Toronto emigrated from there.

Macedonia's turbulent history since the fall of the Ottoman Empire in the early twentieth century has resulted in a community often divided politically and linguistically. On August 10, 1913, at the close of the Second Balkan War, the Treaty of Bucharest was signed which called for the partition of Macedonia among Bulgaria, Greece, and Serbia. This treaty thwarted all attempts at linguistic and cultural unity on the part of the Macedonians. Rossos (1991:282) clearly states the enormity of this event:

As a result of that war the territorial integrity of Macedonia, which comprised a natural economic and, in the main, an ethno-cultural unity, was violated for the first time since the era of the warring dynastic states in the Medieval Balkans.

Once Macedonia had been divided, the various states involved responded in different ways to the Macedonian minority within their

territory. Hence, the linguistic fate of the Macedonian language was quite different in each country. The Serbs and Bulgarians considered Macedonian a dialectal variant of their own literary language and publication in Macedonian was limited to certain literary genres where the language was used for local, dialectal flavor (Friedman 1989:304). Macedonian was ultimately granted status as one of the official languages of Yugoslavia in August 1944, and in the course of the past fifty years a sizable corpus of Macedonian literature has been published. The language is used in all spheres of public life and the standard language is taught and studied at universities throughout the world. In Greece, however, the fate of the Macedonian language has reflected the policies of the Greek government which has, almost without exception, followed policies that have sought the elimination of the Macedonian language and the Hellenization of the Slavic minorities.

The history of the Macedonian language within Greek territory in the years following partition has been one of unending persecution. In the early 1920s the League of Nations signed a number of treaties with various European countries concerning the linguistic and political rights of their ethnic minorities. In 1920 Greece signed the Treaty of Sèvres with the League of Nations, which obligated it to grant certain rights to minorities of non-Greek origin in Greece. Among them, minorities were accorded equal civil and political rights regardless of ethnicity, language or religion; the right to the free use by any Greek citizen of any language, either in private intercourse, commerce, religion, the press, in publications of any kind, or at public meetings; the right to establish, manage, and control at their own expense charitable, religious, and social institutions and educational establishments, as well as the right to use their own language and to practice their particular religion in it; and in the towns and districts inhabited by a larger number of speakers of languages other than Greek, the right to receive instruction in their mother tongue in elementary schools (Andonovski 1988:5). In fact, the provision of mother-tongue instruction for the children in Aegean (Greek) Macedonia was a difficult problem. At the time of partition

there was not a clear consensus on the type of Slavic-speaking minority present in northern Greece. The Bulgarian and Serbian governments were engaged in an aggressive propaganda war to win both the linguistic and religious allegiance of the Slavs. Foreign scholars and Macedonian intellectuals had recognized the distinctness of the Macedonian language as a transitional linguistic area between Serbian and Bulgarian, and as early as the turn of the twentieth century published statements insisting on the separateness of the Macedonian language (Friedman 1989:303). All attempts to establish a separate language or to establish a common literary language with Bulgarian based on Macedonian dialects or a Bulgarian-Macedonian linguistic compromise had failed. Since all attempts at codification of Macedonian had been thwarted by Greece, Serbia, and Bulgaria, in the 1920s the Macedonian language had not yet been codified and therefore, many Macedonian speakers in Greece identified themselves as Bulgarian-speaking to distinguish themselves as a Slavic minority.

The Greek government did not meet the obligations of the Treaty of Sèvres. Rather, Greek officials argued that the Greek Parliament had not ratified the treaty (Kushevski 1985:13) and counted on controlling the northern province by moving the Macedonian ethnic minority out of Greece following the policy of "voluntary resettlement" in accordance with the Treaty of Neuilly with Bulgaria. Under this agreement thousands of Macedonians were settled in Bulgaria near the Black Sea, i.e., maximally distant from large Macedonian-speaking community in Pirin Macedonia (western Bulgaria). A separate agreement signed in 1923 between Turkey and Greece called for the exchange of their Christian and Muslim populations. Under the provisions of this agreement approximately 40,000 Muslims of Macedonian descent were resettled in Turkey, while at the same time large groups of Greeks from Anatolia were resettled in Aegean Macedonia (Апостолски 1972:326). According to data in Rossos (1991:283) [see also Киселиновски 1987: 23], in the period 1913-1928 the Greek government transformed the ethnographic composition of

Aegean Macedonia from an area where Slavs had constituted the majority, into an area in which

the remaining Macedonian population in Aegean Macedonia found itself a minority in its own land, and an unrecognized and oppressed minority at that. It was overwhelmingly rural and scattered in small, mainly mountainous towns and villages. There was no longer any large Macedonian urban centre there; and, since virtually the entire Exarchist (Bulgarian) educated intelligentsia and most Macedonian activists had been forced to leave and seek refuge in Bulgaria, it lacked an elite of its own. The number of well-educated Macedonians remained small and their education in Greek tended to estrange them from their Slavic roots and cultural traditions.

Thus, during the interwar period, the Macedonians in Aegean Macedonia were under intense pressure to Hellenize. They were left without an urban center and without a strong intellectual tradition. Their names were changed, as were the surrounding toponyms (see Mojsov 1989 for an extensive listing of these changes). In short, the Greek government was seeking to solve the minority question by eliminating the possibility of it being posed.

In 1924 British Secretary of Foreign Affairs Austin Chamberlain protested at the League of Nations that Greece was inhibiting minority rights as outlined in the Treaty of Sèvres and sought assurances from the Greek government that the obligations to its minorities would be met (Kushevski 1985:15). Due to pressure from the League of Nations, the first primer intended to be used by Macedonian children in Aegean Macedonia was published in 1925. The primer, published in the Latin alphabet<sup>3</sup> was based on the Lerin-Bitola (ЛЕРИН-БИТОЛА) dialect and sent to the regions of Voden (Воден), Kostur (Костур) and Lerin (ЛЕРИН) for the 1925-1926 school year, but was never used (Andonovski 1988:4). Citing political unrest between Greece and Bulgaria, as well as diplomatic pressure from both Serbia and Bulgaria, who did not welcome the possibility of Greek recognition of a separate Macedonian language and ethnicity, the Greek government confiscated the primer and all measures to ensure mother-tongue instruction in Aegean Macedonia were stopped (Алюстолски 1972:328).

In the 1930s, under the dictatorship of General Iannis Metaxas, Macedonian came under even more intense attack. People were forbidden to use the language even in the privacy of their own homes and the policy of minority assimilation was intensified. Evening classes were established for adults providing mandatory instruction in Greek. As one informant told me:

It was not only in the schools that they spoke Greek, but also outside, and at home, and on the street, in the fields. They were forbidden to speak Macedonian. They [the Greeks] used every occasion, every means, to ban Macedonian. My mother and father at that time were illiterate, they couldn't write Greek or Macedonian. When the Greek regime came there, they formed evening schools, even for older people. So they took the old people when they were coming home from work to teach them the Greek language, and of course, Greek writing. Many of them went for no reason except fear. If they didn't go to the school and learn the Greek language and writing they would be fined. Many times they were mistreated, they were beaten. It isn't important that the Greeks would come and [some people] would say to them—I am not given the opportunity to learn Macedonian and I don't want to go and become a Greek. And these people didn't go to evening school. However, when the Greeks found out about this... they caught them and beat them, they locked them up and fined them with the stiffest fines. So the other people, when they saw this, in the village, you know how it is how 200, 300, 500 people, 1,000 people all know one another and they would say, Trajko was taken last night to jail and they beat him because he didn't want to go to school. So the other people would go the next day to school. They had to go, and little by little the years passed and more people began to speak Greek outside and in the home.

Recognition of Macedonian during the interwar period is closely tied to the policies of the Comintern. The establishment of the Balkan Communist Federation (BCF) helped the affirmation of Macedonian issues, but not without difficulties. There were three periods of changing attitudes towards the Macedonian question (Киселинговски 1987:42). First, from approximately 1919-1923, the BCF did not recognize the goal of either a Macedonian state or nationality. Second, from 1923 to the early 1930s, the BCF sought a state without a nationality. And finally, after 1935, the BCF tried to resolve the Macedonian question within the framework of a Balkan federation. It was

difficult to establish a unified policy since the countries involved—Greece, Bulgaria, and Yugoslavia—had individual state interests that would be supported by the suppression or advancement of the Macedonians. The CPG (Communist Party of Greece) and CPB (Communist Party of Bulgaria) ultimately reverted to a policy of “no nationality, no state.” Despite these shifting policies, it must be emphasized that the fate of Macedonian in all the territories where it was spoken was tied to the fate of the separate communist parties. In Greece it was only the CPG that recognized the existence of a separate Macedonian people and recognized them as a distinct Slav nation with its own language, history, culture, territory, and interests (Rossos 1991:286). Much has been written about the publication of the Central Committee of the CPG, *Rizopastis* (see among others, Rossos 1991, КИСЕЛИНОВСКИ 1981, КОЛИШЕВСКИ 1980, Поповски 1982), as the only significant paper in Greece that recognized the legitimacy of Macedonian claims. Macedonians wrote frequently to the paper, sometimes in Macedonian, sometimes employing Greek script. It was not surprising then that large numbers of Macedonians in Greece joined the communist-led resistance movement.

The decade of the 1940s in Greece was marked by waves of civil war and foreign occupation during the World War II. During the final wave of the Greek Civil War, 1947–1949, in those areas controlled by the communists, schools were opened, teachers were instructed, newspapers were published in Macedonian, ethnographic work was carried out,<sup>4</sup> and a nascent cultural life took hold. The final defeat of the communist side of the Civil War, ending in 1949, represented a blow for the recognition of Macedonians as an ethnic minority in Aegean Macedonia. During the final phases of the war the communist forces decided to evacuate children living in the regions under attack. It is not clear from newspaper accounts at the time of the evacuation<sup>5</sup> whether children were evacuated with parental consent or kidnapped by the rebels as stated in accounts such as *Eleni*, the family history written by Nicholas Gage.<sup>6</sup>

In a detailed account of the controversy surrounding the evacuation of the children, the so-called *paidomazoma*, Lars Boerentzen states:

Although there is no doubt about the central fact that both sides, during 1948, moved a large number of children from the war zone into secure areas there is still a great deal of uncertainty about such questions as how, when and why the decision to do this was made by either side, and also the extent to which the parents were left to decide if their children should go. (1987:128)

Newspaper accounts, the report of the United Nations Special Committee on the Balkans, and interviews with Macedonians all point to the fact that parents from Macedonian-speaking families were generally more likely to support the evacuation.

When archives are made available from this period, it will be of crucial importance to ascertain what the Greek Democratic Army believed its position to be. If, as they stated, they thought the war would soon end to their advantage, then the children would have been returned at the end of the war, in a year or two. If, however, they were convinced of their defeat, the motivation for removing the children is unclear. One of the refugee children, now an adult in Toronto, told me that the removal of children was in most cases voluntary. Cases such as those in the *New York Times* account and Gage's book would have been a rare exception. Parents in villages were told that their children would be safer if they crossed the borders; children were organized and accompanied by young women in their flight. Approximately 30,000 children were evacuated to Czechoslovakia, Poland, Hungary, the Soviet Union, Albania, East Germany, Romania, and Yugoslavia, where they were placed in children's homes and given instruction in the native language of the host country as well as in Macedonian or Greek. It is interesting to note that Greek children did not have to learn Macedonian, but Macedonian children did have to learn Greek, a fact which points to the GCP's unwillingness to give up on the assimilation of the Macedonians.

The language of instruction in the children's homes was the standard Macedonian literary language as codified in the Republic of Macedonia in 1945, using the first published grammar written by Krume Kepeski. In 1948, after the Tito-Stalin split, the CPG together with the Macedonian organization Ilinden began the formation of a "Macedonian micro-literary language" based on the Lerin dialects to counter the "Titoist" grammar of Kepeski (Киселиновски 1987:99). A reader and grammar were published based on the Lerin dialect, but whose grammatical descriptions were based on the Bulgarian grammars by Andrejūn, Kostur, and Nikolov, and on the Russian grammar by A. S. Matijtenko. Although these texts were sent to the children's homes, the books were not adopted and the so-called micro-literary Lerin-based dialect was abandoned in favor of the literary standard of the Kepeski grammar.

Many of the refugee children eventually resettled in the Republic of Macedonia; others emigrated to the United States, Australia, Canada, and various Western countries. The Aegean Macedonians I have interviewed in Toronto, who as refugee children were scattered throughout Eastern Europe, were educated in Macedonian—albeit under difficult circumstances. Although they speak in dialect, many have a good command of the literary language as well. In 1989 in the basement hall of St. Kliment, the largest of the Macedonian churches in Toronto, a picture exhibit was mounted to commemorate the fortieth anniversary of the exodus from Greece. A well-dressed couple walked slowly through the hall videotaping the entire exhibit. As they pointed themselves out in the photos, I asked the woman if she knew Macedonian and how she had learned it. She answered, "In Greece we would turn out all the lights at night and we would whisper to one another in Macedonian, and that is how I learned the language." Many of the Aegean Macedonians who came to Canada directly from Greece use Macedonian solely as a spoken language and they remain illiterate in their native language. Within Greece itself an official policy of one state, one language again has ensued and all hope of official recognition of the Macedonian minority has disappeared.

In Yugoslavia, in the first decades of the twentieth century, a number of works were published in Macedonian, but these were treated as dialect literature of Serbian. As in Greece, the fate of the Macedonians in Yugoslavia was tied to the success or failure of the communists. Although the Comintern had several different policies towards the Macedonian question at different times (Friedman 1987, Lunt 1984), in 1934 they ruled that the Macedonians had the right to exist as a separate people with a distinct language. The problems of the standard language—not only in the incipient stages of its codification, but its relationship to the dominant Serbo-Croatian language within Yugoslav culture, schooling, and military—has been the subject of numerous papers and debates in the press (Friedman this volume and forthcoming). This debate is relevant to the study of the Macedonian language in diaspora since the way the literary language evolved has shaped some of the attitudes of speakers from outside of Yugoslavia towards the standard language. Since codification of the language numerous analyses of standard Macedonian have appeared that caution against Serbo-Croatian influence. For example, articles appearing in МАКЕДОНСКИ ЈАЗИК cite errors in Macedonian grammar. Likewise, in his weekly language column "ЈАЗИЧНО КАЧЕ," which appears in the daily НОВА МАКЕДОНИЈА, Blagoja Korubin (КОРУВИН), has also cautioned readers against Serbo-Croatian influence on the lexicon, morphology, and syntax of standard Macedonian. Lunt (1984:125) comments that despite the frequent articles by linguistic purists, the Macedonian language actually has rapidly become standardized and although people may know a regional dialect they are also well schooled in the standard.

The debate about widespread Serbian influence began again with some vehemence in 1988. That year debate on the effects of intense language contact with Serbo-Croatian flared in the press beginning with an interview with Trajko Stamatovski, then head of the Institute for the Macedonian Language in Skopje, which appeared in ЈИИК, the literary supplement of НОВА МАКЕДОНИЈА (8 June 1988). Whereas Stamatovski emphasized the role of Macedonian in all spheres of life in the republic, he also stated: "I see nothing bad in the fact that we

are becoming a bilingual nation [with Serbo-Croatian]." There ensued a series of articles in ЛИК called "The Tribunal of the Macedonian Literary Language" and various factors in the codification of the language itself came under attack. In fact linguistic attitudes were part of the political debate preceding the first democratic elections held in Macedonia in 1992. Though not all the details of this debate are relevant here, it is significant that Macedonian is perceived by many speakers within the Republic of Macedonia, and particularly in diaspora, to have been unduly influenced by Serbo-Croatian.

Macedonian immigration to Canada began in the first decade of the twentieth century and continues to the present. The first wave of Macedonians came primarily on *невалба* (*peǎlba*); that is, they planned to work in Canada, earn money, and then return to the Balkans (see Petroff 1977, 1983 for more detail on this period). It is difficult to ascertain how many Macedonians arrived in the years prior to the World War I, but one study states that the number of East Europeans in Toronto in 1908 was between 1,000 and 2,000, the majority of whom were Macedonian (Vasiliadis 1989:172). Because census takers most frequently designated people by country of origin, Macedonians are hidden within census figures for different countries, and it has always been difficult to ascertain their specific number. According to Dr. Lillian Petroff of the Toronto Historical Society, at the time of the earliest Macedonian settlement the workers on *невалба* were most likely to identify with their home village rather than with a larger national ethnicity. Many of the early Macedonian immigrant clubs and institutions such as church and social clubs were identified either with a village or Bulgaria. The first church to serve the community was Cyril and Methody which belonged to the Bulgarian Exarchate Church. Research done on this period indicates that whereas Macedonians far exceeded Bulgarians numerically, the Bulgarians had the advantage of a home nation that supported the churches and social clubs in diaspora. This is not to suggest that early Macedonian settlers did not have a sense of being Macedonian, but that this identity was most fully displayed within the framework of village-based societies. Nonetheless, beginning in the founding years

of the Church of Cyril and Methody and through the 1960s, Macedonian language instruction in Toronto was primarily in the Bulgarian Exarchate churches, using Bulgarian primers supplied by the Macedonian Political Organization (MPO) of Indiana, an organization that promotes a policy of a united Macedonia within a greater Bulgaria.

The second wave of Macedonian immigration to Canada arrived in the interwar period, the third in the aftermath of the Greek Civil War, and the fourth wave began in the early 1960s and has continued into the present. Again, figures vary, but current estimates of the community range between 60,000 and 100,000 Macedonians in the greater Toronto metropolitan area. Each new wave brought a notion of ethnicity which reflected the immigrants' place of origin and the political climate of the period. Unlike the immigrants of the first three waves, who arrived from northern Greece before the language was codified and who had no schooling in Macedonian, the last wave has come predominantly from Vardar (formerly Yugoslav) Macedonia, bringing better educated people from more urban backgrounds.<sup>7</sup> As a result of the different backgrounds of the immigrants, language contact has involved not only Macedonian in contact with English, but also Macedonian dialects in contact with each other and with literary norms. The conflict between dialect and literary standard has increased with the growth of a more educated immigrant community from the former Yugoslav Macedonian Republic.

The Macedonian community is internally divided by a number of different issues. These issues center on response to political questions in the Balkans and in Canada, but the divisiveness is also reflected in language use. Not only is there a conflict between the standard language and the use of dialect, but there is also an intergenerational conflict on the importance of the Macedonian language as a prerequisite for community identification. I will address several of these linguistic questions. Writing about Italian-Canadian communities, Danesi (1985) uses *Italian koine* or *ethnolect* to refer to the lingua franca of the community, an idiom that gradually blends dialectal forms with the standard language while incorporating and assim-

lating certain English words. Such a typology of linguistic change can also be documented for Macedonian. The specifics of language contact and interference phenomena will be the subject of a future study, but some general remarks should be made here. Lehiste (1988: 13) defines grammatical interference as a contact phenomenon in which "elements of Language B enter Language A and are gradually integrated, or when a speaker of Language A starts to speak Language B and carries over elements of A into B." We will cite here examples of both morphological interference and syntactic interference.

The use of English words in the Macedonian spoken in Toronto is widespread. In fact, students enrolled in the Macedonian course at the University of Toronto often do not know if an English word is part of the literary standard language or a Canadianism. For example, a number of students thought that *ФЛОРО*, standard *подот* ["the floor"], was correct, but that *кемпинг* ["camping"], also standard, was not. There is a gradation in this phenomenon: speakers who use no English when speaking Macedonian; those who mix in an occasional English word; informants who consciously use English words for stylistic effect; younger speakers who use almost all English but who will insert a Macedonian phrase for stylistic effect; and finally speakers who attempt to carry out extended conversation in Macedonian but do not have the linguistic competence to do so. In the following examples I will not differentiate dialect from standard since the point here is to demonstrate lexical borrowings.

НЕ СУМ МОЖИ ТОКУ НАЧИТАН И МОЖЕ ДА СРЕКА ЕДНА ПРЕТЈО-  
СТАВКА 'МОЈ *opinion*' ШТО СЕ ВЕЛИ ОВИЕ, ДЕКА НИЕ СМЕ ТИЕ И ТИЕ  
**but** КОНКРЕТНО ДА **I mean**, ДА РЕЧАМ ДЕКА НЕ ЗНАМ, **it uh**, КАКО  
ДА ВИ КАЖАМ, ВО ИСТОРИЈАТА НЕ Е УБАВО, ТРЕБА ДА ЗНАШ ТОЧНО  
ШО САКАШ. **I hope**, ШО ВЕЛАТ ОВДЕКА.

Perhaps I'm not so educated and it's possible to meet up with a suggestion, 'my opinion' as they say, that we are such and such but concretely, I mean to say, that I don't know, it, uh, how can I tell you, in history it's not so nice, you have to know exactly what you want. I hope, as they say here.

ТОЈ БЕШЕ КАКО *manager*. БРАЧИНО ИМАШЕ СВОЈ *share* НА ТРАГЕ-  
ДИЈА ВО ВОЈНИЦИ.

He was like a manager. Bračino had its share of tragedy in the wars.

Кога зборуваш *македонски*? Со баба ми, и со луѓето, шчо I,  
АКО БИДЕ ТЕШКО ЈАС ОДАМ СКРШЕНО, the best I can од respect, АКО  
ЧОВЕКО НЕ ЗНАЕ English, you know, КОЛКУ УБАО, окау ЈАС,  
ЗАШТО you know... I found, АКО ЗНАМ ЧОВЕКО САМО ПО НАШИ,  
ЈЕЗИКО МИ ГРЕЈ, окау. АКО ЗНАМ ЗНАЕ ЕНГЛИСКИ, ПО МАЛО, ЈЕЗИКО  
МИ СЕ ИСКРШИ.

When do you speak *Macedonian*? With my grandmother, and with people, who, I, if it is hard I go [speak] brokenly, the best I can out of respect. If a person doesn't know English, you know, so well, ok, I, because, you know... I found if I know a person only speaks our language, my language comes to me, ok. If I know he knows English, my language falls apart.

In Macedonian nouns and adjectives carry grammatical gender and thus English loan words must also be assigned grammatical gender. It appears that nouns most often get borrowed as masculine nouns: *ФЛОРО* "the floor," *КАРО* "the car," *НЕ ГО ФЕРЛИ САНДОТ* "don't throw the sand." Adjectives get borrowed without marking for gender: *СРЕДНАТА Е НАЈСМАРТ* "the middle one is the smartest." Verbs are either not adapted morphologically, e.g., "I hope дека ќе се *ВИДИМЕ*" (I hope that we will see each other) or verbs are morphologically adapted to the a-stem category, e.g., *ЌЕ ТИ ФОНАМ* "I'll phone you." Nouns preserve the categories of gender and definiteness, e.g., *НЕ ГО ФЕРЛИ САНДОТ* "don't throw the sand," where sand is treated here as a masculine definite noun, *ЌЕ КУПИМЕ БУШЕЛИ* "we will buy bushels [of peppers]." Here bushels is a plural, indefinite noun.

Tension also exists between literary standard and dialect. In the Macedonian language class at the University of Toronto, for example, students from southwestern dialect areas were able to adapt some of the literary standard forms, for example switching from the ending -oj for monosyllabic masculine nouns to the literary form which preserves intervocalic *v*, namely *ови*, in words such as *ЛЕВОВИ*



for *левој* ("loaves of bread"). Certain forms, however, were difficult for many of them to adapt. For example, in their native dialect the dative enclitic pronominal forms for *her* and *him* merge into one form, *му* ("him"), for both genders rather than the distinct forms *ѝ* for *her* and *му* for *him*. Some speakers had such difficulty with these forms that they hypercorrectly used *ѝ* for both genders. Many speakers have difficulty in assigning certain verbs to the *e*-stem class rather than the *i*-class to which they belong in the dialect, e.g. *МОЖИ* ("he can") for standard *МОЖЕ*. The definite postposed article for masculine singular nouns in the standard language is *-от*, e.g. *ГРАДОТ* ("the city"). Many students continue to use the dialect form of the article *-о*, *ГРАДО*. There are a number of specific lexical items typical of these dialect areas which students continue to use, e.g. *пули* "to look," for literary *гледа*, or *чуле* "girl," for literary *девојка*.

Intergenerational attitudes vary towards the use, importance, and retention of Macedonian as a factor in ethnic identity and the problems of public recognition of Macedonian as a separate ethnic group in Canada. It is clear, particularly in examining the use of Macedonian by speakers from Aegean Macedonia, that the minority-language policies of Greece—which led to language death and assimilation in the home country—breed a strong desire for language retention in diaspora, whereas the open multicultural policies of Canada—while encouraging retention of some aspects of the home culture—seem to lead in the first generation of children born to Macedonian immigrants to a weakening of native language use. The rapid shift from home language to English is a phenomenon observed in other ethnic communities in Canada as well. A report on nonofficial languages showed that

among ten ethnic groups surveyed, a large majority of individuals were committed to ethnic language maintenance for their children and felt that public institutional support was needed if this goal was to be achieved. The study also provided rapid language loss across generations; in fact, language loss was mentioned most often as the major problem facing ethnic groups (Cummins and Danesi 1990:25).

Since the partition of Macedonia following the Balkan Wars of 1912–1913, the Macedonian language has developed asymmetrically in the countries in which it is spoken. While in Vardar Macedonia the language was codified and began functioning as an official language in 1945, Bulgarian and Greek official governmental policies have, almost without exception, explicitly sought the linguistic and cultural assimilation of the Macedonian minorities. The codification of Macedonian in 1945 has had far-reaching impact on the development of Macedonian, even in diaspora, and on the attitudes towards Macedonian by various speakers. Because of its asymmetrical development, Macedonian speakers from those areas where the full development of the language was prohibited look upon the standardized language as a stepparent, a forced relation which they have had no part in nurturing. By virtue of its official status within the Yugoslav federation, Macedonian has undergone significant changes in the past fifty years due not only to the influence of Serbo-Croatian but also due to its use in the full range of activities in the Macedonian Republic.

In Toronto the identification of the literary language with Yugoslavia has led to some resentment by earlier immigrants, some of whom, as stated earlier, were taught Bulgarian in their church schools under the auspices of the Macedonian Political Organization (MPO) through the 1960s. Whereas the early years of Macedonian immigration were supported by the Bulgarians, more recently the Yugoslav Macedonian government and the *Матца за Иселениците* have played an active role in supporting the language and cultural activities in Toronto. I have heard many young speakers of Macedonian who identify themselves as Macedonian tell me that they do not like the language as it is spoken in Vardar Macedonia, that they do not understand the news programs that employ the standard language, and that their parents cannot understand the vocabulary they are taught in the university course in the standard language.

When I went, кога одам по селата, по егејската, јас кога  
разбервам језико таму, најдобро с'чо знам од републиката  
јас можеш бутарите најдобро од тие с'чо се од републиката.

When I went, I go around the villages, in the Aegean part, when I understand the language there. Best of all I know [understand] the Bulgarians better than those from the Republic.

Because over a time period they've changed the language away from their core root which is a very селски (village) dialect I know and what I've seen is that Bulgarians have not strayed that far, the Bulgarians from the Pirinska part. They have not strayed that far from the root of the language which is basically not formalized and *коа сум таму со тие* (when I am there with them) I can speak it, it comes to me, but when I go to the republic, they, the language, they've formalized it and I have problems understanding it.

Many speakers from Aegean Macedonia were illiterate in Macedonian and many continue to use Macedonian solely as a spoken language. Nonetheless, speakers I have interviewed from Greece view the language as a crucial element of Macedonian identity since the battle to use it as an everyday language was fought so bitterly. This is evident in the following remarks:

At home we always spoke Macedonian. But always, as we say, walls have ears. In the Church you have to speak Greek, in school you have to speak Greek, on the street you have to greet your own brother in Greek because if someone comes and hears you, it means a fine or prison. And many times for example in school if you don't speak Greek the teacher would take you outside in front of the other children and everybody had to spit at you and tell you that you are shaming Greece. Once after I was born my mother was at the river doing laundry, I was two weeks old, and I cried, so my mother called to me, she told me not to cry, that she would come and feed me. There was a police station near there and immediately someone came up to my mother and asked her why she was speaking that forbidden language. My mother said that a baby needs to learn its mother language first, and then there is time for other languages. Because of that my mother was sentenced to six weeks in jail.

In a number of families in Toronto loyalties are divided. There are, consequently, hundreds of "hidden" Macedonians. I have met families in which one member identifies as a Macedonian and another as a Greek. For three years I lived next to a family before the grandmother spoke to me in Macedonian. She was from Voden

(Edhessa) but her son had married a Greek woman and now the whole family is identified as Greek. The following excerpt captures the essential problems of ethnic identity in this group:

My father spoke Macedonian, my grandmother spoke Macedonian. These people didn't know any other language except Macedonian. So we can't be anything other than Macedonians. We can't be Greeks. And now I have relatives there and they have become somewhat Hellenized, let's say. We fight whenever we are together. We are first cousins. They say they are Greek, I say I'm a Macedonian. It's really a big battle between us. We're first cousins. My father and his father are brothers. Their children are Greeks, but in fact I'm Macedonian. How can this be?

Although young people in the Toronto area have access to courses in Macedonian it is often difficult for parents to convince their children of the importance of learning it since they feel pressure to learn English and French. The Macedonian language is viewed by many young speakers as an easily expendable part of their heritage. They belong to the Macedonian church, go to Macedonian dances, join the Macedonian soccer league, but do not see the need to learn the language well. If they know it at all, it is to communicate with their parents or, more likely, their grandparents. One influential member of the community who clearly sees the retention of Macedonian as an important feature of Macedonian identity told me:

I take my children to Macedonian school but its a little hard; they understand when I speak to them in Macedonian, but they always answer in English. The Macedonian language is important for them since they are of Macedonian background, and if they know English and Macedonian, two languages, then surely, a third will come more easily to them.<sup>9</sup>

A younger informant in an interview stated :

The reality is that I would like to retain the language but it's difficult. It's difficult even to learn French unless you're constantly using it. The reality of the community is that, okay, they can know the language but they have to adapt to the reality of my generation because if they don't then everything will be lost. My kids probably won't know Macedonian. I find people my age,

you know, I'm Canadian, don't bother me with this stuff. They don't want to be ethnic.

In response to this comment, an older, well-respected community member said:

It would be to his advantage if he did [learn Macedonian] because that'll open up a new field for him about the traditions, the community, his roots, his identity, his cultural heritage. That's the way I feel. I wish the same thing, that my own children follow that path. I have been trying to encourage them. It's not easy in Canada. The reason is because, in order for them to advance, they have to use the predominant language.

The type of bilingual conversation described above is typical—the older person speaks in Macedonian, the younger responds in English. Even if the children do speak Macedonian, many of them cannot read or write in Cyrillic. Another student who speaks quite fluently in dialect at home with his parents but who does not speak the standard language well, told me that he only knows fifty words of Macedonian and, consequently, cannot discuss any contemporary topics in Macedonian. At an informal gathering with students I arrived and heard all the Macedonians speaking English. When they saw me they said, she will force us to speak Macedonian. For a little while the languages jostled one another, but in the end everyone spoke English. Although the younger Macedonians have a strong cultural identity, the language is not one of the most important elements in that identity. One young informant who is active in the Macedonian community told me:

If I have something to express and I feel it's important, I'd rather express it in a language that I can get across what I'm saying, rather than struggle with the language to prove a point that I can speak or understand.

Within Toronto it seems that Macedonian identity is often more closely allied with a certain cultural iconography rather than with language use per se. A statue of Alexander the Great, presented to the city of Toronto by the Hellenic Pan-Macedonian Association, has

over the past several years been the focus of public protest. There have been several violent demonstrations in which more than 2,000 Macedonians participated. On July 21, 1991, a confrontation occurred between Greeks and Macedonians when the Macedonians tried to place a wreath at the statue. As one Macedonian community leader told me, the statue is on public land and everyone should have the right to honor it. In contrast, a spokesperson for the Greek community was quoted in the press as stating, "If they want to come as Canadians or Americans to lay a wreath that's fine. But they cannot come as Macedonians because they are Greek." A student at the University of Toronto gave an impassioned talk in Macedonian class after a bitter exchange of letters between Macedonian and Greek students in the university newspaper, stating that historical facts are irrelevant in talking about Alexander, it is enough that Macedonians identify with Alexander to make him a key symbol of the community.

In the past five years the Macedonian identity in Toronto has been challenged. In addition to the incidents surrounding the statue of Alexander the Great there have been other events. In 1990 Canadian Minister of Foreign Affairs Wiener was invited to Thessaloniki to speak at the Pan-Macedonian conference (a pro-Greek organization), where he stated that "Macedonia is Greece." The Macedonian community was outraged and sought redress from the minister. I was present at a meeting between the minister and members of the community during which it was apparent that Mr. Wiener had no idea of the battle the Macedonians must wage for recognition of their ethnic identity, both in the Balkans and in Canada. There are further indications that this Balkan conflict is being played out in Canada at the same time that policies of bilingualism and multiculturalism are being questioned. Just as in Macedonia where the norms of the standardized language are again under discussion in the press, the lead article of Toronto's Macedonian paper for December 1991 asks, "Is VMRO-DPMNE (the Macedonian Nationalist Party) swimming in Bulgarian Waters?" Another incident over the name Macedonian flared up in 1991 during Caravan, an annual, week-long, summer festival with which Toronto celebrates its ethnic diversity.

Various communities stage events and offer ethnic food in church halls and community centers throughout the city. The Thessaloniki pavilion shut down this year in protest over the use of the word Macedonian in describing the Skopje pavilion at the Macedonian Orthodox Church, Sveti Kliment.

Clearly the Macedonians in Toronto have a difficult job in organizing the disparate elements that make up their community. Recent developments in the Balkans have served as a catalyst to unite the various factions in the community, but common ground is not always easily found. When a people has had to fight against great odds to preserve its language and a culture, when its rights to linguistic and cultural development have been denied, when its language has been banned and its children do not know of the struggle for its affirmation, it is not surprising that the legacy of partition and of Balkan nationalism survive in diaspora.

#### NOTES

1. In an informal conversation with two educated Serbian women in Toronto during the fall of 1991, just after the Macedonian referendum for independence, they told me that everything in Macedonian was Serbian, especially the churches, and that the Serbs had given them [the Macedonians] their language. While this is an extreme view, politicians in the ethnically charged rhetoric of that fall, referred to Macedonia again as South Serbia. For a detailed account of changing Bulgarian policy towards Macedonia, see Lunt 1984. A more recent statement can be found in the English Language publication from Sofia, *The Insider*. In the 1990 issue the Macedonian question is referred to in several editorials. In one, titled "Balkan Matters," the following statement is made: "Communist rulers in Yugoslavia, faced with similar internal crises, happily obliged their Bulgarian colleagues and unleashed a series of campaigns demanding human rights for the entirely hypothetical 'Macedonian minority' in Bulgaria."
2. I wish to thank the many Macedonians in Toronto who spoke to me about their lives both prior to and after immigration to Canada and my students in the Macedonian course at the University of Toronto. In particular, I wish to thank Tanas Jovanovski for his invaluable help without whom this work would not have been possible. In addition I wish to thank the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada for their support of my research.

3. The use of the Latin alphabet was itself the subject of controversy. In selecting Latin script, the Aegean Macedonians were cut off from the Slavic culture of other Macedonians, as well as of Bulgarians and Serbs.
4. Paskal Paskaevski collected songs between the years 1947-1949 for his work *НАРОДНИ ПЕСНИ ОД РЕГИЈСКА МАКЕДОНИЈА* (Folk Songs from Aegean Macedonia), published in Skopje in 1959. He writes in his introduction to the collection: "The gathering of such material from the Macedonian population in this region, keeping in mind the conditions under which it lived, was a difficult task. People were frightened and overly careful. Every woman—old or young—when they had decided to allow me to write down a song, first begged me: 'Don't write down my name, the *буџуџари* will kill me if they find out.' In view of these conditions, I felt that it was necessary to gather as much material as possible to preserve it for the history of our language and of our literature."
5. *New York Times* (March 1948) and the *Special Report to the United Nations* (1948).
6. In this personal account of the events surrounding the evacuation of the children from Greece, Gage never mentions the Macedonians as part of the exodus.
7. This pattern of immigration is not unique to the Macedonians. Burstynsky (1969) has noted with respect to the Ukrainian immigration to Canada in this century that the first wave of immigrants was largely unskilled, peasant workers but that subsequent waves have brought better educated people.
8. The *Matica za Iselenicite* is an organization that nurtures ties between Macedonian emigrés and the Republic of Macedonia. In addition, it carries out public-relations activities and provides financial support for activities that promote Macedonia.
9. Again, this problem is not unique to the Macedonians. The Non-Official Language Study (O'Bryan et al. 1976:176; Cummins and Danesi 1990:25) points out that the rapid intergenerational loss of language indicates that the task is not being successfully borne by parents; in fact, "the job of preserving language is quite possibly beyond them."

## REFERENCES

- Andonovski, Hristo.  
1974 "Macedonian National Minorities in Greece, Bulgaria and Albania." In *The Socialist Republic of Macedonia*, ed. M. Apostolski and H. Polenakovik, 188-204. Skopje: Macedonian Review.
- Апостолски, Михајло  
1972 Историја на Македонскиот народ (History of the Macedonian People) Скопје: Просветно Дело.
- Boerentzen, Lars  
1987 "The 'Paidomazoma' and the Queen's Camp." In *Studies in the History of the Greek Civil War 1945-1949*, ed. Lars Boerentzen, John O. Iatrides, and Ole L. Smith. Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press.
- Burstynsky, Edward  
1969 "Ukrainians in Canada." In *Slavs in Canada* 3, ed. Cornelius J. Jaenen, 249-268. Ottawa: Inter-University Committee on Canadian Slavs.
- Cummins, Jim  
1984 *Heritage Languages in Canada: Research Perspectives*. Ottawa: Department of Secretary of State of Canada.
- Cummins, Jim, and Marcel Danesi  
1990 *Heritage Languages: The Development and Denial of Canada's Linguistic Resources*. Toronto: Our Schools/Ours Selves.
- Danesi, Marcel  
1985 *Loanwords and Phonological Methodology*. LaSalle, Quebec: Didier.
- Friedman, Victor  
1975 "Macedonian Language and Nationalism during the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries." *Balkanistica* 2:83-98.
- 1985 "The Sociolinguistics of Literary Macedonian," *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 52:31-58.
- Macedonian Language in Toronto 181
- 1989 "Macedonian: Codification and Lexicon." In *Language Reform History and Future* 4, ed. Istvan Fodor and Claude Hagege. Hamburg: Helmut Buske.
- Gage, Nicholas  
1983 *Eleni*. New York: Random House.
- Georgievski, Kuzma  
1988 *The Exodus of the Children from the Aegean Part of Macedonia*. Skopje: Nova Makedonija.
- Катарциев, Иван  
1986 По врвниците на македонската историја. Скопје: Култура.
- Киселиновски, Стојан  
1987 Статусот на македонскиот јазик во македонија (1913-1987) (THE STATUS OF THE MACEDONIAN LANGUAGE, 1913-1987). Скопје: Мисла.
- Колшевски, Лазар  
1988 Аспекти на Македонското Прашање (Aspects of the Macedonian Question). Скопје: Наша Книга.
- Корубин, Благоја  
1969 Јазикот наш денешен. (Our Contemporary Language) том 1. Скопје: Наша Книга.
- 1976 Јазикот наш денешен. (Our Contemporary Language) том 2. Скопје: Литературен Збор.
- 1980 Јазикот наш денешен. (Our Contemporary Language) том 3 Скопје: Литературен Збор.
- Kushevski, Voislav  
1985 "Forward to the Photoprint Edition of Abecedar (1925-1985)." In АБЕЦЕДАР ЈУБИЛЕЈНО ИЗДАНИЕ, (Alphabet Book, Jubilee Edition). Skopje: Macedonian Review.
- Lehiste, Ilse  
1988 *Lecture Notes on Language Contact*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.

- Lunt, Horace  
1984 "Some Sociolinguistic Aspects of Macedonian and Bulgarian." In *Language and Literary Theory in Honor of Ladislav Matejka*, ed. B. Stolz., I. R. Tifunuk, and L. Doložal, 83-132. Ann Arbor, Michigan: Papers in Slavic Philology 5.
- Minova-Gurkova, Liljana  
1990 "Current Changes in Contemporary Macedonian." Paper delivered at the First North American-Macedonian Conference. Ann Arbor, Michigan.
- Мојсов, Лазар  
1989 Македонците во Егејска Македонија (The Macedonians of Aegean Macedonia). Скопје: Мисла.
- O'Bryan, K. G., J. Reitz, and O. Kuplowska  
1976 *Non-Official Languages*. Ottawa: Supply and Services Canada.
- Petroff, Lillian  
1976 "The Macedonian Community in Toronto to 1940." Ph.d. diss., University of Toronto.
- 1977 *The Macedonian Community in Toronto to 1930: Women and Emigration*. Toronto: Ontario Institute for Secondary Education.
- Поповски, Ј., ред.  
1982 Македонското прашање на страните од "Ризоспастис" меѓу двете војни. (The Macedonian Question in the Pages of Rizospastis between the Two World Wars). Скопје: Култура.
- Робовски, Никитор  
1988 Македонците од егејскиот дел на македонија во чехословачка (Aegean Macedonians in Czechoslovakia). Скопје: Наша Книга.
- Rossos, Andrew  
1991 "The Macedonians of Aegean Macedonia: A British Officer's Report, 1944," *The Slavonic and East European Review* 69 (2): 282-309.

- Stavrianos, L. S.  
1958 *The Balkans since 1453*. New York: Rinehart.
- United Nations Special Committee on the Balkans.  
1948 *Official Records*. Third Session, Supplement No. 8. Lake Success, N.Y.: United Nations.
- Vasiliadis, Peter.  
1989 *Whose are You?* New York: AMS.

### Newspapers and Periodicals

- Globe and Mail* (Toronto, Canada)  
*The Insider, Bulgarian Digest Monthly* (Sofia, Bulgaria)  
*Macedonia* (Toronto, Canada)  
МАКЕДОНСКИ ЈАЗИК (Skopje, Macedonia)  
*New York Times* (New York)  
*Toronto Star* (Toronto, Canada)