

# Reality check

remembering the past - shaping the future





# Reality check

remembering the past - shaping the future

a comprehensive insight into local cultures of remembrance in three multiethnic municipalities in the Republic of Macedonia

**Autors:**

**Gordana Duvnjak, Kirsten Schönefeld, Xhabir Deralla, Joss Becker**

**Biljana Jordanovska, Arbana Qerimi, Sasho Talevski, Kreshnik Ajdini**



## Reality Check

Remembering the Past - Shaping the Future (pilot project of Forum Peace Service - Macedonia (*forumZFD*) and Civil - Center for Freedom

**Publishers:** Civil - Center for Freedom and Forum Peace Service - Macedonia (*forumZFD*)

**For the Publishers:** Xhabir Deralla and Silke Maier-Witt

**Editors:** Xhabir Deralla and Kirsten Schönefeld

**Authors:** Gordana Duvnjak, Biljana Jordanovska, Arbana Qerimi, Kirsten Schönefeld, Sasho Talevski, Kreshnik Ajdini, Xhabir Deralla, Joss Becker

**Proofreading Language redaction:** Natasha Cvetkovska, Kreshnik Ajdini, Biljana Jordanovska, Biljana Zdraveska

**Design:** Arian Mehmeti (and others)

**Print:** TP Dule 99, Skopje

### Contacts:

CIVIL - Center for Freedom

Address: Mito Hadjivasilev Jasmin 12/5, 1000 Skopje, Republic of Macedonia

Tel: +389 2 520 91 76

[civil@civil.org.mk](mailto:civil@civil.org.mk)

[civil.mk@gmail.com](mailto:civil.mk@gmail.com)

[www.civil.org.mk](http://www.civil.org.mk)

[www.civil.today](http://www.civil.today)

[www.facebook.com/civil.mk](https://www.facebook.com/civil.mk)

[www.twitter.com/CivilMacedonia](https://www.twitter.com/CivilMacedonia)

[www.youtube.com/user/CivilOrgMK](https://www.youtube.com/user/CivilOrgMK)

[www.forumzfd.de](http://www.forumzfd.de)

**The contents of this publication is responsibility of its authors. Publicizing of this publication is possible under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.**

ISBN-10 608-65629-7-0

ISBN-13 978-608-65629-7-7

EAN 9786086562977

Foreword	<b>05</b>
Objectives and methodology	<b>12</b>
Parallel histories and selective memory	<b>21</b>
Actors and stakeholders	<b>45</b>
Mayors: Chair, Tetovo, Kicevo	<b>59</b>
Museums    Fostering the culture of memory in schools in municipality of Cair    Library "Koco Racin" - Tetovo	<b>69</b>
A selection of online and printed content dedicated to a part of the historical events covered in the survey	<b>75</b>
Insights from international scientific literature on memory and remembering	<b>114</b>



# Foreword

Who controls the past controls the  
future; who controls the present  
controls the past.

George Orwell, 1984

**H**istory and remembrance are overwhelmingly present in people's lives in the Republic of Macedonia. Events in the past are interpreted in a plenitude of ways, overlapping and colliding, depending on ethno-religious and nationalist politics in the country. Remnants of rigid and backward ideologies of the past mixed with newly discovered nationalist sentiments, values and identities strongly influence policies and practices at official levels, as well as culture, media and education.

Dealing with the past was an important issue in the post-conflict societies of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia and Croatia, as it is stated by a number of authors that "compared with other post-conflict societies, 'dealing with the past initiatives' began very early in the Western Balkans and were well resourced by the international community".<sup>1</sup>

Regardless of how true this might be for the countries of the post-Yugoslav sphere in which wars broke out already in the

---

<sup>1</sup> Martina Fischer and Ljubinka Petrovic-Ziemer: Dealing with the Past in the Western Balkans Initiatives for Peacebuilding and Transitional Justice in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia and Croatia, Berghof Report No/ 18, 2013

early 1990's - it is definitely not the case with Macedonia. The international involvement to end the ethnic conflict in 2001 was enormous, but that involvement faded away in the post-conflict period in the area of dealing with the past. Apart from few initiatives and conferences, little has been done to solve the outstanding issues.

Legal cases and political issues that directly concern events in the 2001 ethnic conflict are still under the veil of speculations and political manipulations and bargaining. The conflict, the conditions and events that led to it, as well as the immediate aftermath are still an open issue in the country. The cases of missing persons (12 Macedonians and 6 Albanians), torture of the "Mavrovo" construction workers, and several others are still unresolved at a societal level, despite the attempts of domestic politicians to bring them to a closure in a legal/institutional frame.

There is a lack of efforts to start any sort of discussion on the 'open questions'. On the contrary, conflicts and wars are re-charged in the collective memory of the citizens of Macedonia. Apart of the most recent conflict in 2001, other historical periods and events, such as the Ottoman period, the World War I and II - seem to remain strangely untouched in the true sense of dealing with the past. The government and state institutions have engineered and conducted massive and expensive projects of re-shaping history and identity of the ethnic Macedonians in the country. These efforts were countered by projects to boost ethnic Albanian nationalism by the government coalition partner, the major political party of the ethnic Albanians in the country - the Democratic Union for Integration.

The Macedonian society greatly suffers from ethnically segregated and highly politicized, past-oriented (party) politics. Examples and evidence for this diagnose may be found on daily basis, such as the pompous welcome given by the top state in-

stitutions and dignitaries (ethnic Macedonians) to the former police officer Johan Tarculovski, convicted to a prison sentence by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) at Hague for war crimes against ethnic Albanian civilians during the conflict in 2001- says a lot about the conditions of past oriented politics. He was greeted not as a person who has submitted serious war crimes but as a returning hero – a contradiction per definition.

It is obvious that the effect, which this kind of events (and there were many of this kind in the last decade) - must be disintegrative for the whole society, which should be trying to build a post-war identity and much for the interethnic relations of a highly diverse country.

The lack of initiatives is evident. Apart of state and political establishments, national and international civil society actors also lack initiatives for constructive dealing with the past, which altogether affects the way in which the past is being dealt with in Macedonia nowadays. The root-causes of the conflict in 2001 not being sufficiently tackled, the open questions such as those concerning missing persons not being solved and 13 years after signing the Ohrid Framework Agreement (OFA) no consensus between the two main ethnic groups is in sight. Policies of exclusion and segregation are in place instead.

The most visible and most symbolic outgrowth of these past-oriented politics is surely the controversial and expensive Skopje 2014 project. The Skopje 2014 project is trying to refer at the same time to the (engineered) antique Macedonian heritage of the Macedonian nation and putting at the same time an emphasis on the liberation struggle of the late 19th and early 20th century. The same is true, for the Albanian side, where also events, symbols and heroes from the time of the formation of the Albanian nation and the Albanian state are in the forefront of memorialization processes. Still, this materializes in a reduced

scope, due to budgetary and political constraints, generating even more frustrations and divisions. The recent history is highly present. On the Albanian side, it is accompanied with relentless recurrence of the memory on UCK and the fighting in 2001. On the ethnic Macedonian side, 2001 is also recurrent motive in media, culture, education and memorialization, but in highly confronting manner, far from any reconciliatory fashion.

As one of the few “connectors” for the ethnic groups, the 1903 uprising of Ilinden against the Ottoman rule is being mentioned in political and academic documents and appearances. Despite some legitimate hope, that the (joint) uprising against the Ottoman rule might function as a reference point for a joint identity of the ethnic groups in Macedonia - the ongoing distortions about this historical event between the ethnic communities in the country, as well as between Macedonian and the Bulgarian government throws a dark shade over this hope. It shows: any kind of identity built upon ethnic demarcation lines is doomed to fail.

This also points out to the pitfalls of the whole approach of the current past-driven policies in Macedonia - from both ethnic sides. Any kind of policy focusing on processes of nation-building of the 19th and early 20th century in the attempt to foster late nation-building is anachronistic - it may serve the short-term needs of ethnic political entrepreneurs by reinforcing policies of exclusion, not at all in accordance to the multi-ethnic character of the country and opposite to its declared European orientation. Not in a post nation-state 21st century.

It is more than obvious, that these past-oriented policies in Macedonia are an attempt to control the present and the future of the country. As Orwell puts it in his famous novel “1984”: He who controls the past controls the future. He who controls the present controls the past. This effort of winning over the past is a very costly one; it will eventually lead to lose-lose situation. Not

one ethnic or political group will win the future by reinforcing its past, but all groups will lose the chance to build a common identity and thus head towards a grim future. Inventing history and twisting historical facts might be politically profitable in a short run, but will certainly bring vast losses on a long-term basis.

The current past-oriented identity politics in Macedonia are surely not in favor of the wellbeing of the country. It keeps failing to come to terms with its past, particularly having in mind its multi-ethnic character, and the fact that it is still recovering from a violent ethnic conflict. On top of all this, the country seems to be trapped in a never-ending transition process. Yet, it seems that the benefits lay within short-term wins of political power and control over public finances.

Most, if not all, of the current policies and practices in the area of dealing with the past, affect human rights and democracy in many ways. Memorialization and culture of remembrance, as integral and most perceptible components of what we know as dealing with the past, are clearly fueled with national-chauvinism and discrimination along ethnic and religious lines. Furthermore, a masculine and gender insensitive culture has been developed, diminishing the role of the woman or, more precisely, reducing it to a reproductive tool. War and violence are praised as ultimate values. Only a quick look at the three-cypher-number of monuments within the Skopje 2014, built in the last 5 years, will provide more than enough physical evidence to support this assumption.

Another thought-provoking, if not intriguing observation is that no participant in the research has mentioned the Holocaust and the deportation of Jews from Macedonia, although the Second World War was mentioned frequently. That is one more aspect that needs to be researched in our future work, illustrating one more of the many chambers in the remembrance that remain surrounded by walls of silence and denial.

A constructive and future-oriented Dealing with the Past is of utmost importance for all post-conflict societies and countries in transition to democracy. It is very important how a society deals with its past and how war is commemorated. The Macedonian political elites definitely fall short of facing reality in dealing with these issues.

Dealing with the Past is a multi-layered transformation process, combining measures for “the right to know”, “the right to justice”, the “right to reparation” and the “guarantee of non-recurrence”- as it is pointed out in the influential framework developed by Swiss Peace.<sup>2</sup>

It means a combination of legal and symbolic measures aimed at the society to first and foremost bring justice to the victims of past conflicts on the basis of internationally established human rights standards and mechanisms such as the ICTY. It also means to foster debates, which will allow for victims, perpetrators and all members of the society to exchange views on the conflicting past, acknowledge responsibility for (war) crimes and thus build a new, common identity. This would be a DwP which tackles and not avoids open questions and has a peaceful direction by condemning war, violence, nationalism and chauvinism. It includes all groups in the society from Macedonians to Albanian, from the old to the young men to women. Surely this DwP has to distance itself from any kind of violence as means of conflict resolution, but to promote democracy, rule of law, human rights and non-violence.

Memorialization is essential part of the symbolic actions, touching upon all of the above. When it comes to the effects of the current

---

<sup>2</sup> The conceptual framework on dealing with the past was elaborated by Swisspeace and the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs. It is based on the principles that Louis Joint as UN Special Rapporteur recommended in 1997 in his report on the question of the impunity of perpetrators of human rights. For report, see: <http://www.unhcr.ch/huridocda/huridoca.nsf/%28Symbol%29/E.CN.4.sub.2.1997.20.Rev.1.En>

power-driven politics of memory, memorialization is clearly an important element of post-conflict identity building. Such an identity can arise from new or renewed civic trust, a concept brought up by Pablo de Greiff.<sup>3</sup> Besides necessary juridical measures for prosecuting perpetrators and rule of law, elements of truth-telling and truth commissions might be helpful in this endeavor. The notion of “civic” also points to the kind of identity that becomes feasible through Dealing with the Past that encompasses civic identity, human rights, freedom and social equality, conforming a maximum of cultural and ethnic diversity.

Such dealing with the past is as much needed as it is not-to-be-seen nowadays in Macedonia. Experience has shown that processes of dealing with the past which are locally rooted and driven by local actors are most likely to fulfil the above mentioned preconditions and add to a nation-wide constructive and future-oriented dealing with the past.<sup>4</sup> That is why we decided to place our project at a community level.

*Skopje, spring 2014*

**Kirsten Schönefeld**  
**Xhabir Deralla**

---

<sup>3</sup> For further reading see: Pablo de Greiff: A Normative Conception of Transitional Justice, in: Federal Department of Foreign Affairs FDFA (ed.): Politorbis. Zeitschrift für Aussenpolitik, Nr. 50, 3/2010, pp. 17-29. Available at: <http://www.dplf.org/uploads/1292518783.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> See on this aspect: Martina Fischer and Ljubinka Petrovic-Ziemer: Dealing with the Past in the Western Balkans Initiatives for Peacebuilding and Transitional Justice in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia and Croatia, Berghof Report No/ 18, 2013

# Aims and methodologies

## 1. Project aim: Creating inclusive local cultures of remembrance at local level

**H**aving in mind the introductory remarks about the role of Dealing with the Past (DwP) and memorialization processes in transition and in post-conflict countries and the prevalence of exclusive cultures of remembrance and nationalistic narratives in Macedonia, the aim of the project is:

“To contribute to the development of inclusive cultures of remembrance at community level in Macedonia and to develop the capacities of local stakeholders in conflict transformation and DwP”

Thus, the project aims at developing concepts and creating possibilities for exchanging views of local stakeholders and citizen’s on the conflicting past. This means to establish a culture of memorialization and Dealing with the Past which would include all ethnic, political age, gender groups as well as all viewpoints and perspectives on past events and periods. In the attempt to create inclusive and constructive Local Cultures of Remembrance at community level Civil- Center for Freedom and forumZFD will work – together with local and strategic partners from the civil society, the state administration and politics. Human Rights and Transitional Justice standards will be both the starting point for all our endeavors, as explained below.

By the end of the project in 2016, best practices and concepts for cultures of remembrance at the local level in the country will be formulated and the capacities of local actors in Dealing with the Past and memorialisation will have been strengthened.

In a first project phase from March to August 2014, forumZFD and Civil-Center for Freedom aimed at exploring the state of the art in Dealing with the Past and cultures of memorialisation at the local level in Macedonia. As the main focus of the project is on creating inclusive cultures of remembrance and thus has a strong interethnic component, we selected three multiethnic communities with special importance for the interethnic relations in the country:

- Tetovo with a special link and being specially affected by the conflict in 2001
- Kicevo as the last municipality in which the provisions of the Ohrid Framework Agreement have been implemented through the territorial reform in 2013
- Cair as the multiethnic municipality with most inhabitants and (partially) affected by Skopje 2014

In the induction phase, seven focus-group sessions (six mono-ethnic focus groups from the model communities and one multiethnic focus group at the central level) and 16 interviews with stakeholders from local civil society, local politics, historians and others were carried out by Civil-Center for Freedom in May and June 2014. The analysis of these interviews forms together with an in-depth literature research on national and international scientific perspectives the basis of this study as well as for the planning of project activities.

## 2. Human rights and conflict transformation – complementary approaches

**B**efore explaining the methodology of the study, namely action research and Reflecting on Peace Practices, some remarks on the approach shall be made.

It is our attempt to combine human rights based approach with the perspective of conflict transformation. Whilst both perspectives offer different analytical perspectives and operate with distinct Theory of Changes, we believe that their combination cannot offer a fruitful, multidisciplinary approach and contribute to creating a sustainable peace and help to foster democracy and rule of law.

This means to combine ideas of change which are rooted in the law-based approach of Human Rights and activities within the field of empowerment, education and lobbying with the process-oriented approach of conflict transformation.

The approach of Civil in this context is multifaceted and reflects the socio-political and cultural reality of the country and the region, but definitely represents profound human rights aspect of DwP issues. Sensibility to human rights issues is important when working in the area of DwP, having in mind the deep impact to human rights situation at local and national level, particularly in the area of minority and cultural rights, but also in the area of economic rights, education and access to justice.

In the perspective of conflict transformation, change can only take place when actors within the society want it. Change thus cannot be imposed from outside, by external intervention, but needs to be build from inside. It is believed, that focusing on constructive processes opens up the possibility of the change of behaviour and attitudes of

actors. Within this concept, third parties can play an important role in facilitating processes of conflict transformation.<sup>1</sup> ForumZFD thus understands itself in this project as a third party, aiming at sensitizing local stakeholders for the topic and at facilitating processes for establishing local cultures of remembrance together with local partners.<sup>2</sup>

## **Methodology: Action research and Reflecting on Peace Practices**

In the attempt to combine human rights based, peace-building and conflict transformation approaches, we chose to work with the methods of Action research and Reflecting on Peace Practices. Action research is a method for social research, which strives to combine research and learning processes of both the ones researching and the ones being subject to research. The origins of the method are dating back to the 1940s with Kurt Lewin being its father; it is nowadays being applied in various academic disciplines.<sup>3</sup> Amongst other assets, the method is adequate for pilot research, especially “when the situation is too ambiguous to frame precise research questions”. As the topic of local cultures of remembrance in the Republic of Macedonia has not been researched upon and there is little to no academic knowledge on it- a method like action research seems to be highly appropriate to conduct the baseline study.

---

<sup>1</sup> Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ): Connecting Human Rights and Conflict Transformation. Guidance for Development Practitioners, 2011. URL: <http://hrbaportal.org/archives/resources/connecting-human-rights-and-conflict-transformation-guidance-for-development-practitioners>.

<sup>2</sup> For further reading on forumZFD as a third party actor, please see the Mission Statement: URL: <http://www.forumzfd.de/en/node/897>

<sup>3</sup> The explanations and quotations in this section refer to: O’Brien, R. (2001). Um exame da abordagem metodológica da pesquisa ação [An Overview of the Methodological Approach of Action Research]. In Roberto Richardson (Ed.), Teoria e Prática da Pesquisa Ação [Theory and Practice of Action Research]. João Pessoa, Brazil: Universidade Federal da Paraíba. (English version) Available: <http://www.web.ca/~robrien/papers/arfinal.html> (Accessed 20/1/2002)

Furthermore, as this baseline study is meant to be the induction for project activities aiming at establishing inclusive cultures of remembrance, it seems to be essential to actively include stakeholders, members of the target group and beneficiaries right from the beginning. The assumption is, that including these persons will not only lead to increased acceptance of the action and ensure 'do-no-harm' in the local contexts, but also significantly contribute the quality of the research, as opinions and knowledge of the local actors and the local population will be taken into account.

This is reflected both in the principles of action research and in the research process. The principles of action research, which will have been applied while compiling the baseline study on local cultures of remembrance in Macedonia, are the following:

- Understanding and accepting the other as someone different to me;
- Listening to the Other;
- Willingness to change oneself, the context and the processes in which we act and reflect;
- Understand the idea behind our actions and activities, develop self-awareness;
- Generate our theories and concepts on the basis of the experience we gather in practice;
- Enrich our practice through theory;
- Demonstrate willingness to question own assumptions;
- Respect the knowledge and achievements of others, and let them inspire our own work;
- Our approach is participatory and co-operative

Concerning the research paradigm, action research is based in the paradigm of praxis. This again is very appropriate for a baseline study which aims at practice and changes on the ground. This means, that the idea of neutrality does not apply, as "the most active researcher

is often one who has most at stake in resolving a problematic situation". As to the relation of theory and practice, it is as circular as the research process itself. "Theory informs practice, practice refines theory, in a continuous transformation".

All these principles and aspects of action research have been taken into account, when designing the course of the action and carrying out focus groups discussion, interviews with stakeholders and when writing the baseline study.

The idea of mutuality also implies, that both the approach and data are being made available to all those involved in the process. According to the approach of action research, participants/co-researchers have the right to be informed about the approach, the course of the action and the outcomes and have a saying in it.

This is why we publish this study online and in hard copy and make it available to the members of focus groups, those stakeholders interviewed and the general public. In doing so, we wish to enhance local and national debates and root our project in these debates.

### *Reflecting on Peace Practices*

Apart from action research, we took the Reflecting on Peace Practices (RPP)<sup>4</sup> approach into account. One of the ideas of the RPP project is, that peace projects shall take both the so-called 'peace writ little' and 'peace writ large'- meaning larger and broader peace processes into account. Transferred into our context, this will mean to both research the local contexts (Tetovo, Cair, Kicevo) and the national and also regional context. This will be applied both in literature research and by carrying out one focus group at local and national level. Moreover, it means in the local context to include members of all sectors and layers of the

---

<sup>4</sup> See for the Reflecting on peace project, matrix and project documents: URL: <http://www.cdacollaborative.org/programs/reflecting-on-peace-practice/>

society into the focus groups ('more people') and conduct individual stakeholder talk with so-called 'key people' as the combination of both is defined as another precondition by the RPP project for peace projects to be successful.

As to the Theory of Change, the research design, especially the questionnaire for the focus group interviews and for interviews with stakeholders shall reflect the complementarity of the individual and the socio-economic level for achieving change. Questions shall therefore encompass both levels, exploring individual and interpersonal aspects of cultures of remembrance but also take the socio-political level, for example group and political aspects as the interethnic relations and the effect of the Ohrid Framework Agreement and aspects of Transitional Justice into account.

### 3. Research areas and questions

**B**ased on these methodological considerations considerations, interview questionnaires for semi-standardized interviews were developed.

After researching major strings of the international and national scientific literature about Dealing with the Past and memorialisation, we decided to focus this baseline study on forms of memorialisation at the local level, their contents, their actors, the functions that they have and on perspectives of future-oriented and inclusive cultures of remembrance. Interviews with focus groups and stakeholders were carried out based on the following leading questions.

#### **Forms of Local Cultures of Remembrance**

- How does remembrance take place: Which forms of remem-

brance take place (for example monuments, events, private storytelling, etc.)?

- Is there inclusive (interethnic and cross-party remembrance) and if yes- when and in which form does it take place?
- What is the difference in practicing of the culture of remembrance based on gender?

### **Contents of Local Cultures of Remembrance**

- What are the most important contents of remembrance for the different groups in the municipalities and in the country?
- Are there any joint topics of remembrance for all ethnic groups in the municipalities?
- What is being remembered and why?
- Which are the topics, periods and events which are excluded/marginalized from memorialisation processes and why are they excluded?
- How are different ethnic and social/political groups depicted in LCR?

### **Actors of Local Cultures of Remembrance**

- Which groups (ethnic/social/political) are included in memorialisation processes?
- Which are the powerful and which are the marginalized groups in LCR?
- Do women play a role in remembrance processes and if yes, what is their role (subject or object to remembrance or both)?

### **Functions of Local Cultures of Remembrance**

- What is the role of LCR for the municipalities as a whole and for the different ethnic and other social groups at local level?
- What is their specific function for the different ethnic commu-

nities and the political groups within the communities?

- Do LCR reflect current political divisions, interethnic divisions and intra-ethnic divisions and how do they influence them?
- How centralized is the remembrance? How much past is part of the present? How much present is in the past? (central - local; past - present)
- Which role do they play in regards to establishing a democratic culture at local level?
- What is the function of local processes of remembrance for national identity/nation-building and other political processes, especially peace-building (OFA/Transitional Justice)
- How do LCR contribute to segregation or integration and to political polarization at local and central level and how are these processes intertwined?

### **Future-oriented/alternative Local Cultures of Remembrance**

- Are LCR of use at all?
- How could inclusive LCR help to strengthen interethnic relations, build trust and foster the peace process at local and central level?
- What could be the role of inclusive LCR for establishing of a democratic culture and foster democratization at local and national level?
- How to include the marginalized topics/excluded groups?
- How would alternative LCR, which would promote peace, non-violence and interethnic understanding look like? Which topics/events would they deal with?
- Which form would they take?
- Which preconditions (social, political, and economic) must be met in order to establish inclusive LCR?

Gordana Duvnjak

Parallel histories and

exclusive remembrance

# Parallel histories and exclusive remembrance

Analysis of the results of the focus groups from the municipalities of Cair, Tetovo and Kicevo, based on standardized questionnaires

**F**or the purpose of having a better picture of the considerations and views of the different categories of citizens in three ethnically mixed municipalities, interviews were carried out with seven focus groups in the period May – June 2014. An identical methodology was used with all focus groups in order to make a comparative analysis on their perception of issues in the area of cultures of remembrance and dealing with the past, relevant to the project.

Six focus groups were composed of five or six community representatives living within the municipality, which were predominantly mono-ethnic. Their diversity based on gender, social and age structure was taken into account as far as possible. The seventh focus group was composed of representatives of all communities living in Republic of Macedonia and served as a resource for analysis of the situation at the national level.

## **Structure of focus groups by municipalities**

### **Cair**

The focus group of the Municipality of Cair (predominantly ethnic Macedonians) consisted of three men aged 30, 50 and 64 years, from which one a Boshnjak, as well as two women aged 40 and 45 years, one of which is a member of the Serbian community.

The focus group comprised of ethnic Albanians from the Municipality of Cair consisted of three men aged 37, 19 and 23, and three women aged 23, 21 and 36.

### **Kicevo**

The focus group of ethnic Macedonians in the Municipality of Kicevo consisted of six participants, two of which were men aged 60 and 56 (Roma), and four women, two of which aged 50 years, one 20 and one aged 30 years.

The structure of the focus group from the Municipality of Kicevo composed of members of the Albanian community consisting of two men aged 30 and 40 years, as well as four women of which two aged 24 years, while the remaining two were aged 36 and 64 years.

### **Tetovo**

The focus group of ethnic Macedonians from the Municipality of Tetovo comprised of six members, four of which were men aged 38, 42, 60 and 33, and two women aged 20 and 25 years.

The focus group of ethnic Albanians consisted of 5 members, four were men aged 23, 30, 35 and 50 years, and one woman aged 24 years.

### **National level**

The seventh focus group consisted of six people of mixed ethnic backgrounds, four of which were men: Macedonian (49 years), Serbian (60 years), Albanian (24 years), Roma (24 years), and two women of which one Macedonian (27 years), and the other a Vlach (44 years)

## Which historical period is most important to you and why?

From the responses received to this question evidently there is a noticeable division in regards to the perception, based on ethnic grounds, to which historical events are considered as most important. This perception does not differ majorly from municipality to municipality. Clearly, the responses received from the so-called “national focus group”, given the mixed composition, gives an overview of the responses from the two largest ethnic communities.

Apparently, members of the Macedonian community have mainly chosen three historical events: the Ilinden Uprising, ASNOM, as well as the Referendum for Independence of 1991.

The Ilinden Uprising of 1903 is stressed as a big historic event, when the Macedonian people organized and uprising against the Ottoman rule and formed the Krusevo Republic. The first session of ASNOM held on August 2, 1944 is perceived as an event which has laid the foundations of the Macedonian state. However, participants assessed the Referendum of September 8, 1991 as a significant date in more recent history, when Macedonia officially separated from the Yugoslav Federation and chose its own path of an independent state.

Apart from these dominant responses, the Ohrid Framework Agreement of 2001 was also underlined as an important event, as a political document which ended the conflict in Macedonia. The Balkan wars are also mentioned, as events that have affected the destiny of the Macedonian state.

For the members of the Albanian community from the three municipalities, the crisis of 2001 is the key historical event, which is perceived as a new phase in the life of the Albanians in Macedonia. Despite dilemmas present among the public and during

the course of the work of the focus groups in regards to terminology, in the responses it is mainly defined as war, and much less as a conflict or crisis. The second major event for the Albanians is the opening of the Tetovo University, as a realization of a longtime aspiration for the existence of a state university in the Albanian language. However, at the same time, events that have a broader significance for the Albanian people are also mentioned, that relate to events related to Albania and Kosovo, such as: the Refugee crisis in 1999 and the declaration of independence of Kosovo. In some municipalities certain specifics can be noticed, whereby the events of Bit Pazar are present in the answers of the respondents from the Municipality of Cair, and the independence of Albania and the Albanian alphabet with those of Tetovo.

The focus group at the national level noted all previously stated events contained in the answers of the remaining focus groups as most important: the Ilinden Uprising, ASNOM, the Ohrid Agreement, the unrest in Kosovo and the refugee crisis.

## Which historic heroes do you remember and why?

Participants of the focus groups responded to this question by giving an extensive list of names from different periods, which go beyond from just the distant past, but also include current and former politicians, some of whom are contemporaries.

The three most frequently mentioned names by the Macedonians are: Goce Delcev, as a historical figure with great importance for the Macedonian people, then Metodi Andonov Cento, as the first president of ASNOM and Kiro Gligorov, as the father of the modern Macedonian state.

Macedonians from the Municipality of Cair indicated Dame Gruev, Pitu Guli, Nikola Karev, as well as Kuzman Josifovski Pitu, Jordan Hadzi Konstantinov Dzinot and Gjergj Kastriot Skenderbeg.

Delcev, Gligorov and Cento are most frequently indicated by the Macedonians from Tetovo, as well as the late President Boris Trajkovski, as a man who made a great contribution to the return of peace in 2001, and the first prime minister in the recent Macedonian state Nikola Kljusev. In some of the answers, names of people born in this city can be found, such as: Kace Stojceviski - Ambarche and Todor Cipovski - Mercan. In one of the answers the name of the folk singer Aleksandar Sarievski was also indicated.

Local-patriotism is particularly obvious among the Macedonians from Kicevo, who believe that despite previously mentioned figures, their fellow citizen Vlado Polezhina of whom they are especially proud of has been unjustly forgotten. It has been indicated that he had a PhD, was a member of ASNOM and was a holder of partisan monuments, but unfortunately, ended on Goli Otok. Figures of local importance are also mentioned, such as Mirko Milevski and Olga Micevska from Kicevo, as well as Memed Semovski and Ramazan Asamovski, members of the Roma community. The current Prime Minister of the Macedonian government, Nikola Gruevski, was been pointed out from among the present politicians.

Among the Albanians from the three municipalities, the following most important figures were on the top of the list: the internationally famed humanitarian from Skopje with Albanian roots, Mother Teresa, as well as Skenderbeg, who is defined as "a legend of the Albanian people, who worked for the good of all Albanians". Nonetheless, names of more recent times have not been forgotten who, in their opinion, have credit for the interests of the Albanian people.

Respondents from the Municipality of Cair give special emphasis in their listing on UCK commanders Teli, Adem and Ferid Jashari as well as Elvis Hoxha.

For the Albanians from Tetovo, Isa Boletini and Ismail Kemail are noteworthy of mentioning for their credit to the independence of Albania and Lek Dukagjini as well as Mujdin Aliu, who was killed in Kosovo in 1999. Interestingly, in their replies they also mention the former President of Albania, Enver Hoxha, as one respondent stated - "Although a dictator, he created a history and implemented law and order that we miss." They also mention Alexander the Great, for whom they say radically changed the ancient world, furthermore, Dzemo Gostivarec, a fighter and Balist and Kemal Atatürk, father of modern Turkey.

For the Albanians from Kicevo, their most favored figures are Mefail and Sultana, who are present in several replies. UCK commanders, Teli, Cakala and Kustrim are listed as heroes of modern time

The list with figures from the focus group at the national level is long and diverse, thereby mentioning Goce Delchev, Dame Gruev, Pitu Guli, Aleksandar Protugjerov, Metodija Andonov-Chento, Kuzman Josifovski Pitu, Jordan Konstantinov-Dzinot, Kiro Gligorov, Skenderbeg, as well as Josip Broz-Tito, Hitler and the Salonica Assassins.

When speaking of valuing individuals from the recent and distant past, individuals like Mother Teresa, Skenderbeg and Josip Broz Tito manage to connect both communities. Despite the critical attitude of the Albanians towards Tito, nonetheless, they state that although he was "a communist and dictator", life was better during his days.

## What role do other ethnic communities have in your remembrance?

The requirement to define the relationship with other communities, opens a series of questions for respondents, but also discloses prejudice, stereotypes and frustrations that are largely due to the impact of politics. Despite the awareness that this region has a long tradition of cohabitation and coexistence, it can clearly be sensed that ethnocentrism has increased within the last ten years, along with closure within the community. This, as has been emphasized, is particularly evident among younger generations, whereby the older still adhere to tradition and respect for other communities.

The armed conflict or war of 2001, seems to be the main event that burdens, frustrates, and puts weight on relations between the two largest communities in the state. Both the Macedonian and the Albanian communities approach with distrust, starting with their views and stereotypes as well, which are more emphasized in ethnically homogenous environments than in ethnically mixed ones.

"I do not separate Macedonians and Albanians, but it does bother me that they consider to have given us rights", stated one of the Albanian respondents from the Municipality of Cair.

Others expressed their opinions as follows:

"Macedonians do not have a document that they own the state".

"Criminals need to be condemned, not entire communities".

"There is a lack of communication, we do not know each other well enough".

"We are not defended by the Albanian politicians in the Government".

Furthermore, the Albanians from Tetovo concluded as follows:

“After the war in 2001 a difficult atmosphere was created between Macedonians, Albanians and Turks. The relations after 2001 are just not the same as they were before. There is a big difference”.

“In words, the relations between Macedonians and Albanians are very good, but in reality they are very bad.”

“It’s a new phase after the conflict. Sometimes we think we are our own bosses, however, we are not equal to them (Macedonians)”.

Hesitations are present in some of the replies from the members of the Albanian community in Kicevo, which at times are rigid, as they state:

“Macedonians have a more negative role than the Turks and Roma”.

“Macedonians discriminate the Albanians”.

“Although we live with the Macedonians together, they are our greatest enemies.”

Macedonians, however, seem to be more restrained in their responses and give emphasis on the moment of coexistence with other communities, who admit that in recent times is “contaminated” by politics.

“We share the same destiny. I would put the influence more on the political games on ethnic basis, “says a Macedonian from the Tetovo focus group.

“Currently, Albanians and Macedonians in Tetovo live more harmonious than anywhere else. Unfortunately, a small part of the politicians see to turn this situation in their favor and create misunderstanding”.

“We the elderly have coexistence and respect each other, but the young do not share this.”

The responses of the focus group at the national level are quite reserved in which they avoided direct statements in relation to other communities, probably due to the mixed composition and the need to be “politically correct”. Perhaps this is why the replies are quite affirmative and mostly indicate positive examples, such as the following:

“The Ohrid-Debar Uprising is an example of good cooperation between VMRO-DPMNE and the Albanians”

“Between the two world wars there was a strong Belogardiska community. Russian immigrants are credited for forming the first faculties”.

“The Albanians and Vlachs had a significant role in the Krusevo uprising”

Part of the replies are pretty vague and without reference, like this for example:

“We have little knowledge of other communities”.

## Do different communities have different remembrance?

Everyone sees and interprets historical events through their own point of view and through the prism of their own ethnicity. There is parallel reading of history, as well as celebration and admiration of their heroes. Mutual relations are complicated by mistrust and unawareness of the “others”. Yet, more between Macedonians and Albanians, than Turks and Roma.

Smaller communities, however, emphasize that they had higher expectations of the Framework Agreement, which they think

puts them in a marginal position in relation to the Albanian and Macedonian community. These are the general assessments that can be drawn from the responses received to this question from the various focus groups.

"The Macedonians are afraid of us, they think we are going to create a Greater Albania," stated one member of Albanian nationality of the Cair focus group.

"For the Macedonians still a dead Albanian is a good Albanian," concluded an Albanian from Kicevo.

"Macedonians have never seen anything bad from the Albanians. Macedonians have problems with themselves, with their own identity".

"Macedonians do not like us, they have great hatred towards us. Religion binds us with the Turks".

The Macedonians from Tetovo also conclude that "older generations have good recollections of coexistence, but the newer generations are less interested in the events that are happening. They have different perceptions and views than us. "

Members of Kichevo, however, stated: "We do not interfere on our own initiative, unless the local government does not order a gathering for some occasion. We celebrate the holidays individually".

Through the answers an attempt is made to give explanations to where the problems lay for the antagonisms, and also for the positioning of the various ethnic groups from a geographical perspective.

One of the possible answers that is offered is that "Albanians from Tetovo and Gostivar have fewer contacts with the Macedonians, and the same goes for the Macedonians of Eastern Macedonia".

“The Turks from Kicevo are closer to the Macedonians, whereby, the Turks from Skopje, Tetovo and Gostivar with the Albanians”.

The responses of the focus group at the national level are in the direction that “there are parallel histories that different communities perceive and “read” through an ethnic prism”.

## Do you think of other communities when memorializing an event that is important for your community?

**D**eclaratively, the majority considers that state and religious holidays belong to all and that holidays of other communities are respected. However, more care and attention is given to their own celebrations, even when awareness prevails that certain actions cause dislike to the other communities.

The Macedonians from the Municipality of Cair state that Independence Day, September 8, should be a holiday for everyone. Albanians from the same municipality, acknowledge that they know that the Macedonians did not like the celebration of the 100th anniversary of the Albanian flag, and that there is a kind of a revenge. They are aware that gunfire use is also a bad tradition, which further brings anxiety and distress to others.

The practice to congratulate a holiday to a member of another community generally refers to the religious holidays when, in the spirit of the old tradition, guests go visiting during Easter and Bayram.

A Macedonian from Tetovo replied that “when it comes to a public holiday, such as the Independence of Macedonia, only Macedonians go out. If it is a holiday that refers to the Albanian community, the same does not apply to us and we will not go out to celebrate”.

It is believed that most of the holidays are tied to the Macedonian national identity and that is the reason why the other communities do not share common points with them.

When speaking of the Ilinden Uprising, both Macedonians and the Albanians know well that the Krusevo Manifesto is a document that expresses the unity and the joint struggle on this territory. Still, an Albanian from Tetovo will note that this holiday is celebrated as the Macedonian uprising. "For now we are not taking this into consideration, but in the future, in a multiethnic Macedonia, it would be nice for these holidays to be mutual for all," he says.

There is also division in the memorialization of historic dates.

"If a school bears the name of a hero, and if both Albanians and Macedonians go to that school, only the Macedonians will honor and memorialize the hero. The same happens when the hero bears the name of an Albanian hero, the Macedonians do not respect and do not memorialize the hero", adds another member of the same focus group.

However, certain pragmatic considerations can be seen, which show understanding to the social context and reality.

"If I could be the one to write history, I would find common points that tie the various ethnic communities. I think that history should be written so as to reflect the real situation, to have coexistence with all communities that live here", noted one of the participants of the focus groups.

Similar thoughts are also found among participants of the focus groups from the Municipality of Kicevo, where it is underlined that: "Neither they think of us, neither we think of them. We are together when there is a certain manifestation organized by the municipality".

Regarding this question, the responses received from the na-

tional focus group are quite affirmative and in the direction that diversity should be fostered and respected. This view is mostly reflected in the following response:

"Macedonia is a mosaic composed of different stones. If some stones were to be moved, than the whole picture would break".

## The role of women in history?

There is almost no difference in the views regarding this issue, nor in terms of ethnicity and gender, or in terms of place of residence. Opinions are undivided in that women throughout history have been often marginalized, under-recognized and have acted more from the "background". Participants in the focus groups are convinced that there are changes in recent times, as women are more educated and dedicated to their careers.

The answers highlight that even though history remembers women who were examples of heroism, that still, their role was more at home in raising children and caring for the family. Special emphasis is given on her actions in the Second World War, especially in providing food and cover for the Partizans.

Some replies provide views in relation to the position of women, as the one given by a representative of the focus group of ethnic Macedonians from the Municipality of Cair, who sees women as executors of the will of men, where the role of Mara Buneva is mentioned. Whereas, Vera Jocik is given as an example of heroism and sacrifice.

The Albanian participants from the same municipality, underline that previously women had no rights, but that after the war in 2001 they now go out more often in public, have a social life and study. Mother Teresa and Ibe Palikuka are given as positive examples. Despite the persuasive view that gender equality can't be achieved, the following was still admitted: "Mistakes are not

made when a woman is consulted about something”.

Ethnic Macedonians from the Tetovo focus group highlighted that we live in a traditional society where the husband is the head of the family. When asked who they would point out as a positive example, they pointed out Krstena Menada, Ibe Palikuka and Mara Buneva, and from more recent times Dosta Dimovska and the current Minister of Internal Affairs Gordana Jankulovska, as a woman working in a “male portfolio”.

Their fellow citizens from the Albanian community share the same thoughts. They think that women throughout history have been discriminated, not accepted in society and had no key roles. “I think women should be more involved in state institutions and in society. Women think more reasonably and are more conscious than men. If we had women leaders in the past, we would have had fewer wars”, they said.

Members of Kichevo, regardless of ethnicity, especially value the role of women in the Second World War. Women, as they say, “prepared everything at home in order to enable partisans to come to this area, because the Kicevo region was transformed into a shelter for fighters from all over Macedonia.”

There are no major differences in the responses of the national focus group, where Mara Buneva is mentioned as an example of a female-executive, and Mother Teresa as a humanitarian.

The answer of one of the respondents is quite interesting who quotes an old folk wisdom, which states: “If you make a man literate, you have made man literate. If you make a woman literate, than you have made the entire nation literate.”

## Which individuals or groups are important for remembering the past?

The leader of the NLA and leader of DUI, Ali Ahmeti, continues to enjoy the greatest support among the majority of Albanians who participated in the focus groups. They indicate him as the central figure of their political corps. This is mostly due to the “credit” he is still “spending” from the conflict of 2001, as a person who brought the biggest changes for the Albanians. The glorification of the 2001 conflict has led to the point where in some of the answers participants avoided personalization and stating particular persons, and insisted on the importance of “whole UCK, from soldiers to generals”. The Mayor of Gostivar, Rufi Osmani, is also looked upon with confidence.

Even though the popularity of Ahmeti is undisputed, especially in Tetovo and Kicevo, still, in the Municipality of Cair, Adem Demaci, Arben Xhaferi and Tito have also been given importance. In addition to Ahmeti as a domestic actor on the political stage, “external” actors are also pointed out, such as former EU Ambassador to Macedonia Erwan Fouere, and current Chancellor of Germany Angela Merkel, as two significant figures for Macedonia’s path towards EU and NATO, and also for the rights of the ethnic communities in our country.

It seems as if though Macedonians are somewhat fed up and disappointed with the politicians, therefore members of the focus group avoid specifying particular individuals with the explanation that they do not see such worthy of mentioning. The focus group comprised of Macedonians from Cair, gives advantages to the politicians from recent times. They range between Kiro Gligorov, Branko Crvenkovski, Radmila Sekerinska, Boris Trajkovski, Gjorgje Ivanov and Nikola Gruevski.

The disappointment among citizens of Tetovo is especially seen

through views such as the following: "For me there are individuals and groups that will be remembered, but in a negative connotation. Perhaps NGOs will be remembered for their struggle for democracy, but they are also subdued in their actions by the policy which is currently lead". Director Milco Mancevski is stated as someone who could influence the promotion of Macedonia.

Defeatism is also seen through the prism of thinking that "politics affect the character of the state. History is changed on a daily basis. In the future, as part of the historical events, the young will be speaking about the Baroque in Skopje and the ships in Vardar".

The most dominant character in the selection of individuals by the focus group at the national level is the first Macedonian President Kiro Gligorov, nonetheless, Branko Crvenkovski, Nikola Gruevski, Ljubcho Georgievski, Stojan Andov Ali Ahmeti, Arben Xhaferi and Boris Trajkovski are also mentioned.

## Who declares holidays and build monuments?

There is an obvious impression that almost all the representatives in the focus groups, regardless of where they come from and which ethnic group they belong to, are all well informed about the procedures and processes of decision-making. This means they precisely know the institutional framework for adopting decisions on declaring holidays or building monuments. There is a clear distinction in that the local governments set the historic sites, whereas the central government the monuments. Also, there is no confusion in regards to who declares holidays and that this must pass parliamentary procedure in the Parliament of Republic of Macedonia. However, concerns that

the ruling parties are motivated by partisan objectives and that there is a disproportion in the number of holidays and monuments are prevalent in the replies.

The monuments are approached with particular critical observation, especially in terms of their number and cost and that they are used for “political elites to heal their frustrations”. Nevertheless, the long list of holidays is also not spared, for some of which are considered unnecessary and even politically motivated.

In one of the responses of a Macedonian in the focus group of the Municipality of Cair, it was concluded that “some monuments do not have the basic criteria for aesthetic value” and that “the current ruling party uses them for collecting political points.”

“The government is building, not the people,” stated a representative of the Albanian community of the focus group from Cair. The project “Skopje 2014” qualifies as unnecessary and discriminatory. Although there is a clear distinction that this project is not solely directed against the Albanians, remarks are that there is no need of so many monuments and that this troubles Macedonians as well, many of whom do not like it.

Macedonians from the Municipality of Tetovo resent the fact that nobody asks the citizens and that politicians make decisions on their own about everything. They also resent the fact that old World War II monuments are torn down and nobody undertakes anything to bring them back.

Their fellow citizens from the Albanian community generally believe that there are many more important issues on which the government should focus on, rather than the construction of monuments. As an example, they stated that boosting the economy and employment are of higher priority.

Albanians also see inequality in the declaration of holidays, as they have noticed that Macedonians have a larger number of

historical dates and religious holidays for celebration. In their view, monuments of prominent Albanians are lacking.

Kicevo Albanians comment that “the government declares holidays and builds monuments with their money as well”. They blame “those that we brought to power” for the monuments.

The national focus group considers that “the monuments serve the political elites in healing national frustrations”.

## Where does information on historical events come from?

**B**y enumerating the possible sources of information about historical events, we come to an overwhelming realization that alternative ways of getting to the truth about what happened in the past are used much more than traditional, educational resources, primarily history books. A conclusion has been made that this is not done out of curiosity and the need to upgrade knowledge, but much more due to the lack of confidence in the official educational contents, which is a result of the politicization of science.

Modern information technologies provide additional, namely alternative means for acquiring information and knowledge. The wide-scope of the Internet provides great opportunities, but also hides traps in the sense of visiting polemic forums and sources, which are unconstrained of the obligation to respect standards and are often a place for spreading hate speech and religious and national hatred. Support to such conclusions can be drawn from the responses of several participants in the focus groups.

“A little bit from school, more from the historians, from reading books and watching documentaries, from the family, from direct participants in events, and lately, from the Internet,” was

the listing made by one of the Macedonians of the focus group from Cair.

“We studied history from scripts, but there was nothing in the books regarding the Albanians”, noted a member of the Albanian community in the same municipality and added: “They talk about history wherever you go.”

Macedonians from the Tetovo focus group say that they are mostly informed by the “older generations and traditional stories”, but also through the Internet, books and family.

Even though some Albanians from the focus group in Tetovo concluded that “young people are not interested in history”, however, this has shown to be only partially true, as the majority of them are still interested in historical events and are informed through their families and the media.

The Internet is increasingly more becoming the main source of information, but people are aware that “there are many debates on the social networks that are filled with hatred.”

History books can’t be trusted, says one of the respondents, because if they are written in Macedonia than the Macedonians will be favored, if they are from Turkey, than the Turks will be favored.

Opinions are divided within the focus group at the national level regarding the traditional way of learning history. While some still believe that history books are the main source from which knowledge is derived, there are those who deny this and rely on other sources, primarily the Internet.

## Do men and women remember differently?

This issue has divided answers, but mostly agree that gender division should not be made. However, this refers to the absence of awareness on the differences in perception that are immanent in the sphere of gender relations. This is also confirmed by the views that “women are more emotional and men more frustrated” in the interpretation and observation of historical processes and events.

In addition to this is the view expressed by a female participant in the focus group of ethnic Albanians in the Municipality of Cair that states “regardless of which ethnic community they come from, men see war as a heroic act, and women perceive it as a tragedy, equally for all communities”

## Why is remembrance important?

There is no difference in the opinions as to why it is important to remember what happened in the past. The main point is that it is necessary in order not to repeat the mistakes of the past, because “history is a teacher of life”.

With a small dose of self-criticism, one of the members of the focus group from the Municipality of Cair said “we Albanians praise our achievements and sometimes, forget the good things, but remember the bad”.

There is consensus that those who made their mark on history and fought for certain rights should be recognized and given significance. Not failing to emphasize that “history is a mankind tool through which past mistakes can be learned”

It is not just the good things that need to be remembered, but

also the historical nonsenses, as one of the participants jokingly noted, because “each nonsense that has not been learned from the past brings a new one, which is not like the old.”

Reference is also made to another aspect of the human being, who “always needs to ask, investigate why, how and for what purpose something happened and, ultimately, whether it is true.”

Another interesting view is that “you must remember, even to pull back if something really was not that way, but happened in another way”. “The smart ones learn from other people’s mistakes and the stupid from their own”, was also found in one of the answers.

In the multitude of responses received, which want to come closer to the essence of why we should not forget, is that it is actually an investment for the future and future generations. “In order to build the future, one should not forget the past”. Or, to be more precise, we learn from the past what is a loss and what a benefit.

## Is there a forgotten event or something that should be deleted?

From the responses received concerning this question, it appears that ethno-centric celebrations equally trouble both the Macedonians and the Albanians, as they recognize political manipulation within them. Particular emphasis was given on the observance of October 23 (Day of the Macedonian Revolutionary Struggle), which is recognized as the day of VMRO-DPMNE and is given party-political colors. There is a critical attitude also in terms of which religious holidays are declared as national holidays. Some Macedonians also have a negative attitude towards

the holiday of the Albanian flag, which is experienced as a holiday of another country. As recalled, Macedonia is a multiethnic state, hence it lacks more common holidays that would act as the connecting bridge between the communities.

"I find October 23 to be non-sense. It is a holiday for the current political elite. But we all must celebrate it", was stated in one of the replies.

"The perception people have today concerning October 23 is linked to the political party in power. It is not seen as a holiday of the identity. It is not a holiday of all people", was the view of another member explaining why this holiday is considered unnecessary.

"I would never celebrate October 23. It is a national holiday, but only for a specific group of people. I would delete it as a holiday, because it encourages national intolerance. I do not experience Mara Buneva, Todor Alexandrov and others like them as defenders of the Macedonian identity", was another view given within this topic.

"I would replace the VMRO holiday with a holiday for the entire youth in Macedonia. Have an open day, where the young people would be present with a variety of activities", was the proposal of one of the participants.

With a certain amount of nostalgia recollections are that earlier there were fewer holidays, but were celebrated better.

"The Tetovo Liberation Day, November 19, is becoming less celebrated. Kids today do not know what it represents. Personally it bothers me that on November 28th the day of the Albanian flag is celebrated, especially in Tetovo. It is not logical, it comes as being imposed, as a holiday of another country", complained a member of a focus group of Macedonians.

Irritability in regards to the project "Skopje 2014" conveys

throughout the entire research, hence, also in some of the answers to this question, thereby, radical views could be heard such as the one of a Macedonian from the national focus group who said: "I would tear down all the bridges except the Stone Bridge". Another, member of the Albanian community says "I would replace the monuments of 2014, I would crush them. People need bread, not monuments".

Suggestions concerning which holiday should be on the list of holidays or has been unjustly forgotten and deserves more public recognition, are very diverse, and at times conditioned upon ethnic grounds. Therefore, names of figures were given such as Alexander Protuger, Josip Broz Tito, Metodija Andonov Cento, Nikola Kljusev, the writer of the first Roma primer, Shaikh Juzum, as well as the independence of Kosovo.

**Biljana Jordanovska**

in cooperation with  
**Sasho Talevski,**  
**Arbana Qerimi**

Based on interviews with:  
Vlado Popovski, historian  
Sofia Kunovska, actress  
Sreten Koceski, civil society  
Amdia Emini, civil society  
Vase Ogenov, retiree

Interviews

with representatives of

actors and stakeholders

Vlado Popovski, Historian:

## The historiography in Macedonia is exclusive

Professor Vlado Popovski connects the history of Macedonia with the historiography, which develops as a necessity with the creation of the Macedonian state, namely after ASNOM. The sources used for the preparation of the three volume "History of Macedonia" are from archives of other countries. The first history of Macedonia was written by Western historians who specialized in the Institute for National History of Macedonia. Nevertheless, the sources and documents that compose that history are chosen selectively. It covers only what is specific for Macedonia. The three volume history of the 1960's covers the period from the Antique period to ASNOM.

Since that first history is written only in terms of the Macedonians and their identity, Prof. Popovski recommends a new edition with the title History of the people in Macedonia, which would cover all segments of Macedonian history, all people, and if possible include historians of other ethnic communities. According to him, history is being politicized by the state and this affects all historiographies. It is the same as it was in the period of Yugoslavia during 1970-1990, where history was written by historians-purveyors creating an ideologically colored history that suited that government, namely Tito. He finds the basis for the objection and reason, why one such history is viewed as counterfeit, in the renaming of those works of historiography where it says Bulgarians, and are renamed into Macedonians. In order for the data to be valid, Popovski considers that an explanation should be given on where such a statement is coming from, rather than on making changes. However, throughout history, the Balkans have always depended on some policy to

create its history. In that direction, the impact and pressure are huge for each succeeding generation of history shapers. After the breakup of Yugoslavia, and previously the death of Tito, a need had been created to separate from that ideology and to justify the previous policy by the Macedonian side. Although there is no direct link between the historian and the politician, the impact that one has on the other is great and leads the historian to self-censorship. From that position, the historian believes to be defending the interests of the party, the politics, or is simply completely fostering the tradition of the historiography.

After the independence of Macedonia, MANU published the "Encyclopedia of Macedonia" and "History of Macedonians" by Mitko Panov, which contain the thesis that is massively favored today, and that is that we are directly related to the ancient Macedonians. The time when the Slavs settled and assimilated the local population is suppressed and explained otherwise. This manner of presenting history does not show its heterogeneous composition. "In creating the historical policy, or collective memory, policy does this overly exclusive and within the framework of its knowledge, which may not be identical to the scientific truths. It is strange how this does not even concern them", says Prof. Popovski.

This approach can lead to incidents and contradictions. The heterogeneity is crucial for the Macedonian history and this can not be denied. To ignore existence and participation in the historical events of a nation that actually existed in this region, and still exists in a large percentage, will only increase mistrust and according to Prof. Popovski will create symbols of zoning. That process is growing through the memorials. "There are unclear positions in regards to certain figures that are monumentally overrated and are in discrepancy with the role of the others, which also creates a division among the Macedonian part of the population. This is how traitors and patriots are qualified", states Prof. Popovski, and gives the example of ASNOM and Ilinden where affili-

ation to a particular party is determined, and depending on this, the meaning increases or decreases. It is as if ASNOM belongs to SDSM, and Ilinden to VMRO. These two events historically complement one another. During Yugoslavia, ASNOM was being favored, and now Ilinden on its account.

Regarding the question whether there is a possibility of accepting different opinions and interpretations of history, Prof. Popovski replies: "In Macedonia there are also other factors preventing the achievement of maximum mutual trust. Macedonians question the loyalty of the Albanians and think that they are constantly working for Greater Albania, whereby the Albanians doubt the sincerity of the Macedonians that they want to ensure equal treatment of all, hence Macedonian policy pulls towards affecting and increasing, the collective memory to be associated only with the Macedonian segment from the previous theses, and the Albanians remain with the idea of albanism and uniting". Those moments that unite us should have the same historical interpretation for all, while other events should be announced as historic facts.

In order to achieve success in the mutual understanding and in the direction of reconciling with ourselves and with history as it is, mass communication needs to be opened between the generations and the civil society, and individuals need to be the carriers of the topics. The question must be opened publicly. The state and its policies need to be transparent and open to the part of the historic policy that reflects the heterogeneous character of the Macedonian history.

"I sense that Macedonians are conservative as a nation, whereas the Albanian part is highly extreme in its requests. Diversity is wealth, if it is in terms of culture, tradition and religion, but only if real equality in the political and economic spheres is provided. At that point, every nationality is a resource, i.e. potential of the state. We have not started that issue at all", concluded Popovski.

Sofia Kunovska, actress:

## **Culture, history and remembrance are controlled by the ruling political parties**

**T**he biggest remark of Sofia Kunovska, in terms of the contribution of the local government in practicing culture, preserving memorials and in celebrating the more significant events in Macedonia, is directed towards the political elite that makes the decisions regarding all these issues. She considers that not only is the local government limited in its actions, but that it depends directly on the government. According to her, legal regulations are abused. The law clearly defines who is in charge of what, but it is not being respected.

An example is Skopje 2014. "Skopje 2014 was passed by the Municipality of Center during the governing of VMRO-DPMNE, and now that the Municipality of Center is not governed by them, all competencies have changed and the City of Skopje has undertaken them. But it is not the City of Skopje that is competent to do that," says Kunovska. The relationship with historians is obviously not good. If they are to evaluate which person or event in history should be memorialized, experience shows that their expertise and opinions are not respected.

As a multi-ethnic environment, Skopje is vulnerable to enormous political influence in all spheres. Excess history is being produced and instead of looking towards the future we are still trapped in the past. According to Kunovska, previously the political influence was at least trying to provide remembrance that represents a bright spot of the past for everyone, a good founda-

tion on which to build the future. It should serve as an example for the current political elites if they want a good and progressive position for the future. The things that are being done in terms of what history is promoted to the public, leaves room for doubt, and for each ethnic group to think and perceive history differently.

"I believe that on the account of the unsuccessful stories of Macedonia that this government is trying to root into our history, we have forgotten the only valuable historical episode for Republic of Macedonia, and that is the union of all nationalities in the struggle against fascism. We have such a lovely common story that history has shown to be accurate, as a story for the good side", says Kunovska. It is because of this rough action carried out for the needs of the political elites that all Macedonian citizens suffer.

"That is not history, it's some kind of a story that is being preached by politicians who have the need of returning us back in history because the present can not offer anything or it can not offer enough for us to deal with. Returning back in history confirms that there is a crisis in the present", concludes Kunovska.

In regards to what Skopje as a city remembers from history, and how it fosters those memories, Kunovska states: "In addition to the heroes of the Second World War that are being neglected, we are now witnesses to the fact where the proposals, regarding the individuals who should be remembered and celebrated, were given by the Association for spiritual unification of Setinci, Popadinici and Krushoradi from Florina with headquarters in Skopje, at the last session of the City of Skopje. It is an association for which we barely remember the name, which reportedly will donate five new monuments in Skopje. The mayor had no idea of which monuments were to be placed, or where they would be located".

The most significant figure for Skopje that should be marked and

honored in any such way, even though it is uncertain whether this individual even exists in the memory of the people of Skopje is Josif Mihajlovic. She says that if the current Mayor was asked about who Mihajlovic is that he would not know and would not be able to respond. According to her, Mihajlovic is the first serious mayor who transformed a village settlement into a city of Skopje, in only two terms. On account of this, the ancient history of Macedonia is being favored, which harms the Macedonian identity and creates enemies.

Regarding the question of how women are remembered in history and if there are any heroines among them, she replied: "A female hero is any woman who manages to deal with all the challenges of modern living. I would point out the women artists that marked the last century: Milka Eftimova, Milica Stojanovska, Nada Gesovska ... From the period of the Second World War I will point out Vera Hristova Jovic, holder of partisan monuments".

Sreten Koceski, Community  
Development Institute - Tetovo:

## **Civil society is an important participant in social processes**

Interethnic relations are a main priority of CDI, in particular, creating a functional multiethnic society in Macedonia. In relation to the questions regarding the remembrance of history and its presentation, among else, he believes that coexistence between ethnic communities is possible if the economy is improved. With its stabilization, tensions will also stabilize, and through business

cooperation opportunities will grow for normal communication between Macedonians and other ethnic groups. Politics directly affect how much one will gain in this respect, but in terms of historical experience and the manner in which it is interpreted in the public and in schools, politics are not involved.

Koceski considers that the interest for learning one about another is distorted by emphasizing the NGOs for the diversities that separate ethnic communities. Therefore, young Albanians nowadays do not know Macedonian. The Albanian language is used everywhere: in institutions, schools, the media, whereas, the number of classes in Macedonian language in the education is reduced. The interest and need to speak the official language is lost since the Albanian language can be used in the same way, says Koceski. There is no distinction regarding the use of languages, therefore the Albanians can not be productive members of the state as a whole. As a result, conflicts, tensions and mutual disrespect and violence arise.

A common point for all ethnic communities in Macedonia is Yugoslavia - highlights Koceski. The generally accepted opinion that under the umbrella of Yugoslavia people in Macedonia lived in harmony – is not true. Macedonians will never admit to the Albanians that in this period and on the territory of Macedonia they were repressed, imprisoned and did not have the same rights as them. That's why there are parallel histories, and why society is divided. His remarks are directed towards the small ethnic communities that do not express enough interest for achieving common objectives. Some things are imposed by law and therefore there is no confidence from either page.

From more recent history, 2001 is a year when Macedonia was invaded, whereby Tetovo the most: kidnapping, murder of civilians and military formations from all sides - recalls Koceski. Albanians are presented as defenders or as being attacked. The compromise with the Ohrid Agreement has no effect in practice.

Especially at the local level. The smaller ethnic communities are ignored, even though they are included in the agreement. They are accused of not being involved in the process itself.

As to how politics developed to a moment of conflict, Koceski says that the unrests of 1999 had an impact, namely, the crisis with the refugees from Kosovo. At the local level, in more recent time, the Law on local self-government and decentralization has made the greatest impact. The territorial division has not been carried out fully, as there is no financial aid.

According to Koceski, history should teach us what is right and what is wrong. It should be an incentive to make something new, and not to repeat the same mistakes. He personally learned history from his father who was a professor of history. The history his father lectured did not corresponded with the real history. There were certain events from the time of communism that were better not to speak of, as sanctions and serious consequences followed.

When speaking of heroes, Koceski concentrates on local figures of history within the Tetovo region. For him it is Goce Stojčevski-Ambarče and Todor Cipovski-Merdžan. He also mentions Čakalarov for whom he first heard of during an informative program on television. Women heroes or fighters, exist only during the Second World War. Nowadays he can't point anyone out, as he would have to select someone from politics. For him, politics today are only marketing and nothing else. In that direction, in the future there will be no heroes of nowadays from either sexes, because we live in a male society. The role of the woman now is to be a housewife, as it once was. If someone in the future should be remembered and marked in history, everyone first think of themselves and the function they perform. He believes that as an organization, CDI has contributed greatly to the community and that it will remain in the historical memory. He highlights the historian Brane Svetozarevic because of

his illustrative and informative display on the development of Tetovo throughout history. The decision at the local level on the manner of which history is remembered through memorials is adopted by the Municipality of Tetovo. There are problems with the monuments of WWII that have been replaced by other, new monuments. Although citizens reacted, the monuments have not been returned, thus leaving Macedonians revolted. The new monuments honor Albanian historic figures. In relation to the celebration and marking of historical events, Koceski is reserved. He does not celebrate anyone in particular, but also has no objection to their number throughout the year. Pertaining to the holidays that were once celebrated, but are now neglected, 1 May is outlined. According to Koceski, we are lacking trade unions and workers to go out publicly with their problems and in this manner mark the holiday. He sees the reason for their inactiveness in the economic dependence from the state and the fear to lose the privileges of the state support.

Amdia Emini, Association “Gajret”  
Kičevo:

## **Turks among Macedonians and Albanians**

**T**he Association was formed in 2003, first as parental board, and then organized as a non-governmental organization. It has 240 members, of which 30-40 percent are women. There is also a youth committee. All are volunteers. “Gajret” cooperates with all NGOs from Kicevo, Albanian, Macedonian and Roma. As an association they also have foreign cooperation with Turkey and their NGOs. They cooperate with TIKa and with the

Union of Turkish NGOs in Macedonia. Cooperation with the local government contributes to the construction of historical features and assistance in the education and culture of the Turks in Macedonia.

They cooperate with other ethnic communities as well. For holidays like December 21, the day of the Turkish alphabet, the day of the Turkish women, Bajram and other religious holidays they invite all other ethnic communities. Through their delegation they participate in celebrations of holidays of other ethnic communities, as well as national holidays. The political context greatly influences their relations during elections. There is always some bitterness on both sides on who to take the votes of the Turkish community. Upon elections everything is like nothing happened. Referring from personal experience, he points out socialism as one of the most essential historical moments of the history of Macedonia. Dissatisfaction existed, it was not perfect, but there weren't any ethnic tensions. Today the young look upon history from 2001 and onwards and interpret it in a political context. There is no interest to what happened before 2001. Earlier, the history of Turks was handed down from generation to generation, now efforts are made to convey this history also through education, but the problem is not only with the young people who have no interest, but also with teachers who are party colored. The authority for historical issues is in the older generations who endured it. In schools, in earlier time as well as today, wrong history is taught. Amdi Emini claims that not only does the winner write history, but that everyone interprets that written history as it suits them. Turks were under different types of pressures. At times they were referred to as Albanians, and at times as Turks. As of the 2001 conflict, Macedonians have resentment towards the Albanians, and to a lesser extent also towards the Turks. Within the structures of government, representatives of the various ethnic communities do co-operate, but share dislikes. Nationalism is the biggest problem in Mace-

donia. With the Ohrid Agreement the smaller ethnic communities gained greater rights in all spheres. Gotse Delchev and Tito are historic figures from whom we should learn. They were the greatest strategists. Kiro Gligorov is most worthy for the autonomy of Macedonia. Today there are no such people who would be remembered as heroes. Both Albanians and Turks were credited during the time of socialism, but also in more recent history. History should be accompanied with memorialization and conveyed to the young people, but the real one, not the modified history. The need to learn about each other should be emphasized, and also be reminded of how earlier it was possible to live together. Young people from all ethnic communities need to learn to cooperate and communicate and live together better than before. Turkish woman can not be found in heroic stories of the past. Home was her place. Today she is a modern and emancipated woman who actively participates in all areas that formerly were exclusively male.

## Vase Ognenov, retiree from Cair: **Remembering the Greek Civil War**

**V**ase Ognenov is a retiree who lives in a retirement home in Cair and is originally from Aegean Macedonia. He personally experienced the civil war in Greece and the emigration of the Macedonian population. He is originally from the village of Babčevo (Bapčor) which today does not exist, except for the church, which has remained in the village. His story begins with the abandonment of the village at the age of 7 years, when partisans of the main headquarters of the DAG (Democratic Party of Greece) issued an order for the children be taken out of the village during the night, as there would be bombings. They only passed through

Macedonia, on their way to Poland. After seven years spent in Poland he returns to Macedonia and has remained here, since after the completion of the war the Macedonians were not allowed to return to their birth place.

The most significant moment of history for him is the exodus. According to his words, the policy that Greece is leading from that historical moment when, with the help of America and England they acquired Aegean Macedonia, is inexcusable. "The Greek will not change his view...the policy remains the same"- says grandpa Vase, adding that the name dispute will never be solved.

Through nostalgia he remembers his parents who were partisans and fought for the liberation of Macedonia, and also recalls life in federal Yugoslavia. However, the process of gaining independence of Macedonia and September 8, Day of the independence, are most important for him, whereas, Kiro Gligorov is most worthy for the peaceful separation from the former Federation. From then on they can freely go to Greece and other places outside Macedonia without being harassed. He outlines the conflict of 2001 as a historical moment from more recent history. He says that the conflict was imposed from outside and that it contributed, through the Ohrid Framework Agreement, towards giving greater rights to the ethnic communities than Macedonians themselves have in their country. The reason for the constant complaining and dissatisfaction on their part can't be seen from here. "Their soldiers are not heroes" - he says referring to the fighters in KLA. They are fighting against the state, not for the state. Nikola Gruevski is a hero, since he was the first to address the issue of Aegean Macedonians and the return of their property. Now the most important thing for Macedonia is NATO and EU accession.

According to Vase Ognenov, the contribution of the ethnic communities throughout history is the reason why we still live together. He is a Macedonian, but the label Aegean Macedonians bothers him, as if they are a separate ethnic group. On that account, the other ethnic communities are responsible for the unrests and tensions. They are the ones who are withdrawing from life together. Policy

today influences how one lives with the other. Earlier there was equality, a middle class, and freedom of socializing and communication.

Things have changed since 2001, and danger is felt from the threshold of your own home. If we leave out the Albanians, the Roma in Macedonia are those who have greatest rights all over the world. Vlachs are recognized only in Macedonia. Their holidays are solely theirs. They are not mutual. Holidays should be within the framework of the history of the state. Skanderbeg can be celebrated, but an upheaval from 2001 should not be allowed to be marked. Among the neglected holidays he highlights May 25, Day of Youth, which is in honor of Tito.

"If it was not for Tito, Macedonia would have not been recognized. Just as we were not recognized in Greece. I miss socialism"- says Vase Ognenov. May 1 and 2 are not celebrated as they once used to be. They are also losing their significance. The most important thing for the Aegean Macedonians were the Bavčovski meetings, while those who fought were still alive. The initiator of the meetings was Gjoko Doneski. After his death no one replaced him, and the state is not interested in providing assistance.

Women have never been represented in politics. Women are mothers, caregivers. During the wars they were also fighters. Evdokija Foteva-Vera is his example of a woman heroin originating from Aegean Macedonia and who fought for liberation in the civil war. Lazo Trposki is a hero who deserves to be remembered.

History should be written by historians. The only valid history is the one by Blaze Risteovski. Macedonia does not need Albanians to create its history. Monuments of certain figures are a mistake. Those who were enemies and declared themselves as Bulgarians, should now be memorialized and celebrated. They should not exist in the Macedonian history (Example: Todor Aleksandrov, Tatarchev).

**Kreshnik Ajdini**

Mayors of the municipalities

of Cair, Tetovo and Kicevo

Izet Medziti,  
Mayor of the Municipality of Cair:

## **Decentralization is not substantially implemented**

“**T**he Municipality of Cair is in some way old Skopje. This can be seen through the large number of historical monuments. They are mainly from the Ottoman period. As an old part of town, there is always a need to foster these values. It is something positive and makes the Municipality of Cair more attractive, as Cair has the largest bazaar in the Balkans. We are doing our best to revive it and make it the busiest place in town” - said Izet Medziti, Mayor of the Skopje Municipality of Cair. But on the other hand, he complains of the limited funds for the municipalities – “We are dealing with decentralization of responsibilities and problems, but not with decentralization of funds. This represents a major problem for those municipalities that want and can. However, with the lack of finances they cannot meet the needs on the field, especially in terms of the culture and history. Thereby, we try to contribute to the cultural development and tourism through foreign donations. All of this supports the local economic development of the Municipality of Cair”.

In regards to the question whether the political context affects the culture of remembrance in the multiethnic environment of your Municipality and to what extent, Medziti says that he is the first mayor to arise as a result of the Framework Agreement. “I am the first Albanian mayor in the Municipality of Cair. In 2005,

we faced an administration that did not correspond to the reality of the municipality. Over the years we have contributed towards building the administration, the policies and investments a reality of Cair, and for all citizens to feel that it is their institution, where they can solve their problems, submit their requests and can also expect a rise in their living standard. The goal was for the Municipality of Cair to be accepted as an institution for all the citizens of the municipality”, he said, answering furthermore more specifically to the question: “Changes have also been made in terms of culture and history. Because Skopje was important also for the Albanians throughout history, and some elements of Skopje were eliminated during the communism and post-communism period. We have tried to bring some things back, but in the meanwhile trying not to overdo it. We set monuments of Skanderbeg and Hasan Pristina only. Financially, the setting of these monuments was covered partly by the budget of the Municipality of Cair, and the rest was from donations. The daily policy does have an influence, but we are trying to preserve the priorities of the municipality. This means not going into the past without having to work for the future”. Asked if he thought that different ethnic groups have different memories, the Mayor of Cair links his response to the current topic from the last presidential elections, when his party proposed for a “consensual candidate acceptable to all”. According to him, this is just symbolic of the fact that the more the decisions and institutions in Macedonia are consensual, the more the citizens will perceive them as theirs. “Regardless of ethnicity and religion, different as we are, we would recognize those institutions and events as common ones. On the contrary, with unilateral decisions on some events, the flag, the name, we will have different views and will perceive them differently. The Ohrid Agreement has contributed not only to Albanians, but also to other smaller ethnic communities to feel safer and more loyal to the state. I think it would be a good start when the Macedonian person will work for greater

implementation of the Ohrid Agreement and realizes that it is a common value and investment for a better perspective of the citizens in Macedonian. As long as the Agreement is implemented only by the Albanians and smaller communities, we cannot see these values as a common value”, he says.

Aside from the two monuments of Albanian heroes, Medziti indicates the placement of one monument of a Turkish poet and one Bosnian poet, for which these two ethnic groups have provided donations, but they have also received assistance from the municipality. The assistance was not large as he did not want to cut from the municipal budget, which would curtail other things more important for the Municipality of Cair. He gave this response in regards to the question which occasions, figures, events or periods of the past, in which manner and in which locations are fostered within the culture of remembrance of your municipality.

Mayor Medziti considers that history should not be too prevalent. Asked if there is a historical event, remembrance of a person or a celebration he would change, would stop to celebrate or would start to remember and celebrate, given that such are not remembered and celebrated these days, but should be, he replied: “I think we have over engaged in history. Some things should be returned, and some withdrawn. Actually, not as mayor, but as a citizen, I do not know what some of the holidays represent. I see monuments for which I am convinced that a good portion of the population does not even know what they represent. I believe that history should be appreciated. It should not be forgotten. Some things still need to be reduced and new ones should not be introduced. I would like to mention the case of Kale as a success story in promoting something in common. Instead of building a church, as was planned, a museum will now be built, which will include the Ottoman, Illyrian, Albanian and Orthodox period”.

With regard to the remembrance of women in history, he briefly replied: “There is a street in Cair named after Queen Teuta. By this, the importance women had throughout history in this region is reflected. There are others who have also contributed to the culture in other circumstances as well”.

## Teuta Arifi, Mayor of Tetovo: **We have a great need for the present**

**T**he Mayor of Tetovo, Teuta Arifi, at the very beginning of the interview complained about the lack of competence the municipality has over the cultural institutions. The main cultural institutions in the city are still under the protection of the Government, which determines which institution will receive funding and how much. “I am not pleased with what the institutions in Tetovo have received as funds from the Ministry of Culture, because they are a very small amount and depreciate the capacity that we have. For these reasons, we as a municipality, have managed through our fiscal policies to set aside funds for many cultural events. In the one year of work in the Municipality of Tetovo, the number of cultural events that have been organized corresponds to the total number of organized events in the past seven years. Since last year, we have started organizing Tetovo Cultural Summer. This year the event will run from June 16 to 26. We are covering it by ourselves, without the participation of the central government. We will increase the tendency to successfully draw funds for culture, as we draw funds for other areas”, she said.

Regarding the impact the political context has on the culture of remembrance, Arifi says that “we all function within the frame-

work of a political context and therefore the impact is great. My efforts are to have as many events as possible that are related to current affairs and the capacities of the city. The culture that encompasses current topics is more developed, whereas the culture of remembrance is less developed. I feel that we have a great need for the present”.

Do you consider that different ethnic groups have different remembrances? - is the next question, to which the Mayor of Tetovo replies: “Of course. We belong to ethnic communities that have different histories. That is why there are different figures that you remember and rarely are they common ones. The Balkan history depends on how it is being interpreted in the present. The problem with interpreting history affects the manner of remembering it. A common point where we should seek the connection is the period of the breakdown of the Ottoman Empire. At that point, the Albanians and Macedonians both had jointly defined and determined aspirations for freedom. The same applies to the period of the First World War.

In regards to the question which occasions, figures, events or periods of the past, in which manner and in which locations are fostered within the culture of remembrance of your municipality, Arifi replies: “In terms of the past, we consider Sarena Dzamija and the Teke as significant cultural facilities and religious buildings. As a part of history, here we have events associated with figures of the Second World War. Tetovo is a city that is associated with the family of Derala, the first defense minister in the first government of Albania in 1912. He is part of the history to which we can relate to. The birthplace of Kiril Pejchinovik is near Tetovo. Many of the schools bear his name. On March 7th we mark the Albanian Teachers Day, and on May 24th the Day of the Macedonian Educators. These events are organized by the municipality. Culture is a point where you can do much in terms of bringing communities together and that is why I am very ac-

tive in this field. We had a concert of the Macedonian Philharmonics, where it does not matter who the artists are, but what they produce. On June 22nd there will be a concert of the Kosovo Philharmonics, which will be complemented by seven members of the Macedonian Philharmonic.

In terms of the monuments and holidays, the Mayor of Tetovo says they are the responsibility of the municipality. "It is good to solve them first, and then see how we agree on the past", she says.

Whether she would change anything in terms of a historical event, remembering a certain figure or in terms of certain celebrations, Arifi says that the history and past cannot be changed. According to her, there is a part of history that differs according to ethnic lines. It refers to 2001. There are issues that I would expand in terms of 2001, rather than changing something. It is not a topic for discussion that needs to be discussed tomorrow.

She probably gives a most accurate response to the last question, if and how women are remembered in history. "History remembers men. History is not a great friend of women. It constantly forces us to look for answers why there are not more women writers, Nobel Prize winners, why are they not yet in the process. I think women are a big part of that process. They were a pillar that developed and supported that process, as of which we have all the great patriarchal figures through which the peoples of the Balkans are identified. They have played a great role, which is recognized so little. Women should insist on remembering their role in history, and not the figure. Seeking for individuals we will lose the battle. Why is this so? I will quote Virginia Woolf: Women did not have a room of one's own to close and 100 pounds a month to write books. That is why there were more men than women writers. It is therefore important to emphasize our role in the whole system, as opposed to how we have been discriminated against in that system. Then we can speak of

women figures in terms of remembrance. In terms of our history, women emerged from their femininity only to fight alongside men. We can take the first teachers as figures. On the Day of the Municipality, each year we give recognitions, according to the years of birth, to a female teacher and a male teacher in terms of their contribution to education. We are not the ones to speak for figures of the new political history, but others will do so for us”.

Fatmir Dehari, Mayor of Kicevo:  
**VMRO-DPMNE and SDSM  
were together in not  
allowing an Albanian  
to be a mayor**

**F**atmir Dehari is the first Albanian mayor of the municipality of Kicevo. He was elected in the local elections in 2013, as candidate of the Democratic Union for Integration. The agreement of several years ago, allowing for several villages inhabited by Albanians to join Kicevo, made it possible for an Albanian to become a mayor. This Agreement’s coming into effect was prolonged up to these elections. At the elections he ran against a candidate supported by the two major parties, VMRO-DPMNE and SDSM, which, although great opponents, “had” to merge in Kicevo and Struga, “in order not to allow an Albanian to guide these two municipalities”.

In an interview with Civil, Dehari says that each year his municipality increases the budget for the local culture. He hopes the Municipality will help the culture at the local level. However, he says that the needs and demands are always high and hopes

that the central government, the Ministry of Culture, will assist in the implementation of the various projects in Kicevo.

Regarding the question on the impact of the political context on the culture of remembrance in a multiethnic Kicevo, the Mayor Dehari replies: "Until now we have a good everyday inter-ethnic situation and I have not noticed any problem in this respect. Hopefully we will not have problems in the future. Culture is a concept that includes education, civilization, which means the highest standards in society. We will all contribute in the direction of not allowing politics or politicians to affect, at given times, the deterioration of relations, whether they be ethnic or interpersonal".

Regarding the question if he thought that different ethnic communities have different memories, he believes that this topic is interesting and requires a study approach. According to him, communities have different memories of events. But often people remember the same or similar events and it is quite inspiring for a new society. I think that people remember the same, common events relating to joint development and culture. Ultimately, we are all human and we should think about the other as we do for ourselves," said politician Dehari. Regarding the following specific question, which occasions, figures, events or periods of the past, in which manner and in which locations are fostered within the remembrance culture in this Municipality, he replied: "We are not performing any particular activity for the various historical activities, and the various international and local festivals. Kicevo has a prominent migration, and that is why we also have activities for the Albanian migrants. Depending on the requirements of the various communities, such as the Roma, the Turks, we have certain activities, such as the case of the Turkish alphabet, Roma Day and others".

It is very difficult to influence the feelings of people, he said, when asked if there is a historical event, remembrance of a per-

son or a celebration he would change, would stop to celebrate or would start to remember and celebrate, if such are not remembered and celebrated these days, but considers they should be. In continuation to the reply, he specifically mentions only the UCK (National Liberation Army), which launched an armed rebellion in Macedonia in 2001, of which he was a member himself. "I had frequent communication with the former UCK soldiers who celebrate different events of that period". The rest of the response resembles a moderate voice of a mayor of a multiethnic municipality: "Then there are other categories, taking into account the age. The fact is that there are historical events that are not significant in this period in which we live in, but there are historical events that are newer and some kind of an event can be organized for them. In a state or multiethnic community, it is always important to be careful not to influence the feelings, regardless of whether they belong to different ethnic communities or ages. Finding a solution that will also reflect the majority living in this city will be quite satisfactory".

Regarding the question of whether and how women are remembered in history, in addition to the general assessment that more attention needs to be put on woman, he once again recalls on the interethnic relations, more specifically, provides the answer to why he is not very specific in the previous answers: "Kicevo is specific for obvious reasons, we have a new municipality, one year has passed since its functioning, meaning we are still careful not to influence its interethnic fragility".

**Biljana Jordanovska**

Museums

Fostering cultures of remembrance in schools  
in the Municipality of Cair

Library "Koco Racin" - Tetovo

## Baki Aliu, Museum of freedom in Cair

The museum was opened on November 28, 2008, the day of the establishment of the Albanian state. It had great support from the Mayor of Cair, Izet Mexhiti and the DUI leader Ali Ahmeti.

“If we talk about the Albanian culture and values created in this region, in which different ethnicities live, we should take them as values created by the Albanians in Macedonia. If we starting from this, than the interest should also be from the different ethnic groups. Just as we are interested in the Ilinden Uprising, so should the other ethnicities be interested in our history”.

An example of cooperation between the ethnic communities in the past is that of Hasan Prishtina with representatives of the centralists of VMRO. Hasan Prishtina and Todor Aleksandrov signed a contract to fight together for the rights of the Macedonians and Albanians. Albanians cooperated with activists of the Macedonian cause in order to jointly solve the national issues of both the Macedonians and the Albanians”.

## Aco Nestoroski, Museum of National Liberation War in Kicevo

The museum covers the period from 1939 to 1945 for the events of World War II that took place in the western part of Macedonia, namely, Gostivar, Tetovo, Kicevo, Debar and Struga.

According to our communicator, the work of the museum is not fully independent. Permission needs to be requested from the Office for Protection of Monuments for any changes in the work or exhibits.

Cooperation has been enhanced regarding research projects with historians. During this period, there is an increased interest in the Ilinden Uprising. When we speak of the Ilinden Uprising we speak

only of Krusevo, but during this period several important battles took place in Kicevo, but they are unknown”, reveals Nestoroski. “There was cooperation between the Albanians and the leaders, and here there is no problem in regards to the other ethnic communities”.

“We need to act more boldly, everything needs to be published” - is the opinion of Nestoroska- “In history, for example, the Ohrid uprising is not mentioned, in which Macedonians and Albanians united against the Serbs. This was not published during the time of communism. Recently there have been some debates, but have remained outside of the institutions. From the Balkan Wars to World War I there are many such events that are not completely interpreted or are interpreted differently in history. My opinion is that history is written by politicians and not by historians”.

## Valentina Gavrilovska, Museum of Tetovo region

The museum was founded in 1950. It consists of the memorial house of Goce Stojanovski in which the Communist Party of SRM was formed, the Amam and the Arabati Baba Teke. After 2001, the Islamic Religious Community and the Bektashi took away the Teke from the Museum. Once the employees gained access, through OSCE, they revealed that the entire exhibition of the museum had disappeared.

The museum has the status of a national institution funded by the state, but cooperates with other institutions, such as the Embassy of the Netherlands. Since 2001, it mainly works on projects for co-existence.

However, there is not much success. “Previously, the Museum was visited by domestic and foreign tourists, but after 2001 it all stopped. After that, even friendships between the people in Tetovo came to an end”, comments Gavrilovska.

According to historical data, up until 1903 there were few Albanians and only Macedonian and Turkish were spoken in Tetovo and

Gostivar, claims Gavrilovski and adds: "In the list of those killed in the National Liberation War we have some Albanians as well. The names of some of those killed in the Second World War ended in "ić" because in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes the surnames of the Macedonians were extensively changed and as such remained on the list".

Gavrilovska can not indicate a politician or other individual who contributes to the cohesion and peace among the people in Tetovo. Nevertheless, she points to the music star Beni Shaqiri as the greatest Macedonian-Albanian. "Certainly there are some individuals who have accomplished something in this area. From among the politicians this individual would be Mersel Bilali, as through his columns I can see that he wants for all of us to live together. I do not separate people based on their nationality, for me there are only good and bad people"- concludes Gavrilovska.

## Fostering cultures of remembrance in schools in the Municipality of Cair

The CIVIL Research Team visited three schools in the Municipality of Cair, two primary and one secondary school. These are ethnically mixed schools. Two are trilingual and one is a bilingual school. In one primary school and one secondary school the principals are Albanians. In the second primary school the principle is Macedonian.

All three directors said that the initiative for communication and mixing classes was theirs. The directors have started working at this position within the last two years. A history professor was also among the interlocutors of CIVIL.

All activities, communicating and connecting children from different ethnic communities are part of a project supported by USAID or the Ministry of Culture and of Education.

According to their opinion there is good cooperation and interest

for coexistence and education among the children. They attribute their success indirectly on their good work and desire for progress. There are no tensions between teachers, only respect and understanding. That is the first lesson they want to convey to the students. From their experience they want to draw the positive side of mutual coexistence. Parents also contribute largely, as they fully support the schools in their efforts to contribute to society for peace and prosperity in regards to ethnics. The good communication they have with parents is also their contribution. Directors calmed tensions caused by fear of merging and the impact of such decision by giving good explanations and arguments, explaining the need for building good inter-ethnic relations among children.

The dissatisfaction among Macedonian professors, concerning the history textbooks, and the manner and the material that students need to learn from, was revealed through communication with the history professor.

“There are too many lessons regarding the history of the Albanian people. We do not teach them all. There are lessons on Skanderbeg, the formation of feudal families of Albanians, about the principalities. We do not have a sufficient number of classes to teach all these lessons. The history textbook is not made well. There are things that I haven’t learned about the Albanian history. Now I must first learn in order to be able to present it to the children. There is just too much on the Albanian people. To learn the history of people is fine, but on this scale, only if you live in Albania. “ - said the history professor at one of the primary schools.

“Children now, unlike older generations, are less interested in history. Macedonian history facts are very compressed. Very little is taught about the NLS and Yugoslavia. Everything is dull. I try to extend the lesson”, says the history professor.

## The Library "Koco Racin" - Tetovo

The research team of CIVIL visited the "Koco Racin" Library in Tetovo. Due to spatial reasons, the books are not arranged according to subject. However, in the Kobis system that keeps track of books, search can be easily performed. Fiction books are among the most read books, but there is also an interest for books on history. The total fund of books is around 140,000 books, some of which are not available, since they do not have enough space where to place them.

Most books on history are in Macedonian - 708 titles. There are 271 titles in Albanian. Furthermore, there are titles available in English (18), Serbian (390), Slovenian (2), Bosnian (8), Russian (5), Turkish (8), Bulgarian (2), German (2) French (5) and Romany language (2).

There are a total of 649 books on the history of Macedonia, as follows:

Macedonian language – 582, Albanian language – 45, English language – 15, German language – 1, Croatian language – 9, Serbian language – 16, Russian language – 3, Turkish language – 2, Bulgarian language – 2, French language – 4, Romany language – 2.

The library has 15 books that include the Ilinden Uprising in the title, whereby the National Liberation Struggle is found in 16, and the conflict of 2001 in 17 book titles, which are at the disposal of the library. These data refer to items allocated only by their title, and not by the contents.

Library statistics indicate that the average circulation of literature on history ranges around 8 samples per month. In the period when final topics and essays are being prepared, the number of historic books borrowed from the library range from 15-16 books a month.

**Part I: Biljana Jordanovska**

**Part II: Sasho Talevski**

**Part III: Arbana Qerimi**

**Part IV: Kreshnik Ajdini**

Overview of selected online and print contents dedicated  
to the historical events covered within the survey

## Part I

### Ilinden Uprising

The Ilinden Uprising in the Kicevo region is less exposed. All submitted facts indicate the importance and contribution to the fight for independence. On this occasion, the Kicevo museum has published two editions with the same topic. "Ilinden Uprising of 1903 - military training and course of the uprising-Kichevsko" published by the Institute of Military History; Sofia 1992. The title "Kichevo and the Kichevo area during the Ilinden Uprising", has also been translated into Macedonian and published by the "Museum of the western area in the NLS", 2013, Kicevo.

Comparatively, the facts overlap with small variations. In terms of the Bulgarian edition, the author himself a historian, had problems with the material that was to be published. This is why there is a remark in that all references pertaining to Bulgarian and Bulgarian uprising refers to Macedonian and Macedonian uprising. People in the villages of the Kichevo area that were influenced by the Serbian policy declared themselves as Serbian, whereas during the mobilization they were mobilized as Bulgarians. This is considered as one of the successes of the Bulgarian (Ilinden) uprising. In the Macedonian version no such data exists. It has been mentioned that these villages joined later. The Ottoman slavery, the struggle against the Turks are written under one name in Bulgarian documents: the occupier. The time at which the uprising started is between midnight and one o'clock, but it is not known exactly. The Macedonian version indicates that it began exactly at midnight. The problem with the danger expected from Albania was solved strategically, by placing units on the side that would watch out for any intrusions. The Bulgarian version achieves neutrality with the Albanian dignitaries. In regards to the number of troops there are differences on both sides. The same applies to the number of villages that were burned down. The bloodiest battle, and one of the few successful, took place in Gjurgjeja. The Bulgarian documentation does not mention it.

The Ilinden Uprising, in general, did not cause any surprises for the

elites then in Greece It was expected that the Macedonian Revolutionary Organization would organize an uprising. The Greeks considered it as a Bulgarian organization. The Greek government itself, and various associations in Greece worked against the insurgency, according to sources in Macedonian language. (Yearbook, Faculty of Philosophy, Greek reactions to the Ilinden Uprising, Dalibor Jovanovski)

The connection with the Albanian population in Macedonia against the Turkish government has its contradictions, not only by the Macedonian interpretation for their participation and contribution, but also among Albanian history groups. There are different definitions and interpretations of the Ilinden Uprising. According to Prof. Halim Purelku, the Albanian historiography itself has omissions. The Macedonian historiography has been accepted for the direct involvement or passive role of the Albanians in the uprising, without a critical view. The demand of part of the population in Albania to voluntarily join the fight against the Turkish government is mentioned nowhere, nor does it mention the Albanians who actively participated in the suppression of the uprising.

Historian Zejna Mazlami has a different view. He emphasizes the equality of the Albanians with the Macedonians and Vlachs in that period. The fight against the Ottomans as a common cause contributed to equal treatment of all people. The most notable Albanians were among the Bektashi. There was cooperation between Albanian nobles and Macedonian revolutionaries. Mazlami emphasizes the cooperation between Pitu Guli and Germen Temistokoli. Albanians are the ones who gave the greatest contribution in supplying arms to the rebels. According to Mazlami, weapons came from different places, especially popular are the following supply lines Ohrid -Pogradec and Tetovo-Kicevo. Great contribution was given by Albanians from the villages of Eleovo, Negovan, Balkamen and Dolni Kotor, the surrounding area of Florina as well as villagers from Zhitoshe, Nerovo, Aldach near Prilep,

Mazlami continues with the facts on the relationship between Albanians and Macedonians. Apart from the joint position on the delivery of weapons, Macedonian historian-Albanologist, Dr. Katerina Todoroska, also highlights the traditional individual links that connect

these two people. However, a conclusion can be made that they were not strong enough to jointly fight and resist foreign interests. During the organization of the uprising, Macedonian revolutionaries were having problems in winning over the Albanians. The biggest obstacles were the religious differences and the role they played in the Ottoman Kingdom. Nevertheless, through referrals of family and friendship connections they managed to win many of them. They even received information from Albanians working in the Ottoman administration. Dr. Todoroska indicates Belal Arif Nadzhak as the most prominent among Albanians, who participated in many battles and was wounded twice. For his contribution to the fight for the Macedonians people, the Presidium of the People's Republic of Macedonia granted him an Ilinden honoring and pension.

The international community, on the other hand, interprets the uprising from a different perspective. In several occasions, Boris Serafov is mentioned as the creator of the uprising. The goal was an international intervention after the massacre by the Turks, as was predicted if the uprising were to be realized. However, no matter how serious the initiative was, many newspapers of that period wrote about it with ridicule. The motto of Serafov "intervention or revolution" helped only to monitor the situation in the region. The position of the UK was expressed by Prime Minister Balfour in the Lower House of Parliament. In his words, criminality is more prevalent amongst the revolutionaries rather than the Turkish authorities. If the ultimate goal of Macedonia is to create an unbearable situation in the region, at the cost of general peace, with the purpose to engage Russia or Austria in intervening, than the United Kingdom will withdraw from such a policy.

The article titled "Inevitable massacre" states that on the fourth day of the Krusevo Republic, the Turkish government decided to crush the revolution through extreme measures. They considered that it was best to make use of the Albanian war. Britain's position remains that the Turks need to settle the unrest in the Port (Empire) and that revolution will not spiral out of control because there are no funds to maintain it.

At that time, New York Times also issues an article that states: "In no way are those who call themselves Macedonians - descendants of

degenerated Slavic tribes and drifters who followed the first Christian crusades - worthy of any sympathy". For this, the Secretary of the Macedonian Committee in America, Vladimir Andreev Canov, responds: "On Monday you wrote about the Macedonian revolution, yet, you don't realize that it is a repetition of the events of 1776, with one exception - the revolution in Macedonia is not like the revolution in America, because people with different skin color are not fighting, rather equal Europeans".

The Germans had the biggest concerns for the Balkan countries. Because of their relations with the Ottoman Empire and their mutual interests, the two countries signed an agreement to undertake joint initiatives to improve the situation of the population in Macedonia. Although they also came to a joint compromise on the issue of reforming the administration, the judiciary and other departments, the Turks were previously determined to sabotage such reforms. These are the so-called Murzsteg reforms, given upon the proposal of the English government, and agreed with Russia and Austro-Hungary. The plan for remapping the Balkans can be seen from the notes of Count von Below, former state chancellor of Germany:

... the Minister (Minister of Foreign Affairs Count Goluhovski) noted that he would not indulge in the autonomy of Macedonia, He would never allow the establishment of a Greater Serbia or Greater Montenegro, just as there is no way for Constantinople to belong to Russia or the formation of a large Slavic state between the Adriatic and the Danube... Count Goluhovski kept mentioning that he would try as far as possible to maintain the status-quo, whereas, the Eastern issue could be later resolved in phases. His ideal is obviously to replace the Turkish rule with an autonomous state, and if possible, create a greater Greece, greater Romania, greater Bulgaria, weak Serbia, small Montenegro, and at the end form an independent Albania.

An article in Nova Makedonija titled Macedonians themselves are re-touching the Ilinden Uprising, provides an answer to the question on how 1903 and the Ilinden Uprising are memorialized today and states that in the consciousness of the Macedonians the Ilinden uprising sums up to 10 days of Krusevo Republic. The main figures Nikola Karev and Pitu Guli, Boris Sarafov, Anastas Lozanchev, Jane Sandanski, Gjorche

Petrov and Vasil Chakaparov are just some of the names that are not only forgotten but in some cases even disputed. According to the author of the article, the Macedonian people either don't know or they accept not to know that the Krusevo epic is just one of the episodes of the Ilinden Uprising. It ends on August 13, at a time when fighting has just started in some parts of Macedonia. The list of the prohibited is supplemented with Slavejko Arsov from Resen, who fought during entire September with his revolutionaries. When he realized that the struggle was hopeless, he fled with his revolutionaries to Bulgaria. Pando Kljoshev of Kastoria states in his testimony that they had been ruthlessly persecuted by the Turks in the period from September 17 to October 17. Luka Dzerov, the Vojvoda who led the unsuccessful attack on Kicevo on August 3, wrote that the rebellion had officially come to its end on October 10. The question of the author is, if from 1945 to 1990 this piece of history was not supposed to be recorded in the collective memory of the Macedonian people, what is the reason for this tradition to continue to this day?

## The myth of Tito's Yugoslavia

Taki Fiti, a University Professor, believes that the contribution of Tito's Yugoslavia, in that today everyone says that back then they lived better and could plan the future, is the economic system. As the Professor states, the economic growth of up to 11% in the sixties and seventies contributed to the popularization of the communist ideology. In the early eighties it was brought to a "soft budget constraint".

"The money in the budget came from successful companies, thus, they became below average. The economic efficiency, without which no system can exist, suffered in the same way and that is why therefore that socialism failed"- says Prof. Taki Fiti.

What later continued as a rule of economic decline, Prof. Risteski, blames it on the wars, the destruction and closure of markets. States that emerged from the breakup of Yugoslavia would have continued with their development. He refers to Sweden as a country that has developed as a socialist country in parallel with Yugoslavia, but has combined the demographic and economic development in a better way.

Loretta Jakovleva-Georgievska, University Professor of the Institute of Literature, explains such a state of blindness from a different perspective. The fact is that many believed in the story of Tito's Yugoslavia. That story, in a way, has grown into a myth. However, just as a certain time is subject to being mythologized, so comes the time in which myths are brought down, and demythologized. And as in every myth, we have heroes and "scapegoats". Perhaps for the heroes and those who believed in them, Tito's Yugoslavia is a positive utopia, whereas, for the "scapegoats" - a negative one"- says Jakovleva-Georgievska.

When it comes to saving Macedonia by joining federative Yugoslavia, the idea of Ilinden supporters is questioned, as they did not see the merging with Yugoslavia through the prism of unity. That is why, changing of the ethnic composition in Macedonia is emphasized, the ethnic problems occurring in Macedonia as well as the devastating role of the communist ideology on culture and art. The fact that only the good moments of that time are remembered, and the bad have been removed somewhere else in the collective memory, shows just how independent Macedonia actually was. The state terror against all opponents of the regime only proves this thesis. From the conclusions of the web portal Macedonian nation, it remains an open question on the role of the VMRO of Vancho Mihailov at that time, namely, the silence in relation to the charges and the linking with the political prisoners, and the call for a terrorist organization. The goal was the elimination of the memory, meaning and ideals of VMRO. Why were they silent? As an example of the repression of the regime, the same source states this information: According to unofficial data, in the period 1949-1951, 7330 high school students were imprisoned, whereas, 2,500 political prisoners were imprisoned only in the prison of "Idrizovo".

## Vrhovists

By definition, Vrhovism is the implementation of Bulgarian policy towards Macedonia and the Macedonian issue. Vrhovists come from the ranks of supporters of Ivan Conchev (organizer of the Gorno Dzhumaja Uprising and participant in the Ilinden Uprising). Vrhovists considered that Macedonia and Edirne could be liberated only from Bulgaria. All

those implementing the policy of Bulgaria towards Macedonia, in any which way, are called Vrhovists.

Since the establishment of VMRO and previously TMORO, there are controversies about the ideology for which they fought. It is undisputed that the common denominator is their struggle for an autonomous and independent Macedonia, but VMRO encouraged this within the framework of Bulgaria. Returning certain figures to the scene, who have been characterized as bugarophilles, vrhovists and traitors, reevaluates the position of the ruling VMRO-DPMNE and its political history creation. Whether they should be taught of is not an issue, but their role needs to be characterized as a positive or negative one. According to several online sources and forums, Vancho Mihailov developed VMRO into a terrorist organization when he became head of the organization in 1928.

## Part II

### Overdue historiography

One can speak of an institutionalized Macedonian historiography only for the period after the establishment of the first modern Macedonian state in 1944, and with the opening of the possibility to partially use the archives in the neighboring countries. (***Darinka Petreska and Violeta Achkoska - "Establishing History"***)

Until then, and further on, traditions passed down through generations mainly remain the sources of creating collective memory, without any additional scientific testing and analysis, and partially burdened with understandable bias, due to the sense of belonging in their community and with the constant interweaving of facts with myths and legends.

The first more comprehensive work that has developed is the three-volume History of the Macedonian people in 1962.

## Heterogeneous concept of history

Five new volumes of the capital edition "Macedonian temptations" were presented today at Gate "Macedonia". The publications are devoted to figures and historical events that left deep traces in Macedonian history, Goce Delchev, Vasil Chakalarov, Todor Aleksandrov, Risto Shishkov and the Balkan wars. The promotion was attended by Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski, Minister of Culture Elizabeta Kancheska-Milevska and the chief editor of the "Macedonian temptations" Rade Siljan ... The Minister Kancheska-Milevska stated that this edition offers scientifically verified facts, arguments and interpretations that speak of the long history of the Macedonian struggle for statehood and independence ... Through this edition the citizens of the Republic of Macedonia will be able to gain knowledge on the known and unknown areas of our past, on the most important events and processes in more recent history of Macedonia, the combat code of the Macedonian people and its revolutionary and spiritual force in the realization of its state-building goals, stated Kanchevska-Milevska. The "Macedonian temptations" anticipates printing of 25 exclusive publications that are enriched with documentaries, whereby, nine editions have been promoted until now. **(Ministry of Culture of Republic of Macedonia)**

Member of Parliament of DPA, Bekis Fazio, tore up the proposal of the Program on commemoration of memorial events and significant figures of 2013 and threw it towards the President of the Assembly, Track Valjanovski. One part he threw to the assembly hall, looking towards the rows of DUI. According to Fazliu, DPA is dissatisfied with the selection, but also with the cultural events that are anticipated for Albanians in Macedonia and accused DUI for not including important dates for the Albanians. **(MK News - "Fazliu tore the program on commemorations and threw it to Veljanoski")**

## Ideological coloring of history

In the period between the establishment of the modern Macedonian state within the Yugoslav federation from 1944 until the independence of the Republic of Macedonia in 1991, Macedonian historiography developed within the framework of the established general Yugoslav ma-

trix, in particular, within the Yugoslav federation, a country with communist provenance. In the interpretation of history, more specifically, in the instrumenting of history in favor of the communist ideology... intellectuals, politicians and publicists took part, even revolutionaries and party cadres who not only by vocation were not historians, but even some who barely had a solid secondary education or did not even have that, but were simply communist party cadres with a communist-party education, without theoretical and methodological training in the field of historical education. They were given the task to interpret history according to the imposed Marxist-Leninist theory and the general Yugoslav patriotism. (***Darinka Petreska and Violeta Achkoska - "Establishing History"***)

## Selection and falsification

In the interpretation of historiographical data and the selection of historical facts, a selection is made of historical facts, events and figures, which is carried out in two directions. As an external selection, which means the exclusion of outside historical elements, regardless of their relevance in the production of historical processes and the exclusion and selection in terms of one's own historical elements. This selection is equally motivated by ideological, political, religious, traditional and other reasons. (***Strasko Stojanovski - "The role of national history in building collective memory"***)

Many do not even know that the Ohrid Uprising took place. VMORO in cooperation with the armed Macedonian Albanians raised an upheaval against the Serb forces, the so-called Ohrid–Debar Uprising in the southwestern part of Macedonia in September 1913, one month after the Treaty of Bucharest. The Tikvesh uprising was raised 3 months earlier. Due to political and ideological reasons, these uprisings were banned and condemned to be forgotten. (***Ljupcho Zoreski - "Ohrid-Debar Uprising 1913"***)

The fact, that part of the MRO was in favor of the annexation of Macedonia to Bulgaria, and that the terms Christian, Greek-Christians and Bulgarian patriarchates were replaced with Macedonians, is concealed. (***Strasko Stojanovski - "The role of national history in build-***

### *ing collective memory”)*

Within the official Macedonian historiography, numerous activists, revolutionaries, figures who were significant for the nation but were unsuitable for the ideology, were disgraced or excluded from the collective memory of the Macedonian people through different methods of repression, agitation, one-sided interpretations, control over historians and etc. (***Violeta Achkoska - "Historical and contemporary Macedonian paradoxes and the case of Venko Markovski"***)

The reason why the Partisan Unit of Skopje was outlawed is tied to the role of Shatorov in the communist and national movement in Macedonia and his conflict with the leadership of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, in particular, the rise of Koliševski. Forgetting the role of the Unit is part of the encounter between Tito and Sharlo, whereas the attempt to erase Sharlo from history is in the same manner as is the attempt to erase Pavel Shatev, Cento, Panko Brasnarov and others. National hero Vera Aceva in a letter addressed to Tempo said: "Shortly after the liberation, during a broader meeting of the Central Committee of the CPM, Kemal Sejfula, who was a fighter in the first Partisan Unit of Skopje, stood up and raised the issue of why the anniversary of the unit is not marked? Then, surprisingly, Koliševski had responded before the attendees and begun declaring that the First Skopje Partisan Unit did not exist. (***Ego - "Facts and Falsifications"***)"

## Politicization

On October 23, Gordan Georgiev from SDSM states: "Neither have we celebrated this holiday, nor do we intend to celebrate it, because we think that it is established in order to carry out party political manipulations with the citizens. It would be best for VMRO-DPMNE to change its name to DPMNE only, and say that the legacy of the historical VMRO belongs to all citizens, not just to one party. Then we will all celebrate this holiday". (***Utrimski vesnik***)

Silvana Boneva from VMRO-DPMNE, however, believes that the party holiday can not be paralleled with the national holiday of the Macedonian Revolutionary Struggle, therefore, the absence of SDSM is in-

excusable. "It is the Macedonian Revolutionary Struggle Day which is dedicated to the victims of today's free, sovereign and independent Macedonia, and it is not a holiday of VMRO-DPMNE and should thus not be disgraced in that manner". (*Utrimski vesnik*)

"The idea of a united and independent Macedonia can not be politicized, because it exists, particularly to the people. The struggle for an independent state unites all options that emerged in the previous period, from 1893 and the establishment of VMRO, until ASNOM in 1944. That is why Metodi Andonov-Cento, Panko Brasnarov, Pavel Shatev are present at its session, but the communists are not" - historian Todor Cepreganov answering the question whether the current party/media divisions upon the question if the second Ilinden is the work of anti-fascism and communists or that the independence is VMRO-DPMNE's idea only, and if September 8 is not a motive for uniting all citizens? (*Alexander Chomovski - "Independent Macedonia - history in motion"*)

## Renaming of streets and memorials

Mass renaming of streets is taking place at the proposal of the ruling party VMRO-DPMNE, which sparked a reaction from the citizens and the opposition SDSM. There were shattered windows, tension, anxiety and accusations of treason before the Skopje City Assembly after dozens of mainly SDSM supporters tried to enter during the session dedicated to renaming streets. "Today our history is deleting Stiv Naumov, a hero, sacrifice, for a free and independent Macedonia, and instead of him the name of the greatest executioner of the Macedonian people, Todor Aleksandrov" is written", accused SDSM. (*Grid*)

On the other hand, historian Vlado Popovski justified the act of renaming streets as a necessary objectification of history. There are names that have completely lost their importance for the City of Skopje and inclusively or cumulatively also for Macedonia, which were names of little known partisans, communists in the communist movement or in the partisan movement in other republics, which part of them in the republics in which they were born are no longer in to the system of streets... There will be naming of streets with names of prominent

revolutionaries of VMRO which due to ideological reasons were not mentioned during the previous system". (**Vlado Popovski - MIA**)

Historians believe that the streets of Milan Milutinovic, Kumrovec – the birthplace of Josip Broz-Tito, Vasilie Djurovic, July 7 - Day of the Serbian Uprising, Rudo (BiH town where former YNA was formed), Socijalisticka Zora - socialist newspaper, Nadezhda Krupskaja - wife of Lenin, Ho Chi Minh, Boris Kidrich, Sedum Skoevci, AVNOJ... should leave history and be replaced by Macedonian revolutionaries and figures and events that have contributed to the Macedonian state. Their accomplishments will remain recorded in history, but there is no need for streets in Skopje and Macedonia to be named after them- says historian Gjorgji Chakarjanovski from the Institute of National History. The debate about whether it is necessary to change the names of the streets in Skopje has heated up after the Council of the City initiated the procedure for changing the names of streets, squares, boulevards and bridges in the metropolis. (**Mariela Trajkovska - "Suggestions from historians regarding names of streets in Skopje"**)

Hence, for that profile of historical figures associated with the national identity or cause of Macedonia, who were not communists or for those communists who also particularly fostered the national line such as Kuzman Josifovski Pitu, for example, later on Mihajlo Apostolovski... such monuments certainly are lacking... There would be arguments that monuments should not be made in times of crisis if we fall behind, or if this proves to be fatal, but I do not believe in it. Critics of this thesis have not only not built monuments, but also many other things, and the budgets within 12-13 years have been spent to the last denar". (**Vlado Popovski BBC**)

## Different interpretations

The period of Yugoslavia is differently interpreted by the two major parties. On the one hand, the left historiography still glorifies the importance of Yugoslavia for Macedonia, while the right historiography qualifies this period as repressive for the idea of the independence of Macedonia, and also as a period in which under the ideological torture of the Communist Party many Macedonians were sentenced to prison

and repressed because of their nationalist concept. Feelings towards this period also differ among citizens. Even after 70 years after the establishment of Yugoslavia, the economic-political and cultural character of the former Yugoslav community is questioned, which is based on decades of Yugo nostalgia. (***"Does the myth of Tito's Yugoslavia live'- Telegraph MK***)

My generation and the ones close to it nostalgically recall of the common Yugoslav art scene, the art of activism and the free flow of information. However, even with the small breakthrough of young artists in that scene (with some exceptions) the awards for the duo Unkovski-Stefanovski remain engraved in my memory, says culturologist Loretta Jakovleva-Georgievski. (***for Talegraf MK***)

November 29 is the real national holiday of Macedonia. That is when the Macedonian state was created. August 2 is just a confirmation to the decision of AVNOJ. If during the session of AVNOJ it was decided for Macedonia to be Province of Vardar, we still would have not had a country, just like Sumadija and Dalmatia. (***comment of a reader in Utrinski Vesnik***)

Have you ever asked yourself why is it that the session of ASNOM was held exactly on August 2-nd. Continuity was sought even back then. Good for Tito, but this depreciates the people who had given their lives for Macedonia. (***comment of a reader in Utrinski Vesnik***)

November 29 (2011), the former Republic Day, was not marked in Stip by anyone. Nobody even reminded about the importance and role of the Second Session of AVNOJ. The quick forgetfulness of important dates and events for the Macedonian people speak that disrespect to the past is disrespect to the future. (***Radio Stip***)

In January 1945, through a special, secret mission for the definitive isolation and removal of the President of the Presidium of ASNOM, Metodi Andonov-Cento, Dr. Darko Chernej, head of department for building the people's government in NKOJ, arrives to Skopje. In conversation with members of the Trustee for the construction of the people's government and with Vice President of the Presidium of ASNOM, Lazar Kolishevski, Cernaj proposed for a new administrative division of

Macedonia to be conducted. Statement of Alexander Rankovic "Cento is using every situation against the party. In Macedonia we must always have one reliable friend". Then after, in this context, Rankovic concludes: "Lazo is the best, most positive friend."**(Blaze Minevski - "How Tito performed a coup on the Presidium of ASNOM")**

It would be harmful and unworthy to throw out Yugoslavia into the landfill of history. History itself will punish him who will try. **(Predrag Matvević - "Yugoslavia will not end up in the landfill of history")**

Two views prevail among Macedonians:

1. Without Tito Macedonia would have had more than it has now.
2. Without Tito Macedonia would have not had what it has now.

Opponents of Tito mention the fiercest repressions against the opponents of Yugoslavia, against the supporters of the idea for an independent Macedonian state. According to unofficial data, during the period 1949-1951, 7330 high school students were imprisoned, whereby, only in the prison of Idrizovo 2,500 political prisoners were imprisoned. In relation to the number of those persecuted, imprisoned and convicted for having different political beliefs than the existing communist regime, the 14,000 political records that were kept by the State Security Service at the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the 22000 prison files of imprisoned political individuals in the Idrizovo Prison, or a total of 36000 files, speak enough of the situation. The leaders of the Second Macedonian Ilinden did in no way perceive Yugoslavia as a unitary community, rather as a state formation in which Macedonia would largely be independent. **(Macedonian nation)**

Kuzman Josifovski – Pitu, Mihajlo Apostoloskil, Metodij Shatarov - Sharlo, as individuals who through their acts marked the heroic four-year epic after which the Macedonian people put the foundations to their country, are just some of the dozens of heroes who are deeply rooted in the National Liberation Struggle, for an act, which seems, has still not been sufficiently investigated nor marked with dignity. **(Branko Gjorgjevski - "Tito and Tempo destroyed Macedonian heroes")**

## Controversial figures

The political execution of Metodija Andonov - Cento was a process that involved many people, but the key figure in that was certainly Lazar Koliševski, whereby Kardelj is one of the main people to order this. Being the most important political figure at the time, Koliševski had to have the deciding word about the arrest of Cento, considers first fighter Pero Ivanovski - Tikvar. **(Branko Gjorgjevski - "Lazar Koliševski gave amen for the removal of Cento?")**

Is part of history going to be reviewed in relation to the treatment of Metodija Shatorov Sharlo, for whom we were taught that he was an enemy of the Macedonian people? Upon the removal from the head function of PC and exclusion from the party, Sharlo requested to join the partisans and fight against the fascists, but the new leadership of the party did not allow him to do so. Disappointed, he left and joined the anti-fascist struggle in Bulgaria. He died on September 4, 1944 in Pazardzhik. His death is still baffling. **(Victor Cvetanoski - "Sharlo or Lazo the last taboo of communism")**

Lazar Koliševski, his successor as secretary of the Regional Committee of the CPY for Macedonia, in the paper "Aspects of the Macedonian Issue" explains all the weaknesses of the party organization in Macedonia with the "evil policy of Sharlo," for his "unexperienced autonomist tendencies ... for creating some kind of an "autonomous" or 'independent' Macedonia". **(*"Metodija Shatorov-Sharlo - Documents and Materials" State Archives of RM*)**

Metodija Shatorov Sharlo is an exceptional figure in Macedonian history and for me personally is at a higher level than Tito, but, for more than 50 years Sharlo is on the sidelines of the Macedonian history only because for disobedience he was declared a traitor and counter revolutionary by Tito and the Comintern. **(Professor. Dr. Cepreganov at a scientific debate for Shatorov - Sharlo)**

Until yesterday all historical findings showed that Aleksandrov was a Bulgarian agent and spy of the royal court, and now is represented as one of the greatest revolutionaries. It's a little premature. It is a controversial figure, which causes a lot of controversy in scientific circles.

Past history presents Aleksandrov as Bulgarophile, as an associate to the Bulgarian royal court and as a liquidator of many Macedonian revolutionaries and activists for a free and independent Macedonia. (***Professor. Novica Veljanovski MKD***)

Latest discoveries show that Todor Aleksandrov was one of the biggest Macedonian revolutionaries and fighters for independence and freedom. "Maybe until now he was considered a controversial figure, but now after the discovery of a large number of documents it can be seen that Aleksandrov is one of the greatest revolutionaries and fighters for an independent and free Macedonia. There are documents, records showing that he was committed to the unification of all forces in the fight for an independent Macedonia and documents showing that he condemned the policy that Bulgaria lead towards Macedonia". (***Zoran Todorovski, Director of the State Archives of Macedonia for MKD***)

It's about an assassination carried out by members of the autonomist VMRO on the Bitola journalist Spasoe Haji Popovic and the interference in the assassination of the old Vojvoda Krsto Ljondev. A detailed analysis is performed on the events related to the assassination, upon police investigation, regarding the reasons that drove the Serbian occupying authorities to construct a reconstruction in which Krste Ljondev was imprisoned and killed. (***Dr. Alexander Litovski - "Krst Ljondev and the murder of Spasoe Haji Popovic in Bitola"***)

The monument of Koliševski stirred up quarrels among citizens of Sveti Nikole. Some defend and glorify his name, while others believe that the monument is "a disgrace to the Macedonian people." Koliševski is personally responsible for imprisonment, persecution and murdering of innocent people, says VMRO-DPMNE. "He is a prominent figure in the Macedonian history and fighter for freedom. He was the first President of the Government of the People's Republic of Macedonia and President of the National Assembly, as well as a member of the Presidency of Yugoslavia. He has also been proclaimed a national hero", state the Union of fighters. Venko Markovski and Metodij Anonov Cento were very close, and for a period of time, Venko was also close with Mihajlo Apostolski, as well as with a whole group which included Bogoja Fotev, Petre Piruze, Panko Brasnarov, Pavel Shatev

and Dimitar Vlahov. That group opposed the Serbinization of Macedonia, implemented by Lazar Koliševski, Vidoe Smilevsk, and until then unknown to everyone, Cvetko Uzunovski-Abaz and others. UDB-dealt with each one separately. First Cento was sentenced to 11 years in prison; Shatev and Brasnarov were changed, and later convicted. ***(Blaze Minevski - "Venko refused to write that he is with Tito and Koliševski sent him to Goli Otok")***

The fact that this people's leader of ours who wasn't meant to be (Vanko Mihailov) wandered for over seventy years in close and distant foreign land to build his dream of Macedonian happiness beyond Macedonia, unfortunately has no practical basis. ***(Gane Todorovski in the preface of the book "One hundred years of present" of Veroljub Andonovski)***

The fact is that in the revolutionary struggle for Macedonia there are two types of revolutionaries, one that belonged to the revolutionary organization named TMORO with the ultimate goal - an autonomous, independent Macedonia, with a Macedonian national sense and others who belonged to the Supreme Macedonian Committee of Sofia, later renamed into VMRO, with the ultimate goal of their revolutionary struggle - an autonomous Macedonia within the state of Bulgaria, feeling as members of that nation. For this reason, it is illogical to use the term fratricidal fights. What they both had in common was that they both fought for Macedonia, but the ultimate goals were diametrically opposed. ***(comment of a reader in Utrinski vesnikl)***

Nevertheless, Vanko Mihailov is part of the historic revolutionary struggle of Macedonia and we can not deny his historical role. He is the organizer of the most famous assassination attempt in the first half of the 20th century - the assassination of King Aleksander, known absolutist who wanted to assimilate the Macedonian population to Serbs. He gave publicity to the entire global community of VMRO and Macedonia. ***(comment of a reader in Utrinski vesnikl)***

The assassination of Mara Buneva on the Serbian officer Velimir Prelic is part of the terrorist strategy of the VMRO of Mihailov. This was prepared in Sofia. She returned to Macedonia in May 1926, whereas, she moved from her home town of Tetovo to Skopje in order to kill one of the heads of the Serbian government. She was employed in a tailor

shop and sewed clothing for the women of famous Serbian politicians. She was renting a place of a family in the neighborhood of the murdered Prelic. She fired three bullets in Prelic and one to herself. Seriously wounded she was taken to the hospital. She died the next day. The police secretly buried her, therefore, nobody knows her grave. **(Macedonia is everything)**

The most known Macedonians to be imprisoned on Goli Otok are: Panko Brasnarov, Venko Markovski, Petre Piruze, Bogoja Fotev, Vladimir Polezhinoski and others. **(Macedonian nation)**

In 1991 our recruits were massively mobilized for Vukovar, for interests which are now foreign, and then our then head **(Kiro Gligorov)** (together with his party) took on a mate position. Neither here nor there ... And we can not even begin to speak of changing the constitution, name and flag. So he put his final signature of defacing the Macedonian state and nation. **(comment of a reader in Utrinski vesnikl)**

We had two immense problems: one was tied to the need for Macedonia to survive the Yugoslav crisis, without being drawn into the war, because it was a period of bloody wars within other territories of former Yugoslavia. The second challenge was to change the social system in a contemporary, democratic and civilized manner. We successfully conducted our role and this can certainly be credited to Gligorov, as he had a key role in the country. Something else also needs to be said about Gligorov, and that is that from all of us who participated in 1991 in the creation of independence, he is the only one who participated in the work of ASNOM in 1944, when in fact our country was founded, then as a federal republic in Yugoslavia. **(a statement by Stojan Andov for Vecer)**

"I do not know whom I should watch myself from? Whether from the Serbian government, which is constantly following me, or from the Communists in Macedonia who are setting me various devious traps. I lost my job, for many days I have no money for bread. I begged everywhere, and looked for a job everywhere. I could not stand this anymore, and after much begging I received a job at the library in Skopje. Am I guilty for having to live of something". - Kosta Racin. The responsible within the party considered that Racin disgraced the party, in that as a member he sought employment from the "Ban". **(Blaze**

***Minevski - "Koco Racin and Kole Nedelkovski almost killed together in Sofia !?"***

Although the names and works of Pavel Shatev, Panko Brasnarov, Vladimir Polezhinovski, Vasil Antevski- Dren, Alekso Demnijevski - Bauman, Dimitar Vlahov, Mirce Acev, Strasho Pindzur, Cvetan Dimov, Orce Nikolov, Vera Ciriviri Trena, Geras Cunev, Petre Piruze – Majski – have so far been marked in various ways and in local communities, form part of the individuals that needs to receive much greater appreciation than they have until now. The heroes who marked the four-year epic with their work, upon which the Macedonian people laid the foundations to its country, are deeply rooted in the NLS, but, there work is still not sufficiently investigated or marked in a dignifying manner. ***(Branko Gjorgjevski - "Tito and Tempo destroyed Macedonian heroes")***

Tens of thousands Macedonians gathered in the capital of Skopje to welcome former police officer Johan Tarchulovski, who spent eight years in prison for war crimes committed during the conflict in 2001 caused by Albanian militant groups - stated Washington Post.. Johan Tarchulovski was welcomed at Skopje airport by the conservative Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski and representatives of government, and his return was broadcasted live on several TV stations. The 39-year-old Tarchulovski was convicted by the tribunal in 2008 for the murder of three Albanian civilians and the destruction of 12 homes during the police raid.

Albanian political analyst Albert Musliu, indicated that the welcoming resulted in disappointment for the Albanian minority. "I would have understanding if his return was celebrated by his family, friends and those who were on his side participating in the conflict in 2001. However, the question remains open whether it deserved such high praise and presence of representatives of the government. I am disappointed that such a celebration was held for anyone who is convicted of war crimes in his own country". ***(The Washington Post: "Convicted of war crimes welcomed as a hero in Macedonia")***

Historians believe that by breaking memorial plaques and busts, some people are trying to revise part of history they do not like, others to cover up lack of knowledge, and third ones to fill an empty space left

by the country. By "rule", the memorial plaque that is set in honor of Mara Buneva in Skopje is regularly broken, whereas busts of soldiers from the NLS roll off demolished through local parks and even end up in landfills as scrap metal. It's time the Macedonian authorities built a monument for Mara Buneva and one did exist until 1944, as she gave her life for a free Macedonia ", says Zoran Todorovski, Director of the State Archives of Macedonia. With similar assessments, in particular, for the "Serbianisation" of the Macedonian politics, Albanian NGOs reacted after the monument of Serbian Tsar Dusan was set in the center of Skopje. (*Deutsche Welle*)

## United Macedonia

From the Congress of Berlin until the First World War, the Macedonian issue has been the most difficult, complicated and time consuming problem faced by the Ottoman Empire and the greater powers. It originated when the greater powers sought to enforce their interests in the Balkans, and the neighboring countries to conquer Macedonia. Facsimile of the first page of the Bucharest anti-democratic deal: it had the goal to destroy the consciousness of the Macedonian people for its national uniqueness. (*Sitel*)

Macedonia to Danube: Macedonians ruled the Balkan Peninsula in the old and new era. It was Philip and Alexander the Great who continued into the new era at times when the government of the Roman Empire was undertaken by kings with origins from Macedonia and the Macedonian peninsula, and only from 1809 when Cojne introduced the notion Balkans... In many maps Macedonia stretched to the Danube River. (*Dr. Risto Ivanovski - "Albanians bicontinental and biracial so-called people"*)

A hundred years ago, all three Balkan countries, neighbors of Macedonia - Serbia, Greece and Bulgaria - went to war against Turkey not only to expel the Turks from the Balkans but also to occupy and divide Macedonia according to a prearranged plan! Certainly, that plan was immediately implemented and each one occupied the parts it wanted as its war prize. (*Blaze Minovski - "The Balkan Wars redrew the historical borders of Macedonia"*)

With the Bucharest Treaty, due to the voracious appetites of the Romanian, Greek, Bulgarian and Serbian bourgeoisie, Macedonia was also divided without asking the Macedonians and Vlachs, which were the dominating population in this region. Due to the above-mentioned, the Cultural Union of the Vlachs from Macedonia requested before the international democratic and civilized public, the following request from the great powers-members of the Security Council of the UN and Germany, the European Union, the Council of Europe, Pact for Stability and Cooperation in Southeast Europe, the International Crisis Group and all scientific institutions and influential individuals in Europe and elsewhere: for the Bucharest peace treaty to be annulled and the conclusions to be declared as a tragedy of the 20th century in the Balkans, especially for the Vlachs and the Macedonian people, and thereby abolish any harmful residues. (*Dimchev N. Dimo - "Bucharest Treaty is null"*)

The great powers and the neighboring countries sought to settle the Macedonian issue many times in the past, according to their interests. The same forces that divided Macedonia with the Bucharest Treaty in 1913 and the Treaty of Versailles in 1919, and later the attempt in 1944/45 to prevent the creation of the Macedonian state, thus annulling the benefits of the Macedonian people in the four-year liberation war and the right to self-determination, unity and creation of an independent Macedonian state, nowadays, through the name dispute, are aging attempting to deny the right of the existence of the country. (*Macedonian nation*)

We would not be true Macedonians if we did not dream of this (united) Macedonia – a national state of the Macedonian people with an official Macedonian language, currency. For those who are not Macedonians we will post them a sign stating "out". (*Forum Kajgana*)

Pero Antic with a greeting "United Macedonia": He marked his first three points in NBA with the greeting "United Macedonia" with his left hand. (*Kurir*)

The Komiti swear for "Greater Macedonia": in the first spring round the Komiti created a great atmosphere at the arena "Philip II", in the duel with Rabotnicki. They had prepared a choreography, and swore for a "united Macedonia". On the west stand there was a poster with "I

swear to be united 1913-2013.” (*Ekipa*)

Flyers with maps of Greater Macedonia were found on windshields of vehicles throughout the center of Skopje. Besides maps, the six pages of text contained sentences describing the Balkans and the historical expansion of the Bulgarian and Greek state on the account of Macedonia. (*Forum Vodenica*)

Gruevski's gate with a map of greater Macedonia: "Macedonia" Gate contains reliefs which are interpreted as territorial claims against neighboring countries. It is part of the project "Skopje 2014". Legal dilemmas arise from the messages of Gate "Macedonia", which has troubling maps showing the territories of Macedonia with modern Greece, Bulgaria and Albania. (*Utrinski vesnik*)

## Greater Albania

The provocative map of Greater Albania appeared yesterday on the Facebook Profile of the head of the Islamic community in the country, Reis-ul-Ulema Sulejman Rexhepi. The photo with the striking title "United States of Albania", which displays "Albanian ethnic territories" that penetrate deep within the borders of Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro, was placed on his profile by another person, a certain Adelina Sufi. "The union of Albanian lands is God's will, just as the union under the same flag in the same country where God sets limits. We have an obligation of bringing them back as they were before. The unification of the forces of the Albanian people of all levels will become a reality, and Albania will have one border, the one that God created. IRC with all its facilities is prepared to contribute to the national cause and to respond to any type of call for unification of all Albanians" - stated in an interview Sulejman Rexhepi. (*Dnevnik*)

The map of Greater Albania was promoted before the Headquarters of the European Parliament in Brussels. The red zones are Albania and Kosovo, and the dark blue are territories that should be part of Albania. Western Macedonia, including Skopje, Tetovo, Gostivar, Debar, Struga, Ohrid, Bitola, southern part of Montenegro and southwestern part of Serbia towards Bulgaria. The map was presented in front of the

European Parliament by a supporter of the protests against the decision of the case "Monster". (*Infomaks*)

If you ask me personally, I like every other Albanian, hope for unification, I am for unification, I dream for unification of all Albanians, but the question is how to perform this? Is there a platform for this - a manifesto, some type of document? That is first. Another thing I would like to say is how this can actually be done – stated Ermira Mehmeti – Devaja for Tirana TV Klan. (*Fama*)

Yesterday a graphite of Greater Albania written in Albanian appeared on the large retaining wall at the exit of Tetovo to Skopje, while Albanians in Macedonia and in the region celebrated the Day of Albania and the Albanian Flag Day. (*Utrinski vesnik*)

"Gallup" in cooperation with the "European Fund for the Balkans," conducted a survey according to which the majority of respondents of Albanians from Albania, Kosovo and Macedonia support the creation of a "Greater Albania". According to the poll, 62 percent of the Albanians in their home country, 81 percent of the Albanians in Kosovo and more than half of the respondents from Macedonia, or 51.5 percent, support the idea of creating a "Greater Albania". (*Ohrid.on*)

Today, with different messages, demonstrators protested without scarves, without stones, without fundamentalist symbols, without reference to Allah, but with shouts of "KLA", "Greater Albania", "Ali traitor", "Silence is betrayal." (*MKD*)

## Controversial interpretations

The so-called Albanian history: "The problem of ethno genesis of the Albanian people is not easy to solve ... There are different opinions about the origin of the Albanians. It has been confirmed that the Albanian language was a mixture of "Romans, Slavs and Greeks" and Black Sea-Caucasian Albanians-Arnauts.

Hence, a three-racial Albanian language. Albania was Macedonian – Ohridian. Illyrians were only the Dalmatians. For residents of the Illyrian province, the general language was only the so-called Slavic language.

Hence, Albania was never in the Illyrian province. Therefore, the Albanian history is a falsification. (*Dr. Risto Ivanovski – "Albanians bicontinental and biracial so-called people"*)

## Joint history

After the Russian-Turkish War in 1878, which ends with the peace treaty of Berlin, Macedonia and Albania are the only ones remaining within the Turkish Empire on the Balkan territories. It's about two people who never in history (with the exception of sporadic uprisings) had their independence, but definitely had national particularity different from the rest of the Balkan peoples. The largest, and probably only benefit for the Macedonians and Albanians from the Berlin Congress, is precisely the recognition of that national particularity. Therefore, in 1878 the Macedonians and Albanians lead their struggle for national independence in parallel, the effects of which are felt in the critical period 1912-191 ... Hasan Prishtina obtained autonomy in the Turkish Parliament, Jane Sandanski failed. (*Dejan Azeski - "How Albania succeeded and Macedonia failed to gain its independence in Bucharest?"*)

The Macedonian Revolutionary Committee was formed in St. Petersburg (headed by Dimitrie Cupovski, Krste Misirkov and Nace Dimov) which initiated the idea of creating a Balkan Federal Democratic Republic of Macedonia as an equal member. Macedonian revolutionaries in Bulgaria, from the VMORO District led by Dimo Hadzi Dimov, announced the "Declaration to resolve the Macedonian issue" in which they demanded autonomy for Macedonia within its ethnic boundaries. Later, this group connected with revolutionaries led by Gjorce Petrov and jointly formed a Temporary office of the former VMORO united and sent a representative to the Paris Peace Conference. The emigration in Constantinople organized a gathering during which a Memoar was read, in which there was conspiracy for unification following the example of Switzerland. (*"Macedonians and the decisions of the San Stefano and Berlin Congress"*).

The Parliament and the Provisional Government of the Krusevo Republic: After the liberation of Krusevo on August 4, 1903, the Assembly of the city held its session during which a decision was made to

form an interim government, namely, the Interim Executive Council. The following were elected as members of the interim executive council: Dinu Vangel, Nikolaki Balju, Gjorji Chache, Teohar Neshkov, Dimitar Sekulov and Hristo Kjurciev. The following were also included in the government according to ethnicity and confessionism: one Vlach-patriarchist, one Albanian - patriarchist, one Vlach - nationalist and three exarchates. Therefore, Dimitar Sekulov noted that the exarchates were willing to give up two seats to: one Turk and one Pomak, if in the future such a need were to arise. (*Krusevo Republic 1903*)

Macedonian and Albanian historians suggested that an agreement be made on the common name for the Ohrid-Debar Uprising of 1913, who attended a conference yesterday organized by the Institute for National History in Ohrid. Yesterday, they debated on this uprising for the first time, which was led by the Macedonian and Albanian population against the Serbian authorities. "The success of sitting at the same table is a very big indicator that we can agree upon the name of something which has been separating us until now, and relates to something that has happened mutually - said Katerina Todorovska from the Institute of National History. Among other speakers, Husamedin Alili summarizes the response of the uprising into the Albanian historiography, Pavle Mitrevski spoke of the cooperation of the Macedonian and Albanian troops, and the Director of the Association of historians-Albanians in Macedonia refers to the violence of the Serbian army against the Albanian population in 1912-1913. According to the organizers, one of the goals of the conference is to propose building of a common monument of the fallen Macedonian and Albanian insurgents, who jointly participated in many of the clashes with the Serbian army. (*Igor K. Ilievski - "First meeting of the Macedonian-Albanian historians – a common name for the Ohrid Uprising will be agreed"*)

Consequently, under pressure you acknowledge that the uprising was also Albanian, but where are the other uprisings: the liberation of Skopje led by Hasan Prishtina, the Krusevo Uprising, the Macedonian-Kosovo Brigade...it is the Albanians recognized by contemporary history that are credited for the formation of this country. (*comment of a reader in Dnevnik*)

In the past, both the Macedonian and the Albanian population were

under someone's authority, always united and fighting together for liberation from the "third". But as soon as independence was declared for the Albanian state, things started to change. The foreign "preferential treatment" of one of the sides posed danger to the mutual relations. We will indicate a few joint actions as indicators to this: 1 Stojan Vezenkov (1828-1897) was one of those activists who put his moral, social and emotional efforts in the building and strengthening of the Albanian-Macedonian friendship, in the sincere bonding, connecting and cooperation of the two neighboring nations, and used the conspiratorial Albanian name of Zeka Bisov. 2 Macedonian-Albanian friendships and relationships were also maintained by Radev Mazhovski, who spoke good Albanian and had established lasting friendly contacts with Albanian patriots. 3 In 1888 an Albanian-Macedonian Committee was created in order to jointly fight in achieving their liberation endeavors. 4. The Macedonian-Albanian emigration published the first issue of the newspaper "Albanese-Macedonia" on 25. 12. 1892 (6. 1. 1893) in Bucharest (Romania). 5 In London in 1893/94, an attempt was made to form a joint league, which represented a new development in the Macedonian-Albanian relations, it was called the "National-Central Albanian-Macedonian League". 6. At the end of 1898 the association "Albano-Macedonian Syllogos" was formed in Athens. 7. The Macedonian-Albanian cooperation in Sofia was the most intense, resulting in a project-proposal for the autonomy of Macedonia and Albania on 23 February 1899, consisting of 23 items. 8. In 1902, the "National Macedonian-Albanian League" from London increases its work when its Executive Committee issued a proclamation or an appeal, which through the activities of the League - Stevan Damchev and Yasar-Beg were distributed in places inhabited by Albanians and Macedonians. The League prepared a project for the autonomy of Macedonia, Albania, Old Serbia and Edirne, composed of 12 articles. 9. On May 10, 1902 the first issue of "L" Autonomie" was published and came out in five numbers. The newspaper was published twice a month, with the theme of Macedonia to the Macedonians, Albania to Albanians. Under the program "Our goal, our ideas are gaining autonomy for Albania and Macedonia". 10. In the late 19th century revolutionary committees were immensely formed in Macedonia. These committees, through their leaders, guerrillas - Peter Chaulev, Rinko Dzambazovski, Kosta

Leshtar and others, maintained connections with patriots of the Albanian population in Pogradec. During a stay in Albania links were established with the Albanian regiment of Captain Kayo Babiena. Macedonian revolutionaries had their own bases in the homes of Christian and Muslim Albanians, such as Koci Spiro, Naki Tiars, Kol Tala, Aslan Minaroli, Riza Minaroli, Kosu Orhan-Beg and others. 11. Shefqet Agoli wrote the following in 1901: "At that time there were no Albanian troops in the Prespa area that fought to overthrow slavery, because of which I sought to enter the Macedonian troops. Miho Laho connected me with a Macedonian unit where he himself was an insurgent. 12. Apart friendship links, marital links were also created. Thus, the Albanian Koli Todi, in-law of fishermen Kosta Kanevce, furthermore, Koci Spiri, a relative to the teacher Kosta Leshtar of Pogradec, Tomaki, brother-in-law of Marko Tomce and others, performed various services and supplied weapons to the Organization. 13. Albanians, as suppliers of arms were very reliable and consistent. They were active in Gostivar, Tetovo, Debar, Ohrid, Struga, Kastoria, Florina etc. 14. Belul Arif Nazzak is considered as an exceptional activist in the work of the Organization in Ohrid, who for his revolutionary activity in the board for granting Ilinden pensions received an Ilinden pension at the Presidium of the National Assembly of NRM. 15. Continuation of the Macedonian-Albanian cooperation among emigrants can be noticed in 1904, when in Vienna the Humanitarian Albanian-Macedonian Association was founded. 16. In Vienna, in June 1908 the so-called Albanian-Macedonian Committee was formed. The committee was headed by influential figures such as Count Aleksandar Ikonov and Gjergj Pekmezi. 17. Before the Second Balkan War, in July 1913, Jane Sandanski, along with Stoju Hadziev, went on a mission in Albania, by the order of Ferdinand. Their task was to negotiate with the Albanian leaders for joint action on Bulgaria and Albania in the event of another war. ***(Interview with prof. Dr. Katerina Todoroska, Senior Research Associate at the Institute for National History of the Republic)***

Macedonians are not in danger from the Albanians in this sense of identity threat. A second factor to a good start for us is history. There is no serious "blood memory" between Macedonians and Albanians. Hence, history until 1945 is history of intensive cooperation of the historical VMRO's and the national liberation movements of Albanians

from Macedonia and the region. That history, though for us Macedonians is "hidden" and still not taught in textbooks (due to the syndrome of Serbian influence from Yugoslavia) is real history of cooperation and entanglement in the joint struggle of national movements. **(Ljubomir Danailov Frchkoski - "Macedonians and Albanians")**

The emergence of Islam and its spreading, the uprising of Skender-Beg, the Albanian Pashalaci, the creation of the Albanian Committee for Freedom of Albania, the Albanian position in the Kingdom of SCS, in Chameria and the attitude of the Greek authorities .. These are just some of the lessons in the section regarding the Albanian national history, within the completely new textbooks, from which pupils will be studying in primary schools. Additional lessons for the Albanian national history will be taught from sixth to eighth grade. The textbook for the fifth grade content is the same for both Macedonians and Albanians. The Bureau for Development of Education say that Macedonian pupils in primary schools may choose to learn about the Albanian history and vice versa, Albanians may choose to learn about the Macedonian. How much the Albanian and Macedonian pupils will learn about the history of the other nationality will depend on the teacher. **(Dnevnik - "History textbooks went down in history")**

The Macedonian public reacted fiercely to the attempt of Macedonian and Albanian history teachers to come to a common version of the conflict of 2001, when Albanian guerrillas in northern and western areas fought against the Macedonian police and army. The Project "Understanding recent history" was conducted by the Centre for Human Rights and Conflict Resolution at the Institute for Sociological, Political and Juridical Research in cooperation with the Helsinki Committee. The authors say that the project is an essential attempt to overcome the one-sided historical "readings", giving young people answers to their legitimate questions. Skender Asani, a historian of ethnic Albanian ethnic origin who participated in the project, says that this is just the beginning. "We started with diametrically different opinions between Macedonians and Albanians. But through tolerance, however, we set on the long road of moderating positions in order to create a mutually acceptable and realistic picture of events". **(Ivan Blazhevski -" Macedonia: Revised historical lesson sparked the public")**

## Controversies

Neovrhovizam is going mad in Macedonia! Macedonianism as a national ideology, is threatened from within because domestic vrhovisti have multiplied. During a time when they are acting as patriots, when in reality they are selling fake patriotism, Macedonianism as a national phenomenon is threatened from within. Not only from outside, the external enemies we know, the problem is that now domestic vrhovisti have multiplied. Vrhovism is a Macedonian phenomenon in the interest of others. Some things like revisionism in historiography go in the interests of foreign countries, and not in the interest of Macedonia. (***Forum Vodenica – „Lustrated Academics Tome Serafimovski and Bozhin Pavlovski“***)

"Ilinden fighters fought in the National Liberation War (WWII), VMRO was with the fascists!" (***General Todor Atanasovski***)

The real question of the Second World War, for which we still do not have an explanation, according to my opinion, is the following: Why did Macedonian communists, immediately after the Bulgarian occupation, unanimously secede from the KPY and join the BCP? Was that a personal and private decision of President Shatorov - Sharlo, or was it a unanimous decision? Why was the Macedonian partisan movement the weakest in comparison to all other socialist republics of Yugoslavia... On that topic I can also link the following question: Why is it that in the First World War, the entire Macedonian left, voluntarily engaged in support of the Bulgarian occupation of Macedonia? For example, Gjorche Petrov was appointed as a Bulgarian mayor in Prilep, and Dimitar Vlahov as a Bulgarian mayor in Prizren. (***Ljubcho Georgievski - "Polemic: The real question of the Second World War"***)

All the important details, in relation to how the decision came for the separating of the Regional Committee of Macedonia from the one of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia and its "joining" to the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party, has still not been determined historically and scientifically to date. (***Antun Kolendikj - "The white spots on Macedonian history"***)

"In late April and early May 1941 Shatorov succeeded in establishing a connection with his leadership and obtained the consent of his leader-

ship to temporarily, until the situation is clarified, have the Macedonian organization put under the leadership of our (Bulgarian) Central Committee...We immediately announced to the committee (i.e. the Politburo the CC CPB, in Moscow – A.K.), with a letter dated May 10, 1941, and edited by Trajco Kostov and Anton Ivanov (the political and organizational secretary of the CC of CPB – A.K) the following: 'We have already established contact with the Macedonian District Committee, which in accordance with CPY, transfers under our leadership'. **(Cola Dragojcheva - "Prominent officials of Bulgarian communists")**

The interview of Vera Aceva and the publication of her, although significantly shortened, "letter to Svetozar Vukmanovikj - Tempo" caused a sensation, not only among historians. Namely, Aceva, a national hero and a longtime member of the Central Committee of Yugoslavia and of Macedonia, sharply and directly raised the issue of correcting, actually scientifically determining the true history of the most important period of the development and formation of the state of Macedonia, the one from 1941 to 1945! **(Antun Kolendikj - "The white spots on Macedonian history")**

The leadership of NLA, the construction workers of "Mavrovo" the Lipkovo dam and the Neproshteno tomb are the four "Hague" cases in Macedonia that were closed, as a result of the amnesty law of 2002, as well as the decision of the Assembly for an authentic interpretation of the amnesty of 2011. Legal experts for "Dnevnik" recently estimated that war and crimes against humanity never expire, they can not be pardoned and the state may at any time initiate a court procedure for those cases, as there are no legal obstacles here. According to them, for crimes such as these, the Public Prosecutor may initiate proceedings even though the Prosecution has put the cases ad act, despite a decision by the Assembly for the authentic interpretation of the amnesty, which included four cases. In last year's report for Macedonia from the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, Nils Muiznieks, it has been assessed that the Amnesty Law is problematic because it gives amnesty to people who have seriously violated human rights. He notes that for war crimes there is no amnesty and that it is considered prohibited by international law. Conclusion of the European Court: It is extremely important that trial and judgment are not restricted by regulations, for

example, an amnesty law, for pardoning or amnesty should not be allowed for severe crime cases. (*Zana Bozhinovska - "Macedonian cases remained closed with an authentic interpretation"*)

DPA leader Arben Xhaferi said that he supported the measures of the authorities in resolving the situation in the north of the border, since the majority of the work is finalized through political and diplomatic methods. Xhaferi said he intends to talk to all political parties in Macedonia on the need to amend the Constitution, and not only with the Prime Minister Georgievski, as that is the only way to achieve successful solutions. Several thousand supporters of DPA gathered at Macedonia Square in Skopje at around 14 pm, with slogans for peace and justice written in Macedonian, Albanian and English and with red, white and orange flags having no markings. (*DPA Peace march in Skopje March 14, 2001 - "The solution to the crisis is Europe and independent Kosovo"*).

## History and politics

While we in Macedonia claim that Nikola Vapcarov, Goce Delchev and Jane Sandanski are Macedonians, for historians in Bulgaria they are Bulgarians. That is the official interpretation of history in both countries which is reflected in textbooks. There are many such examples in the Balkans. If for the Serbs the battle against the Turks in Zebrenjak - Kumanovsko is liberating, for historians in Macedonia it is a defeat and introduction to a new occupation. History can reproduce the truth only through diplomacy, or at least by bringing parties closer and offering citizens the most acceptable truth for the majority of people. Leaving history to historians is actually distancing from the essence of the problem. This position in itself is devastating and creates new problems. Politics without history is like a tree without roots, just as history without politics will remain unfruitful (Dirk Lange) ... Our politicians and diplomats should not shift responsibility to historians. They need to directly engage in finding solutions to (un) bridgeable historical differences and similarities. It is due time, that we the citizens of Macedonia contribute to turning the differences that exist between the neighbors, into bringing us closer together, rather than distanc-

ing ourselves. To contribute in making our history be shared. (*Kirilica - "History is political"*)

The Association of Historians of Republic of Macedonia (ZHRM) strongly protests in relation to amendment 8 of the Resolution for the Republic of Macedonia adopted by the Foreign Affairs Committee of the European Parliament, which actually requires the review of Macedonian history. It is absurd that political institutions are dealing with these issues. These are questions that are supposed to be dealt by historians, not politicians, including those from the European Parliament. Research activity, and in that context history as well, should not be subject to political influence and dictates. (*Association of historians - Reaction: "It is absurd for political institutions such as the European Parliament to deal with historical issues"*)

New government, new history - new divisions? Memorials and naming of streets should lead to unification of citizens, not divisions, say historians. If there is no consensus regarding the important figures of Macedonian history, there is a risk for each new political establishment to celebrate those that are important in their opinion. (*Radio Free Europe*)

## Hate speech

Apart from readers' comments in the media, portals and forums, in which hate speech is usually against those of the opposing ethnic, party and cultural group, and when referring to historical topics and events and historic figures, hate speech is observed in journalistic coverage, more extensive studies, and even published books written by historians and other experts.

## Part III

### Albanian alphabet 1908

Bitola Congress gathered the Albanian intellectuals to determine the Albanian alphabet on November 22, 1908. The Bitola Congress unanimously decided to separate the Arab and Greek alphabets henceforth, the Albanian language to be written only in Latin with 36 letters. The initiative for the Congress was undertaken by the Albanian Club in Bitola - "Baskimi". Gjergj Qiriazi and Shahin Kolonja had a key role in organizing the Congress. Albanian schools, student unions, associations of historians, universities and institutions mark the struggle of many generations for the Albanian education. November 22 is traditionally celebrated in Macedonia, which is also a national holiday for the Albanians elsewhere.

### Independence of Albania 1912

Declaring independence and creating an Albanian state were of great importance for the Albanian people. In order to victor, Albanian people had to fight for many years. Albanian people expressed willingness to liberate the territories with their population in any way possible. The Albanian patriots and, especially, the national patriot and diplomat Ismail Qemali are credited for this. The historic decision of November 28, 1912 and the Declaration of Independence of Albania resulted in establishing a state. The Independence of Albania opened a new phase of the history of Albania.

Austria-Hungary was interested in an independent Albania and was against creation of a large Slavic state, which could fall under Russian influence, with the exception of Bulgaria, which they saw as an ally. Vienna had the view that the Ottoman Empire was insignificant for them, unlike Albania, which meant everything.

## Emigration of Albanians to Turkey

The village of Porodin is located about ten kilometers southwest of Bitola. Until the beginning of the 1950s, it was inhabited by Albanians. The communist regime did everything to evict the Albanians, who in the most part were Beys in the past.

The seizure of land was the main reason for the residents of Porodin to flee to Turkey in quite a short time. The last family moved sometime in 1965. These places were then after inhabited by Macedonians from Mariovo and by Macedonians expelled from Greece, hence 150 Albanian families were replaced by the same number of Macedonian families. This is told by Tefik Shabani, a teacher who lives near this village.

## Riots in Kosovo 1981

In 1981, riots broke out in Kosovo in great proportions that resulted with large protests. There were protests against the Serbian regime that treated Albanians as second class citizens. The protests were against the continuing police brutality, unequal access to justice and the poverty in which the Albanian people found themselves in under the former Yugoslavia. These demonstrations contributed to raising national awareness. Without this movement the demonstrations of 1982, 1983, 1988, 1989, 1990 would have never happened. According to their character, the demonstrations were peaceful. Protesters were completely unarmed and posed no threat to the state authorities.

## Referendum on the independence of Ilirida

On 11 and 12 January 1992, in the western part of Macedonia, the Albanians organized a referendum on political and territorial autonomy and reviewed the constitution of the Republic Ilirida. This took place as a reaction against the referendum for an independent Macedonia in September 1991, which was boycotted by Albanians. Even though the majority of Albanians voted for the referendum, it has been rejected. The Albanians faced another decade of hard and bloody war in order to realize the requirements submitted in the referendum.

## Riots on Bit-Pazar 1992

On 6 and 7 November 1992, riots of Albanians took place on Bit Pazar in Skopje. Police reacted brutally, so four people were killed and fourteen seriously injured, while many Albanians were arrested.

## Tetovo University

The Macedonian Government strongly opposed the efforts of the Albanians to establish a higher educational institution in Albanian. On December 14, 1994, in the wake of inauguration of the University, the government has sent massive police forces and tore down the building of the illegal Tetovo University with bulldozers.

Irritated by the brutal police action, Albanians from Tetoto protest-ed and demanded high educational institution in Albanian language. In the confrontation between the police and part of the demonstrators many were injured and one protester was killed.

The Tetovo State University was established on June 4, 1994 at the Constitutional Assembly convened by the Cultural Association of Albanians in Macedonia, in the capacity of founder, whereby Professor Abdula Mehmeti, President of the Cultural Association of Albanians in Macedonia, was the initiator and signatory of the documents for establishing the University and for the appointment of the provisional organs of the university. As a public university it remained unrecognized by the authorities until January 2004, when the Law on the Establishment of the State University of Tetovo was passed by the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia.

## War in Kosovo and the refugee crisis in 1999

The War in Kosovo started in Prekaz, Drenica, on February 28, 1998, when Adem Jashari and the family Jashari commenced an armed resistance against the Serbian police and army. The Kosovo Liberation Army began to act from there.

Democratic and progressive forces in the world immediately reacted to the events in Yugoslavia. Therefore, at the beginning of the cri-

sis in Kosovo, they were forced to intervene against the destructive machinery of Slobodan Milosevic. The world could not afford a new tragedy such as that of Bosnia and Herzegovina. On March 24, 1999, all television channels around the world announced the start of the NATO bombing of Yugoslavia.

Many Kosovars were forcibly expelled from their homes, namely, to Albania and Macedonia. The President of Macedonia at that time, Kiro Gligorov, in those difficult moments of the Kosovo people, convened the National Security Council and decided to close the borders in the name of security.

The deportation of a large number of deportees from Kosovo to Macedonia started as of March 2, 1999. By June, the number of Albanians deported from Kosovo amounted to 379,523 people in Macedonia, from which 92 100 were transferred to other countries, 154,989 lived in Albanian families, and 112,434 people were placed in special camps.

## War 2001

The war broke out as a consequence of the deep dissatisfaction with the political and legal status of the Albanians in Macedonia. The war in 2001 was supported by many Albanians in the country, as well as by the Albanian diaspora in Europe and the USA. The war in 2001 and the National Liberation Army (NLA) are very important in terms of the history of the Albanian people in Macedonia and the Albanian nation in the region.

## The Ohrid Agreement

On August 13, 2001, an agreement was signed in Ohrid that has put an end to the armed conflict in Macedonia. This Agreement is prepared according to five basic principles, which were accompanied by constitutional amendments, thereby confirming a multi-ethnic society. The Framework Agreement aims to contribute to the harmonious development of the Macedonians while respecting the ethnic identity and interests of all citizens of Macedonia. The Ohrid Agreement aims to treat all citizens of Macedonia equally manner, however, in practice

this is applied to a small extent. The Ohrid Agreement, as a document with great international importance and as one recognized at the global level, is part of the history of the Albanian people in Macedonia.

## Part IV

### Macedonian history online

There is amazingly little material on the internet in Albanian on the history of Macedonia in general, especially regarding the period from 1903. We did not encounter any professional literature on history, only sporadically, in several forums where certain events are written very lightly. For example, there are no complete publications.

Even if you write "History of Macedonia" on Wikipedia, a text of three lines will appear on the independence of Macedonia in 1991 and Greece's opposition to the recognition of the independence because of the name. In addition, there is a text of the 2001 conflict in Macedonia. It covers several segments: the socio-economic and political conditions, causes of conflict, the course of the conflict and military activities in the region, the impact on the region, the role of parliament, government, police and army in the conflict, the contribution of the international community, the end of the conflict and the importance of the Ohrid Agreement and its impact on the democratic processes. These chapters are divided into the following sub-chapters: radical Albanian version, radical Macedonian version and a common version.

There is a text on the information portal mesazhi.com published in July 2010, titled A few words about the history of Skopje and the emigration of Albanian Muslims to Turkey. In the longer

description on the emigration of Albanians from this region, it is said that it started at the end of XIX century and lasted until the end of the XX century. Emigration occurred on several occasions, by an agreement of the Yugoslav and Turkish authorities. This emigration is interpreted as an eviction of Albanians by Slavs, whereby the Turkish interest was to settle unpopulated areas in Anatolia. The web portal peshkupauje.com published an analysis titled "The truth of the Albanians in Macedonia and distortions of the Encyclopedia of Skopje". In it, the author refers to the parts pertaining to the Albanians in the controversial "Encyclopedia of Macedonia", published in 2009 by the Macedonian Academy of Sciences and Arts, which later was formally withdrawn. This encyclopedia caused widespread anger among Albanians, who rated it as a "daily political pamphlet, full of silly and unscientific claims". It claims that over time the Albanians have deliberately colonized Macedonia, and the last, fourth phase of this colonization was in 1944. In the published analysis, Professor Chris Frasherri mainly deals with the Slavic origin of the Macedonians, denying the connection of Macedonians today with ancient Macedonians, a statement that is widely represented in the withdrawn encyclopedia. In terms of the Albanians, he writes: "It is not the first time for insults and distortions to come out of Macedonian nationalist circles, on the account of the Albanians."

While searching the internet for the history in Macedonia in the Albanian language, we tried to explore websites of libraries in Macedonia. We found none in the Albanian language. The websites of the two largest libraries, the National and University Library and the Library "Braka Miladinovci" contain no electronic issues, and the pages are in Macedonian language. The same happens when browsing educational books as well.

# Insights from international scientific literature on memory and remembering

**Joss Becker**

## **Memory and remembrance – notions from international sciences**

**A**mong scientists it is a widely spread assumption, that collective memory and the understanding of history play a crucial part in conflicts and therefore also in a peaceful living together as well as that a democratic transformation of post- authoritarian and post-conflict societies can only be realized if society deals with its past. Another equally widespread consensus is that memory is socially framed and constructed, rather than a simply personal experience (Dragovic-Soso, 2010:29; Penkwitt, 2006:1). As Dragovic-Soso puts it: “Most scholars agree that, while it is the individual who remembers, the process of remembering itself is inter-subjective, it is intrinsically related to being a member of a community with its own language, rituals, commemoration practices and memory sites that enable individuals to acquire, localize and recall their memories” (Dragovic-Soso, 2010:30). This coincides with Halbwachs’ notion that “no memory is possible outside frameworks used by people living in society to determine and retrieve their recollections” (Halbwachs, 1992: 43). He describes memory as a kind of “social glue” (Dragovic-Soso, 2010:30) that keeps communities together. This goes for both living, that is directly experienced, memories and ‘historical’ memories (of events that one did not experience personally).

Here Jeffery Olick’s distinction between ‘collected memories’ – collected personal memories of different individuals within a group – and ‘collective memory’ gains importance. In his view collective memory refers to “public discourses and images of the past that speak in the names of

collectives. In other words, the concept of collective memory implies that all the various individual acts of public recollection produce a form of culture that is greater than the sum of its parts" (Dragovic-Soso, 2010:30) and therefore "enters a domain that is beyond that of individual memory" (Winter and Sivan, 1999: 6).

Aleida and Jan Assmann elaborated the notion of the collective memory, which they describe as a connective structure that creates community in the way that it builds a relation synchronically, i.e. between single persons within a group, as well as diachronically, i.e. between consecutive generations. The underlying assumption, that the individual memory is shaped by the collective memory, is based upon Maurice Halbwachs' work about the sociogenesis of the individual memory. Halbwachs points out that the 'collective' that we carry in us does not originate from biological inheritance, but from social and cultural participation. In their elaboration Aleida and Jan Assmann divide the collective memory into communicative and cultural memory, which, roughly, could be described as short and long-term memory (Penkwitt, 2006: 3).

Communicative memory could also be called everyday memory. It is about the oral everyday communication that creates a memory in each person, which, according to Halbwachs, is socially transmitted and group-related and therefore highly dependent on socialization. Every single memory is constituted through the communication with others. These others are members of groups that share some feeling of belonging which is partly based on the awareness of a shared past. An important characteristic of the communicative memory is that it has a limited time frame or horizon (Assmann, 1988: 10f).

As communicative memory is characterized through its proximity to everyday life, cultural memory in contrast is characterized through its distance to everyday life. Cultural memory has so-called 'fixed points' – its horizon does not move along with an ever continuing presence. These fixed points are important fateful events that happened in the past and their memory is kept alive through cultural shaping (e.g. texts, rituals, monuments) and institutionalized communication. Cultural memory preserves the reservoir or stock of knowledge of a group, from which a group obtains its feeling of unity and peculiarity. No memory is able to conserve history as such but only that what remains of it; what society is able to reconstruct in each era and its correspondent frame of reference. Cultural memory is 'cultivated' by 'experts' through the use of different media,

able to gather much more information than on oral communication based communicative memory (Assmann, 1988: 12f; Penkwitt, 2006: 3).

Aleida Assmann continues with a subdivision of cultural memory into functional memory and storage memory. Regarded on the collective level it is comparable to what Freud introduces on the individual level as conscious (*Bewusstes*) and unconscious (*Unbewusstes*). Functional memory therefore highlights single aspects of the cultural archive that always focus on collective identity formation (Penkwitt, 2006:4).

As Halbwachs and Assmann point out, the present and its needs, problems, concerns and intentions define how we see, understand and articulate that what happened in the past. "Memory is thus never fixed, but constantly being constructed and reconstructed in reference to the evolving need of the present" (Dragovic-Soso, 2010:30). This notion is particularly noteworthy if it comes to identity and if we consider how important traditions and the perception of the past are for national identity formation. According to Dragovic-Soso "[l]ike memory, national identity is dynamic and malleable rather than fixed in time, subjective rather than defined by specific objective criteria" (2006:31). Following this constructivist reasoning Anderson even called nations 'imagined communities'. "it is imagined because the members even of the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion" (Anderson, 1983). Gillis states that "national memory is shared by people who have never seen or heard of one another, yet who regard themselves as having a common history" (Gillis, 1996: 7). Hobsbawm writes about national 'traditions' as oftentimes being rather recent in origin and at times even invented (Hobsbawm, 2012:1)

In a purely constructivist view "memory is [...] coopted, modeled, and reshaped by the state and its elites to become an integral part of the national narrative and provide justification for international policy" (Dragovic-Soso, 2006: 31). According to this reasoning memory is thus (often) constructed with a specific aim, as well as it is highly selective.

Subotic shows, that "narratives of the past are often mutually exclusive, contradictory and irreconcilable [and that] the ways in which states in the [Balkans] remember their pasts provide continuing obstacles in the search for acknowledgement and justice" (Subotic, 2013: 266). She further states, that the remembrance endeavors in the Balkans in the areas of history education and national memorialization were mostly used "to

entrench further mutually incompatible versions of the past and contribute to a renewed cycle of mistrust, untruth and injustice" (Subotic, 2013: 267).

Subotic advises the use of narrative analysis in order to "uncover ways in which a story is constructed, for whom, and for what purpose" (Subotic, 2013b: 306). This is based on the aim to find out "how understandings and interpretations of the past become a social fact that then drives contemporary political choices" (Subotic, 2013b: 307). This again is related to the concept of 'hegemonic narratives'; which are "overpowering, dominant stories, that encounter little societal opposition" (Subotic, 2013b: 307) and "establish themselves as dominant, constituting for many an unquestioned 'common sense' and marginalizing alternative understandings" (Ronald R. Krebs and Jennifer K. Lobasz, 2007 in: Subotic, 2013b: 307). "These dominant narratives interpret the past and then situate the past in the circumstances of the present. Historical memory then provides a 'usable past' that political elites use to justify the present" (Subotic, 2013b: 307).

Thelen points out that "the struggle for possession and interpretation of memory is rooted in the conflict and interplay among social, political, and cultural interests and values in the present" (Thelen, 1989: 1127). Subotic therefore argues that "state narratives can and often do guide and influence contemporary policy decisions. They redefine how historical events are represented and fix their meaning in place [...] Over time and with infinite iteration by political leaders, elite intellectuals, the educational establishment, popular culture, the media, and everyday conversation, a particular state narrative fixes the meaning of the past and limits the opportunity for further political contestation" (Subotic, 2013b: 308).

Although there is widely accepted consensus about memory and identity as being socially framed or even constructed, critical voices advise caution to not focus only on this top-down approach to memory and national identity, as it would exclude other representations of the past. Referring to Foucault's notions on 'counter-memory' and 'popular memory' the argumentation is that a "bottom-up view can show areas of resistance to dominant frameworks and visions" (Dragovic-Soso, 2006: 31f), and collective memory should therefore be seen as a site of contestation in which alternative narratives – comparable to a paradigm shift – might contest the constructions of the past undertaken by the state and elite.

Even though the constructivist approach emphasizes how the present determines our understanding of the past, scholars like Connerton point out that the past equally shapes our perception of the present: “[O]ur experience of the present very largely depends upon our knowledge of the past” (Connerton, 1989:2). Hence, memory reflects a rather complex relation and “acts in both directions: as a mediator between our visions of the past and those of the present, shaping both in the light of the other” (Dragovic-Soso, 2006: 32). Also if no one denies that elites possess significant power in influencing discourses about the past, these discourses cannot just be freely created but - at least to a certain extent - need to be based upon some repertoire or frame of already existing myths, symbols and understandings of history that have been established throughout a certain time (Dragovic-Soso, 2006: 32; Halbwachs, 1992: 42). Jan Assmann describes the memory function of culture; culture as a system of signs and cultural texts which determine the scope of the horizon of cultural memory. He depicts culture as a mnemonic technique and cultural texts as the diachronic backbone of a society that secures its identity and coherence throughout consecutive generations (Assmann: gff).

It might be useful for a better understanding to regard the relation between past, presence, history, individual and collective memory and identity as reciprocal and highly dynamic, and not as a simple one-way road of cause and effect. And as mentioned above, different aspects of these entangled relationships are exposed to the thread of fraud, manipulation and propaganda. As Reemtsma and Penkwitt emphasize, forgetting is a substantial part of remembering. Thus memory per se is a mechanism of selection, ordering memories into important and insignificant (Reemtsma, 2010: 3; Penkwitt, 2006:1). But the point here is that this originally natural selective process, again, might be influenced and exploited.

This is of particular importance if it comes to conflict situations. As Dragovic-Soso shows, it is often thought about memory and conflict being “linked through the medium of collective myths that generate fear and hatred of the designated ‘other’.[...] Like the relationship between memory and identity, that between memory and myth is dynamic and mutually supportive; myths define the ways in which the past is collectively remembered, while memory provides the basis on which myths are created” (Dragovic-Soso, 2006: 32f). Hence, myths are jointly responsible for which part of memory is made salient, which, somehow, brings us back to Aleida Assmann’s concept of functional memory and its signif-

icance for identity formation. In the same way myths can generate emotional responses and feelings of belonging, deciding about whether one is included or excluded from a specific group. Collectively shared myths become seriously problematic if they justify ethnic hostility. This brings us to the central question of why we should remember.

### **The functions of memory – Why should we remember?**

As we can see, there is scholarly minimal consensus about memory being constructed. Further it is acknowledged that the interplay of collective memory, the way of how history is understood, national identity shaping and myths creation plays a crucial role in conflicts, as it often is a driving force. Likewise, many scientist and peace workers, though clearly not all, share the conviction that democratic transformation and peace building can only succeed when societies deal with their past. But does dealing with the past necessarily contribute to peace building? And why should we deal with the past at all? This section aims at presenting the main reasons for (not) dealing with the past.

Reemtsma for instance raises doubts about this widespread focusing on the past by asking “What is supposed to be positive about remembering?” (Reemstma, 2010: 3). He states that remembering and forgetting both are human characteristics - neither good nor bad – but necessary for being able to deal with one’s life. As mentioned above, he regards forgetting as a substantial part of the (selective) process of remembering. Even more drastically: To think about memory as something that is per definition positive is nonsense. And repression is nothing bad (Reemtsma, 2010: 3).

Also Dragovic-Soso and Hamber summarize some of the dangers and reasons that might be brought forward as arguments against remembering. “Memories or propaganda-inspired illusions about memories, can motivate people [...] to engage [in new conflicts]” (Dragovi-Soso: 2010: 29). Hamber adds that “uncovering the past can de-rail peace initiatives and cause further violence” and that, if the process of uncovering the past is not conducted carefully, “it could be more psychologically painful than leaving it undisturbed” (Hamber, 1998: 56). And even Aleida Assmann points out that “the memory of violence, injustice, suffering and unsettled accounts it prone to generate new violence, mobilizing aggression between neighbors which breaks societies apart (Assmann, 2011: 15). And Mendelhoff adds, that truth telling about past occurrences might in

fact be a hindrance instead of a support for reconciliation, referring to some cases in which amnesia may be more beneficial to harmony and mutual support than lingering in the past (Mendelhoff, 2004). Especially if one focuses on younger generations that did not personally experience the conflict in their society, forgetting the past could enable them to “create a new future unpolluted by the past” (Hamber, 1998: 56).

Another very important point that has been mentioned before is, that through ‘remembrance’ activities the past could be manipulated and reinterpreted. But instead of being regarded as an argument against remembering, this could also serve as a reason for more critical remembrance and deconstructing made-up myths and traditions. Subotic shows that “narratives of the past often are mutually exclusive, contradictory and irreconcilable”, that the ways in which states remember often provide obstacles, and that “[i]nstead of being productive instruments of transitional justice, official remembrance efforts in [the Balkans] in the areas of history education and national memorialization have been largely used to entrench further mutually incompatible versions of the past and contribute to a renewed cycle of mistrust, untruth and injustice” (Subotic, 2013: 266).

Still, in most of the literature contra-arguments are clearly outweighed by reasons for investigating and uncovering the past. As the Peace Building Initiative puts it, “In peace building processes, memory and history work contribute [...]: To account for a variety of narratives and complex truths [...]; To assist survivors and support transitional justice efforts; To support reconciliation processes and the construction of a re-imagined political community; To pave the way for future generations and prevent future violence” (Peace Building Initiative, 2009). Dragovic-Soso instead identified three main assumptions for confronting the past: First, a psychological one, that “working through the past is necessary for healing, forgiveness and reconciliation”. Second, a political one, that the “processes of coming to terms with the past foster democracy and promote peace and respect for human rights, and thus act as a deterrent against future conflicts and abuses”. And third, a moral one, that it “is a duty to remember the victims, to acknowledge their trauma, and to confront both individual and collective responsibility for their trauma” (Dragovic-Soso, 2010: 34). However these rationales are subdivided into groups of arguments, the basic messages remain the same and are, in similar ways, repeated in much of the scientific literature, which will be summarized in

the following.

The psychological reasoning is based on Freud's psychoanalytic approach that retrieving repressed hurting memory is integral part of the healing process (Misztal, 2003: 14off). Or, how Hamber puts it: "Sleeping dogs don't lie" (Hamber, 1998: 56), meaning that past traumas do not just disappear when time passes by, but that they have emotional consequences, and therefore cannot be simply ignored. This leads to the idea that restoration or healing can be achieved through offering public space for traumatic memories of victims, giving them the opportunity to feel heard, achieve extensive acknowledgement of what they went through, and allowing them to work through their trauma in a safe environment (Dragovic-Soso, 2010: 34; Hamber, 1998: 56f, Subotic, 2013: 267). "Memory, as perpetuated through processes such as memorialization seen in national monuments and commemorative celebrations can assist [...] survivors of human rights violations through symbolic reparations to beginning the process of healing" (Naidu, 2006: 1). "Public acknowledgement and remembrance of atrocity is an act of collective recognition" (Peace Building Initiative, 2009), a kind of "collective confession" that is needed for national healing and peace building processes. The same process gives society the opportunity to learn from what has happened in order to prevent future violence, as well as the recognition and knowledge of wrongdoing and the uncovering of truth and justice increases the chances for those that are suffering to deal with emotional responses to past events. Nonetheless, scientists advised caution to not overstate the "therapeutic effects of public testimony and assuming that nations have psyches that experience trauma in a similar way to individuals" (Dragovic-Soso, 2010: 35).

Talking about the political rationale for remembering, Mendelhoff remarks that "one of the most widely claimed effects of truth-telling is that it promotes and strengthens democratic institutions, practices and values in war-torn societies" (Mendelhoff, 2004: 361). Through the process of dealing with the past societies shall learn to respect human rights, create a culture of tolerance and outline needed reforms. However, as mentioned above, these processes are not without dangers. As George Orwell phrased it, "whoever controls the past controls the future" (Hamber, 1998: 57). By this quote Hamber reminds us of the fact, that "[r]emembering and its use (and abuse) cannot be separated from the present social and political concerns, and could serve the interests of one sector of the

society. It is for this very reason that as many voices as possible should engage in the process of remembering" (Hamber, 1998: 57). This view is shared for instance by the Peace Building Initiative, which states that after a conflict situation, societies try to rewrite the narrative of their past. While doing so, different 'truths' and points of view are likely to coexist, blend together and sometimes enrich one another, without inevitably coinciding. They even might cause multiple contradictions. Different actors do not always have the same relation to past experiences, but still each of them tends to assert the legitimacy of his or her truth (Peace Building Initiative, 2009). This might generate "a struggle among 'memory entrepreneurs', who seek social recognition and political legitimacy of one (their own) interpretation or narrative of the past" (Jelin, 2003: 33). But it also shows us how important it is to critically confront the past.

Another argument for confronting the past is raised by Subotic, who warns us, that "uncontested public memories of past conflicts become salient because they are assimilated into public discourse and become very difficult to challenge, reproducing themselves over time, and taking a life of their own" (Subotic, 2013: 268).

"The construction of joint narratives requires patience and readiness to examine and engage the other side's perspective, especially in cases when such positions seem initially offensive" (Barkan, 2005: 233). In Hambers words it is only through "the process of remembering [that we can] enter into the socially contested field of the past. In doing so, we open the only possibility of developing creative and constructive collective memories that are functional to as many people within society as possible" (Hamber, 1998: 57). In the end this means that it is needed to listen to, to test and eventually to publicize the respective sub-narratives and partial stories.

"Various studies have shown that memory is intrinsically linked to identity and the transmission of memory and history in a post-conflict period can play a significant role in evolving new identities of citizenships. [...] While national narratives often portray a selective version of the past in an attempt to build a national identity and consolidate new political identities, narratives within the home and school have the potential to provide alternative visions of the past to provide a more holistic picture of events of the past as well as promote a critical citizenship" (Naidu and Adonis, 2007: 29).

In the words of Elizabeth A. Cole, “the need for a usable past, which implies some kind of master narrative that is both officially sanctioned and not exclusively negative, is genuine and cannot be ignored” (Elizabeth A. Cole in: Peace Building Initiative, 2009). Such a master narrative relates to “more or less conscious efforts to define and reinforce feelings of belonging that aim to maintain social cohesion and defend symbolic borders. At the same time, [these master narratives] provide the reference points for framing memories of groups and sections within each national context” (Jelin, 2003: 27). Ultimately this leads to the construction or reconstruction of what Anderson calls an ‘imagined community’ (Anderson, 1983), created by the important sense of sharing the same history, which is a crucial element in the shaping of political communities and collective identities (Peace Building Initiative, 2009). Memory work, memorialization and remembrance offer an influential arena for these processes, especially if it is about contested memory (Barsalou and Baxter, 2007:4). “When memory projects go beyond the role of museums to become centers of discourse on the past, they become living examples of the reconciliation process, signifying the population’s recognitions of the past and its affirmation of a different future. [...] They are critical to the process of deepening a country’s democracy by creating avenues for building trust and mutual understanding” (Topol).

Memorialization can enable different generations to comprehend past conflicts and to act as mediators between the past and the present, as societies hand their memories of the past on through intergenerational dialogue, education and memorials. A very important space where intergenerational dialogue takes place is the family; thus the family is an essential element for transmitting historical memory to subsequent generations (Naidu and Adonis, 2007: 6f). Hence, in the time immediately following on (violent) conflicts it is the young generations that need to obtain particular attention, as it is “the generation that inherits the experience of violence as still living memory; [and] it is this crucial interval that the past can be frozen into some form of collective mythology, or comprehended in its historical complexity” (Eva Hoffman in: Peace Building Initiative, 2009). To understand the past as the past is therefore a central achievement of society. “The ultimate objective of history is to give meaning to past events [...] with the hope of preventing or limiting the chance that tragedies will recur, or at least raising the populations awareness of the risks” (Pouligny, Doray and Martin 2007 in: Peace Building Initiative,

2009). In this sense, history education should be looked at in a context of civic or peace education. "Only when young people realize that histories are constructed rather than given, can they even begin to contemplate challenging and changing behavior that poisons inter-group relations" (Bush and Saltarelli, 2000: 20).

### **How should we remember?**

Once it is decided that remembering is a meaningful endeavor, international literature provides several recommendations that should be taken into account. According to Hamber remembrance should take place in a contextual, creative and official way. It is therefore indispensable to be aware of the fact that any strategies for dealing with the past are inescapably influenced by current political and social but also by specific local contexts. Additionally, "uncovering 'the truth' might obscure 'other truths'" (Hamber, 1998: 58). It is also not sufficient to simply uncover the past and the so-called truth, give advice about how the past should be addressed in the future and how victims should be treated. As Hamber puts it: "Truth for truth's sake can be pointless" (Hamber, 1998: 59). Many scholars agree, that fundamental institutional and political changes are needed to truly deal with past wrongs and that critical and sustainable practices of remembrance need to be institutionalized through e.g. education, history books, and public commemoration practices such as monuments, museums, street names, memory sites and national holidays, in order to be able to provide the benefits which remembrance can offer (see Hamber, 1998: 59; Subotic, 2013: 266ff; Subotic 2013b: 311).

Hamber also emphasizes the importance of remembering in a diverse and representative way. Amongst others Hamber refers to the fact that after a conflictive past there remains a lot of mistrust of 'the other' within different societal groups. "The impact of these perceptions cannot be underestimated" (Hamber, 1998: 59) and call for a sensitive and inclusive way of remembering, trying to design the remembrance process as representative as possible, without excluding specific groups, allowing for different narratives (Peace Building Initiative, 2009; Subotic, 2013b:267).

Further, Hamber asks for remembering in a legitimizing way. One should be aware of how stressful a process of coming to terms with past can be for those who were involved in the conflict. "Although acknowledgement, apology, recognition and even compensation can be useful, these act – no matter how well meaning – can never bring back the dead nor meet all the

levels of psychological pain suffered by the families and victims" (Hamber, 1998: 60). He also states, that "it is critical that victims are not expected [...] to forgive the perpetrators [and that] the anger of family members, or other emotional responses [...] has to be legitimized and space provided for people to express their feelings of sadness and rage" (Hamber, 1998: 61). At the same time the 'perpetrators' stories need to be included, if true reconciliation is an aim of the remembrance process. Here Dragovic-Soso reminds us, however, that there exist different concepts of guilt among those involved, and the "dividing line between victims and perpetrators is simply not that clear cut; former victim groups can and often do become perpetrators themselves [...] particularly in regions characterized by cycles of violence" (Dragovic-Soso, 2010: 39f.).

Hamber also makes clear that it is needed to remember in complex ways, as most conflict situations are multi-dimensional and diverse. "Strategies which investigate the past can be - if the issues are not approached sensitively - prone to emphasizing or under-emphasizing certain aspects of the conflict" (Hamber, 1998:62). Obscuring certain aspects is for instance oftentimes related to gender issues, but this will be discussed later. As mentioned above, actors in conflicts often have multiple roles and can be victims and perpetrators alike. In the process of coming to terms with the past this requires complex stories to be told. At the same time this should not be understood as a simple expression of 'we are all victims', as often "some parties are clearly more to blame for the suffering than others" (Hamber, 1998: 63).

It is equally important to keep in mind that dealing with the past is always about shaping the future. The past is not only dealt with for its own sake. Reconciliation, justice, democratization and ultimately especially a peaceful living together are all hopes that are related to dealing with the past practices and that at the same time are driving forces behind it. "The past is gone, it is already determined; it cannot be changed. The future, by contrast, is open, uncertain, indeterminate. What can change about the past is its meaning, which is subject to reinterpretations anchored in intentions and expectations toward the future" (Jelin, 2003: 27).

Further, the constructed nature of memory shows us how important it is to understand power relations and to take them into consideration while memory work is done, since they can give us insight in "where memory can be wielded to the detriment of the powerless" (Impunity Watch, 2004). Another important aspect is to be aware of in what kind of (post-)

conflict situation or in which step of transition a society currently finds itself, as the distance (or closeness) to experienced conflicts or violence – that is whether one deals with living or historical memory – crucially influences people's emotional responses while confronting these events.

## Memory and Gender

Above it was pointed out that while dealing with the past some aspects might run the risk of being emphasized while others are underemphasized, stay in the background or are even ignored entirely. One of these aspects, which finally gains more recognition in the international literature dedicated to remembrance and memory work is gender issues. Penkwitt regards gender as a product of cultural memory and of the creation of tradition. In this sense gender is constructed by being individually and collectively remembered, rearticulated and constantly repeated. At the same time our memories are 'gendered' as it seems that in cultural memory women and men are not remembered equally (Penkwitt, 2006: 1). This coincides with Schraut and Paletschek's view that "European national cultures of memory are male-connoted and oriented towards the bourgeois gender-model" (Schraut and Paletschek, 2008: 267).

Gender, like remembering, is seen as a social construction, as they are both regarded as so-called 'performative processes'. Judith Butler used the distinction of performative and constative statements in order to support her theory of 'doing gender'. A constative statement is a statement about reality, which can either be right or wrong. A performative statement instead is a statement that goes along with an act that creates a social reality. Butler thus understands gender as a performative act. Through repeated acts of 'doing gender' the social construct gender becomes materialized. This means that gender, similar to memory, is not something that simply exists, but by saying that gender exists and by simultaneously acting as if it existed it becomes a social reality. But not only acts of individuals are performative. Equally important are performative discourses that influence individuals. Since individual memory is equally shaped by societal discourses as doing gender of single individuals is influenced by discourses, Penkwitt draws a comparison between 'doing gender' and 'doing memory': Memory is created by concrete acts of remembering (Penkwitt, 2006: 6)

Women are excluded in two ways from cultural memory, which plays an important role in the shaping of identity. On the one side, women have

been mostly excluded from different sciences, also those that deal with the past. So a female perspective in the shaping of cultural memory is likely to be missing. On the other side, women who played an important role in the past are often not represented in the cultural memory itself (Penkwitt, 2006: 4). According to Schraut and Paletschek "national cultures of memory are a relatively new phenomenon. Shaping of national memory has been a significant part of nation building since the nineteenth century. [...] The exclusion of women from the nation is reproduced in nineteenth century national cultures of memory and is thus reinforced. [...] Although integral part of the nation [...] they were excluded from the body politic and they were denied civil rights" (Schraut and Paletschek 2008: 267). "Memory culture is [...] shaped by the bourgeois gender model which started its triumphal march in this time. The dichotomy of male – public and female – private anchored in the central bourgeois concepts had the result that female scopes of action and female perspectives were not perceived as political or as having impact on society" (Schraut and Paletschek, 2008: 271). If women were included into memory culture, then mostly in typically female connoted ways as for instance 'the mother of the country'.

There is a discussion about whether women and men remember the past differently. There are some results that show that women personalize their memories more than men do. "Women say I when men say one [and] memory research demonstrated that memories which are connected with own experiences are rooted deeper than de-personalized memories" (Schraut and Paletschek, 2008: 273). Schraut and Paletschek describe female remembrance as a form a remembrance that allows for regarding the family as a space for counter-tradition and as a "place of creating traditions far away from the state and beyond what is considered desirable by politics or the public" (Schraut and Paletschek, 2008: 273). Thus family is seen as a place where traditions are passed on from generation to generation (See also Peace Building Initiative, 2009 and Naidu and Adonis, 2007: 6f). "Including the feminine connoted space of the family into the analysis of public political memory culture enables us to examine and contrast the memory considered desirable by the political system and (female) lines of counter-tradition with elude public control" (Schraut and Paletschek, 2008: 273). Concentrating on family memories therefore might allow us to integrate this mainly female communicative memory into the male dominated cultural memory. In Schrauts and Pal-

etschek's view a consequent integration of communicative memory into the public culture of memory could thus promote the gendering of memory culture. "A gender sensitive presentation of memory culture should make the heterogeneity of social memory visible and include as many actors as possible in the process of shaping a gender-democratic social memory" (Schrout and Paletschek, 2008: 277). "Memory images which are influenced by the bourgeois gender model have to be stripped of their seemingly timeless anthropological character. A first step to deconstruct such gender stereotypes which claim validity beyond historical change is to consistently put them into historical context. [However] deconstruction alone does not lead to the anchoring of female remembrance into cultural memory. Prerequisite the writing of women into memory culture is to break the dominance politics and nation have in cultural memory" (Schrout and Paletschek, 2008: 281).

### **Memory and the Internet**

Jan Assmann notices, that the revolutionary development of electronic devices and the internet as new storage and communication means will probably have a deep impact on the structure of cultural memory (Assmann: 25). The amount of what is storable is becoming unlimited and leads to the dissolution of the traditional time 'horizons'. This could lead to the disappearance of socially predetermined relevance rankings, which distinguish the functional memory from the storage memory, that is, which separate important aspects (worth remembering) from unimportant aspects (not worth remembering). Thus, vanishing time horizons due to immense possibilities to store information might create a challenge for us to orientate us in almost unlimited information and memories. But this could also mean that what we regard as important or as interesting or as worth remembering, would not any longer be predetermined in the same social and cultural ways as before, but instead would more depend on what we like and chose. (Assmann: 26).

So the internet could also be regarded as a chance for changing and challenging hegemonic narratives. In the same way "the internet could be a suitable instrument for the creation of a multi-faceted and cross-border landscape of memory which prevents an overly quick canonization of images of history (Schrout and Paletschek, 2008: 278). It can allow access to memory culture without travelling to sites of memory, it can offer the chance to present history without having to follow hegemonic interpreta-

tions of the past and it also might avoid the problem of having to limit and select information due to too high costs. Through the opportunity of a broad multidimensional presentation of memory the internet might help “to establish points of resistance in national cultures of memorialization which tend toward canonization” (Schraut and Paletschek, 2008: 278).

## Literature

Anderson, B. (1983). *Imagined communities: reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism*. Verso. London, UK.

Assmann, A. (2011). From collective violence to a common future: four models for dealing with a traumatic past. *Other People's Pain: Narratives of Trauma and the Question of Ethics*, Oxford et al, 43-62.

Assmann, Jan: *Das Kulturelle Gedächtnis*. <http://www.db-thueringen.de/servlets/DerivateServlet/Derivate-1345/assmann.pdf> (viewed at 15/5/2014).

Assmann, J. (1988). Kollektives Gedächtnis und kulturelle Identität, In: *Kultur und Gedächtnis*, Frankfurt. 9 -19.

Barkan, E. (2005). *Engaging History: Managing Conflict and Reconciliation*. In *History Workshop Journal* (Vol. 59, No. 1, pp. 229-236). Oxford University Press.

Barsalou, J. M., & Baxter, V. (2007). *The urge to remember: the role of memorials in social reconstruction and transitional justice*. Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace.

Bush, K., & Saltarelli, D. (2000). *The two faces of education in ethnic conflict*. UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, Florence.

Connerton, P. (1989). *How societies remember*. Cambridge University Press.

Dragovic-Soso, J. (2010). Conflict, Memory, Accountability: What Does Coming to Terms with the Past Mean? In: W Petritsch and V Dzihic, eds. *Conflict and Memory: Bridging Past and Future in (South East) Europe*. (3) Baden-Baden: Nomos, pp. 29-46.

Gillis, J. R. (Ed.). (1996). *Commemorations: The politics of national identity*. Princeton University Press.

Halbwachs, M. (1992). *On collective memory*. University of Chicago Press.

Hamber, B. (1998). Remembering to Forget: Issues to Consider When Establishing Structures for Dealing with the Past. *Past Imperfect: Dealing with the Past in Northern Ireland and Societies in Transition*, 56-78.

Hobsbawm, E. (2012). Introduction: Inventing traditions. In: Hobsbawm, E., & Ranger, T. (Eds.). *The invention of tradition*. Cambridge University Press.

Jelin, E. (2003). *State repression and the struggles for memory*. U of Minnesota Press.

- Impunity Watch (2013). Policy Brief: Guiding Principles of Memorialization. In: *Perspective Series*.
- Mendelhoff, D. (2004). Truth-Seeking, Truth-Telling, and Postconflict Peacebuilding: Curb the Enthusiasm? *International Studies Review* (6), 355–380.
- Misztal, B. (2003). *Theories of social remembering*. McGraw-Hill International.
- Naidu, E. (2006). The ties that bind: Strengthening the links between memorialisation and transitional justice, TJP Research Brief. The Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, South Africa.
- Naidu, E., & Adonis, C. (2007). History on their own terms. The relevance of the past for a new generation. Cape Town: Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation.
- Olick, J. K., & Robbins, J. (1998). Social memory studies: From “collective memory” to the historical sociology of mnemonic practices. *Annual Review of sociology*, 24(1), 105-140.
- Peace Building Initiative: Memory & History Work & Peacebuilding Processes, March 11, 2009. <http://www.peacebuildinginitiative.org/index6079.html?pageId=1894> (viewed at: 15/5/2014).
- Penkwitt, M. (2006). Einleitung: Erinnern und Geschlecht. *FZG/FGS–Freiburger Zeitschrift für GeschlechterStudien*, 12(2).
- Reemtsma, J. P. (2010). Wozu Gedenkstätten? In: *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, 25 – 26 / 2010, 3–9.
- Schraut, S., & Paletschek, S. (2008). Remembrance and gender: making gender visible and inscribing women into memory culture. *The Gender of Memory: Cultures of Remembrance in Nineteenth-and Twentieth-Century Europe*. Ed. Sylvia Schraut and Sylvia Paletschek. Frankfurt/M.: Campus, 267-87.
- Subotic, J. (2013). Remembrance, Public Narratives, and Obstacles to Justice in the Western Balkans. *Studies in Social Justice*, 7(2), 265-283.
- Subotic, J. (2013). Stories states tell: Identity, narrative, and human rights in the Balkans. *Slavic Review*, 72(2), 306-326.
- Thelen, D. (1989). Memory and American history. *The Journal of American History*, 75(4), 1117-1129.
- Winter, J., & Sivan, E. (1999). Setting the framework. *Studies in the Social and Cultural History of Modern Warfare*, 5, 6-39.
- World movement for democracy, What's Being done on Memory Projects, Washington DC. <http://www.wmd.org/resources/whats-being-done/memory-projects> (viewed at 14/5/2014).



CIP - Каталогизација во публикација

Национална и универзитетска библиотека "Св. Климент Охридски", Скопје

323.1:316.7(497.7)

REALITY check : remembering the past - shaping the future : a comprehensive insight into local cultures of remembrance in three multiethnic municipalities in the Republic of Macedonia / authors Godana Duvnjak... [и др.]. - Скопје : Civil - Center for freedom, 2014. - 131 стр. ; 21 см

Фусноти кон текстот. - Автори: Gordana Duvnjak, Kirsten Shonefelld, Xhabir Deralla, Joss Becker, Biljana Jordanovska, Arbana Qerimi, Sasho Talevski, Kreshnik Ajdini

ISBN 978-608-65629-7-7

а) Меѓуетнички општества - Културолошки аспекти б) Македонија -

Меѓуетнички односи - Социологија на културата

COBISS.MK-ID 97494794





[www.civil.org.mk](http://www.civil.org.mk)

ISBN-10 608-65629-7-0  
ISBN-13 978-608-65629-7-7  
EAN 9786086562977