



FEDERATION OF HELLENIC SOCIETIES OF GREATER NEW YORK, INC.
ΟΜΟΣΠΟΝΔΙΑ ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΩΝ ΣΩΜΑΤΕΙΩΝ ΜΕΙΖΟΝΟΣ ΝΕΑΣ ΥΟΡΚΗΣ
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Dear Mr. Gruevski,

Please know that our Federation is the largest Hellenic-American organization of its type in the United States and represents well over One-Hundred (100) Hellenic-American Organizations in the Greater New York area. Accordingly, following a thorough and detailed review of your recent open letter to Konstantinos Karamanlis, the Prime Minister of the Hellenic Republic and inasmuch as many of our member societies represent geographical areas of Greece that were either directly or indirectly impacted by the historical events you addressed in your referenced letter, we felt prompted, and appropriately so, to respond to you.

We are convinced that if you and your Government acknowledge the historical injustices that were committed against the Hellenic people during and after the Second World War and take redressive measures, then and only then can the relations between your former Yugoslav republic and the Hellenic Republic flourish. As you correctly state, we cannot now change history, but as the old saying goes, "Those who fail to learn from history are doomed to repeat its mistakes".

As Greece and all other right minded governments were defending themselves against the Axis Powers in the Second World War, your Bulgarian forefathers were welcoming these evil despots in Skopje as liberators. This collaboration with both the Nazis and the Bulgarian occupation forces resulted in the murder and persecution of hundreds of thousands of Hellenes. Those not driven from their homes in places like Monastiri, Stromnitsa, and Gevgeli were forced to adopt a foreign identity to alleviate the continued persecution.

Sadly, the defeat of the Axis did not end the suffering of Hellenic Macedonians, who were then subjected to the murderous campaigns of the Comintern and their stooges in Greece. Seeking to divide the country and install a communist dictatorship, they proceeded in terrorizing, murdering, displacing, and kidnapping additional thousands of our countrymen. These crimes against humanity have been formally recognized by the United Nations, as was the kidnapping of at least 28,000 Hellenic children (see U.N. Resolutions 193 and 288), many of who repatriated only after the fall of the Iron Curtain.

Following the post war turmoil, to avoid punishment for their crimes, many of these outlaws fled to your country with their families. In the spirit of your letter, we believe that before these criminals and their collaborators, who you may consider worthy of reparations for any financial hardships they may have suffered, must first face justice,

either in the Greek Courts or in an International Tribunal. We also believe that reparations first be paid to the families of those Hellenes who were tortured and/or murdered by your former countrymen and that the living or the heirs of those unjustly forced to flee be allowed to return and enjoy their property.

While these documented crimes against Hellenes resulted in the displacement of thousands, there remains a large Hellenic minority in your country whose demands for recognition and basic human rights have been met with deaf-ears by your government. Among other things, our brethren wish simply to use their forefathers' surnames and not the Slavic ones forced upon them. They wish to form self-funded organizations and teaching institutions for the promotion of their Hellenic ethnic and religious identity, as denied them to date, without any disrespect to their new country. These are fundamental and universally recognized human rights that your government must guarantee all its people, if it ever hopes to become a member of NATO or the EU, let alone a respected government on an international level.

The first error that you can easily rectify is simple recognition. While the Hellenic community living in your country numbers in the tens, if not hundreds of thousands, your government's census numbers them at less than one thousand. This is of course the same census that numbers Bulgarians at less than two thousand, even though hundreds of thousands of your countrymen hold Bulgarian passports, much like your former Prime Minister Mr. Ljubco Georgievski.

Secondly, and as you correctly note in your letter to Prime Minister Karamanlis, "Good Will" is needed, yet on your part, as you have failed to eradicate provocative actions that harm the relations between our nations. As your former President, Mr. Kiro Gligorov, stated "...we are Slav Macedonians. That's who we are! We have no connection to Alexander the Greek and his Macedonia." It is therefore unimaginable for a country that has a former president confirming his exclusively Slavic identity and a former Prime Minister who holds a Bulgarian passport, to simultaneously and preposterously lay claim to Macedonia and its Hellenic history.

Let us begin with an understanding and agreement of who we are, what we want and how can we get there with as much mutual respect as possible without sowing the seeds for future confrontation..

If any of the foregoing are possible, we look forward to hear from you soon, either by words or by deeds.

President

General Secretary

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