



## FYROMITE SKOPJIAN FESTIVAL TURNS UGLY

Abalinx 4 March 2018 Peter Adamis

It is with great regret that a follow up article has been [produced to that of the first](#). What began as a peaceful and well organised festival turned into a mob of cattle that had stampeded amongst the sheep to speak.

As the marchers began their journey so did their anti-social behaviour become more violent to bystanders, shop keepers and any individual that took a greater than the usual glance a member of the public would take at such demonstrations?

As the demonstrators approached the inner city block, snaking their way through the various streets, they purposely took the route through the City Greek precinct in Lonsdale Street.

In doing so, they attacked bystanders, spat on people, intimidated others and attempted to smash the shop front of Australian Greek businesses. These shopkeepers in fear of their life locked the doors and watched passive as the FYROMITE demonstrators banged on the glass shop front, spat at the glass and made threatening gestures. Such behaviour only inflamed the passions of a crowd that was exhausted from the march and their anger culminated at individuals burning the Greek flag at a number of locations. Readers can view the trailer on YouTube and decide for yourself the antisocial behaviour of [burning a nations flag](#).



This sad turn of events is in contrast to the Australian Greek rally held previously. What were the FYROMITE Skopjians trying to prove the public may well ask? There was no need for such behaviour and certainly such incidents belong to backward nations striving to reach the level of a civilised society. Although the Police were in force, they were powerless against the passions of a mob of cattle who had one thought in mind and that was to vent their anger at an imaginary enemy that was not in sight. Did these FYROMITE Skopjians believe that their behaviour was appropriate, did they believe that by demonstrating in an uncivilised manner that it would endear the public to them. SBS Australia provided a brief view into the name dispute which can be viewed by clicking on: [A view from both sides of the fence](#).

[In the first article](#) it was reported that there were no Australian flags flying amongst a sea of red flags and others with a yellow symbol that was more like the Japanese rising sun fluttering in the wind like a lame duck. To make matters worse, and to agitate the crowd, flares were illegally used and thrown among the crowd. This stupid act only mad the demonstrators how more loudly and added to the unruly atmosphere. This was not a peaceful march on their way to their festival, their actions spoke louder than words. Apart from the flags menacingly striking the sky, banners with racial and vile comments were displayed, others incited violence and hurling insults at imaginary Australian Greeks, and making racist statements to those who bothered to watch their display of unruly behaviour.



Photographs taken of the demonstrators taken from different angles by a number of interested members of the public and those monitoring the journey, indicated that the crowd at that time had reached approximately 5000 member strong. However by the time the protester had reached their destination a number had left the mob of demonstrators and filtered through the streets and left. The original number of those who attended still stands at 11,000 and was reduced by those who left the parade during the route or after the mob had reached the Victorian Parliament.







What was of interest was the different ethnic groups that had attended the March. There were the Slavs from FYROM, Bosnians, Turks from Turkey and from North Cyprus mixed in with the main group.

What was truly sad to see was the amount of young children brought to the FYROMITE Festival and also were seen amongst the demonstration of burning flags, inciting violence, intimidating businesses and holding banners with racist and vile statements?

A number of the active and destructive elements of the demonstrators wore masks and others were hooded to hide their faces and from being recognised. I guess as an observer these youths thought it wiser to hide behind their masks because of reprisals in the future. It is a pity that the organisers did not take them by the scruff of the neck and give them a good talking to. These acts of violence, racism and provocative acts against the Australian Greek community did not help the demonstrators to send the right messages to Australian society.

Apart from the obvious, as an observer, I am greatly disappointed at brethren of the North who share the same faith and I for one had hoped for a peaceful demonstration that would eventually become a thing of the past and that both nations reconcile their differences. As for the Australian Greek reaction, social media chat lines were glowing hot from the discussions being bandied about by the various Australian Hellenic chat lines. Many criticised the peak bodies and others for not taking counter measures and failing to respond with an equal demonstration.



But one must admit that the phalanx of Australian Hellenic elders, organisers and leaders held firm against the tide of rampaging bulls so to speak and held the line by not responding in kind. This kind of restraint is admirable as it is a clear sign to one and all that Australians of Greek heritage have integrated well into Australian society. Their self-control, discipline and restraint under provocative, racist, threatening and intimidating actions of their brethren from FYROM has not gone unnoticed.

The FYROMITE Skopjain demonstrators lost the right to be taken seriously, their credibility and integrity is in shreds and the messages have left a sour taste in then moths of those who stood up to support them. On reflection, the public can be thankful that these types of demonstrations may be over soon, once the decision is made by the two nations involved.



It is a great pity that these two warring diametrically opposed communities cannot come to terms with each other and allow those responsible to make the decisions according to the will of their people. But I guess that just too much to ask. As for the future, I can only assume that this antisocial behaviour demonstrated today will continue in another form that may end up with violence being the result.

Despite my own Hellenic background, I must admit that although I am an observer of such matters, it saddens me greatly to see two communities at war with each other when they could work well together as one. Readers can view unbiased documentaries in video format by clicking on the following link: [The Macedonian name issue](#). Even though both communities share the same faith. Orthodox, today's demonstration proved to one and all that the case for the FYROMITES was lost on this day, their credibility in tatters and their dreams shattered.



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