

## Macedonian Tribune - History of the Macedonian Tribune

### Past Editors

#### **Christo N. Nizamoff was proud**

By Virginia Nizamoff Surso

...to have been the first foreign-born writer invited to join the prestigious Indianapolis Literary Club which boasts such members as Kurt Vonnegut and the late Booth Tarkington;

...to have been a founding member of the Indianapolis Press Club and its Man of the Year;

...to have been a member of Sigma Delta Chi Professional Fraternity for men in journalism and president of its Indianapolis chapter the year it was named most outstanding;

...to have been named to the Indiana Journalism Hall of Fame joining such select members as war correspondent the late Ernie Pyle and CNN's Brian Lamb;

...to have received the *Sagamore of the Wabash*, the highest civilian recognition given by the state of Indiana, and two Freedom Foundation Awards from the group at Valley Forge, Pa.

While he was proud of all of that, he was most proud of his work for the freedom of his beloved Macedonia from the early 1920s as a member of the Macedonian Press Bureau in New York City, through the more than 40 years he worked on the *MACEDONIAN TRIBUNE* as a writer, typesetter and editor.

He used every opportunity to inform Americans about the oppression of his people not only by communists, but also by Greek and Serb nationalists. He appeared on numerous TV talk shows, spoke before civic organizations, wrote articles for the Indianapolis daily press, was sought out by Ted Koppel of *Nightline*, and was considered Indianapolis' resident Balkan expert.

He took Macedonia's plight to the American public often. His talks covered everything from politics and Balkan affairs to St. Cyril's and St. Methodius's great gift to the Slavic people a written language.

He spoke often at MPO events cajoling members for additional donations to keep the presses of the *TRIBUNE* running. Some still tell of his strong-arm tactics at convention banquets where he kept an eye on donations, and never allowed prospective donors to leave without digging deeper into their pockets.

The Nizamoff home always was open for out of town visitors who stayed one night, or several weeks at a time, if there was an important job for them to do in the MPO office. The discussions were lively recounting both the humorous and the tragic lives of our people.

Discussions of life in New York City in the 1920s were vivid. Once two world-renowned writers discovered they had observed the same World War II naval battle from opposing ships, and had reported the battle to their respective newspapers one in England, one in Germany.

He was a gentle man who would choke up from a hug. He was a humorous man, who wrote "*Hitar Petar*" satires for the Tribune poking fun at Balkan politicians. He was a studious man who read incessantly.

But he also was a man who physically kicked people out of his home for being against freedom for Macedonia or his belief in how that freedom should be secured. He argued with anyone who didn't agree with MPO beliefs, and he was completely intolerant of communism and communists.

He believed strongly in family, yet was away from family most of his life. When he was just nine years old his mother sent her first born son to live with her cousin Simeon Radev in Sofia, to save him from the terrors of war. He returned to Yankovetz, Resensko, for only a short time before leaving for America in 1921 to escape Serbian oppression and never saw either his parents or his homeland again.

Nearly 20 years later he married Slavka Doucleff of Granite City and began his own family. He enjoyed their two children Nicholas and Virginia, their five grandchildren and the two (of the four) great grandchildren he knew. Since he was married so late in life, he always considered the great grandchildren as God's gift to him.

An American journalist wrote that he believed strongly in freedom and described him as a "shining example of man's eternal quest for liberty and free expression."

Christo once wrote, "There is a tendency in this country to take for granted the freedom and the blessing we have, to believe that we are entitled to it, that the country owes it to us. This attitude is wrong and it is dangerous. It leads to complacency. And, complacency is the twin sister of failure and decline. ...Let us do everything, everything we can to guard it, protect it and preserve it for ourselves and our children and for posterity."

At the turn of the century, Christo N. Nizamoff was chosen one of the 12 most influential persons who lived in Indianapolis during the 1900s by the *Indianapolis Star*.