

# Macedonian Tribune - History of the Macedonian Tribune Past Editors

## **Ivan A. Lebamoff, Editorial Board Chairman**

By Ivan A. Lebamoff

My memories of the MPO go way back, and they are extremely fond ones. As I ponder the MPO's long history, I cannot help but be impressed by the vision of its members and its leaders. Certainly it took vision to organize in 1922. It took even more vision to begin publishing the *MACEDONIAN TRIBUNE* in 1927. It took continuous vision for the organization to reach this Diamond Jubilee Celebration.

In the past, from time to time, the vision faded. Our members became tired or disinterested and the organization faltered.

Yet, in those instances the organization never failed to pick itself up by its boot straps and move forward to loftier heights.

I believe my tenure as president of the MPO created a vision for the organization to do just that move forward to loftier heights. I believe my vision for the MPO launched a new era, one that strives to focus on modernization.

We visibly changed the flag at the 65th annual MPO Convention placing the scarlet on top and the black on bottom signifying our continued crusade for a free and independent Macedonia. For many years the black was on top symbolizing the MPO in mourning over subjugated Macedonia. The change signified that henceforth the MPO would go to "war" for Macedonia.

We moved the headquarters to Ft. Wayne, put a woman on the Central Committee for the first time in history, appointed a woman as editor of the *MACEDONIAN TRIBUNE*, hired a woman to administer the organization, began a museum-library and hired an archivist/librarian and modernized the newspaper.

I believe it took vision to reach outside the organization and meet with leaders from other Macedonian organizations and allow the MPO message to reach our people in Europe through interviews with Bitolski Vestnik and A1 television.

I believe it took vision to reach out to younger people within the organization by asking many of them to serve as Alternates to the Central Committee so that their ideas can begin to take form.

These processes are ongoing and must continue to grow. The vision is there. I see it in the many new members who have joined, the markedly increased number of paid subscribers, and the excitement and growing attendance at our annual conventions.

Yet the fact remains that if the membership and the MPO's leadership should lose a vision for the future, the organization can falter again. We need to continue Macedonian Days of Learning.

We need to sponsor leadership conferences to which we invite our young leaders. We need to continue publishing an outstanding newspaper. We need to reach out to all of our friends who recognize the MPO as the flagship of the Macedonian Freedom movement.

We need to support democracy in the Republic of Macedonia. We need to support human

rights for our people in Greece. We need to urge open borders between Bulgaria and Macedonia with social, cultural and intellectual dialogue which will strengthen the ties between them.

If the vision is kept alive, our grandchildren, some day, will be celebrating the 150th anniversary of this colossus, the MPO a Diamond Forever.