

VISA card offer upsets Greeks

A VISA affinity card promoted by a group called United Macedonian Diaspora Fund (UMD) is deeply offending ethnic Greeks because the card uses the Star of Vergina, a Hellenic symbol from the ancient Greece.

"The United Macedonian Diaspora UMD a Washington DC-based lobby [is] promoting false historical revisionism," says a statement of the Cyprus Action Network of America or CANA.

United Macedonian Diaspora UMD promoter, Denis Manevski, has failed to respond to our inquiries. Mr. Manevski declined to answer us after he replied twice to serbianna.com inquiries with questions of his own.

"Star of Vergina symbol that is copyrighted exclusively in all its forms by the Hellenic Republic, in violation

of Article 6ter of the Paris Convention for the Protection of State Emblems, and Names, Abbreviations and Emblems of International Intergovernmental Organizations under the WIPO (World Intellectual Property Organization)," says CANA. A Star of Vergina as promoted by the United Macedonian Diaspora Fund was originally used on the flag of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia but it was subsequently modified because it is a Greek symbol.

Nikolaos Taneris, of the Cyprus Action Network of America, says that the star used on FYROM flag is the "1995 diplomatic compromise with the Greek state which holds the trademark to the Star of Vergina".

Greece is worried that such beliefs are deliberately fostered by the government in Skopje in order to seek Greek territory and has vowed to block Skopje's entry into NATO and other EU institutions unless it compromises on the matter.

"Using the United Macedonian Diaspora Affinity Credit Card for everyday purchases is an easy way for supporters to help further the Macedonian cause," said Denis Manevski, UMD Treasurer, on the web site.

With offices boasting to be in Washington DC, Brussels, Canberra, London, Melbourne, New York, Paris, Stuttgart, Sydney, and Toronto, one of the United Macedonian Diaspora Fund missions is to "Defend the Macedonian ethnic identity".

News

- *Greeks rank number one in love making! According to a recent survey conducted by Durex Condoms, Greeks have the most sex in the world. On average, Greeks hit the sack 164 times a year, topping out all their competitors.*

- *Students in Cyprus recently placed 22nd in Mathematics and 33rd in Science among school pupils from a group of 60 countries in a research study out by TIMSS (Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study).*

- *Aristotle University in Thessaloniki is partnering with the University of Novi Sad in Serbia to create a Greek Language school in Novi Sad.*

- *Kurdish rebel leader Abdullah Ocalan is suing Greece for 25,500 British pounds after accusing Athens of not protecting him in the Greek Embassy in Kenya in January of 1999.*

Greece calm after 8 days of riots by angry youths

ATHENS, Greece (AP) — Athens was calm Sunday after eight days of the worst riots Greece has seen in decades, sparked by the police killing of a teenager.

Traffic returned to normal in the center of town and open-topped double-decker buses carried tourists around the city's main sights. The cafes in the Thissio area under the Acropolis were busy, and couples took their children for Sunday walks.

But Greek youths who have protested daily since the boy's death have vowed to remain on the streets until their concerns are addressed. Protesters are angry not just at police but at a government already on the defensive over a series of financial scandals, and over economic issues.

"We are not in this for the short term," said Petros Constantinou, an organizer with the Socialist Workers Party. "We want the protests to continue after Christmas and New Year, until this government of murderers goes."



Analyst Theodore Couloumbis, however, said he expected the disturbances to "peter out" over the next few days.

"We are going to have periodic flare-ups," said Couloumbis, a professor emeritus of international relations at the University of Athens. "It will take a generation or two to straighten things out in Greece."

A newspaper poll published Sunday showed the governing conservatives' popularity at 20.6 percent, 5.6 percent below the main opposition Socialists. However, 55 per-

cent of respondents said neither party seemed competent to handle the situation.

"Political parties initially made things worse because they acted as if it was business as usual ... trying to score political points," Couloumbis said. The Focus poll of 1,000 people for Real News gave a 3.1 percent margin of error.

Violence has wracked Greece since the death of 15-year-old Alexandros Grigoropoulos Dec. 6. It spread from Athens to more than a dozen other cities. At least 70 people have been injured, hundreds of stores have been looted, and more than 200 people have been arrested.

Late Saturday and early Sunday, youths in Athens attacked a police station, stores and banks, and fought with police as candlelit vigils were held to mark a week since the shooting. Another vigil was planned for Sunday evening at the site of the shooting but heavy rain made a large gathering unlikely. A separate protest is scheduled for western Athens.

In the northern port of Thessaloniki, a few dozen people held a peaceful protest at noon. Overnight, suspected anarchist arsonists attacked two Communist

party offices with homemade gas-canister bombs and molotov cocktails, causing minor damage but no injuries.

While most protesters have been peaceful, the tone of the demonstrations has been set by a violent fringe. And more young people have been willing to join those fringe elements than in the past.

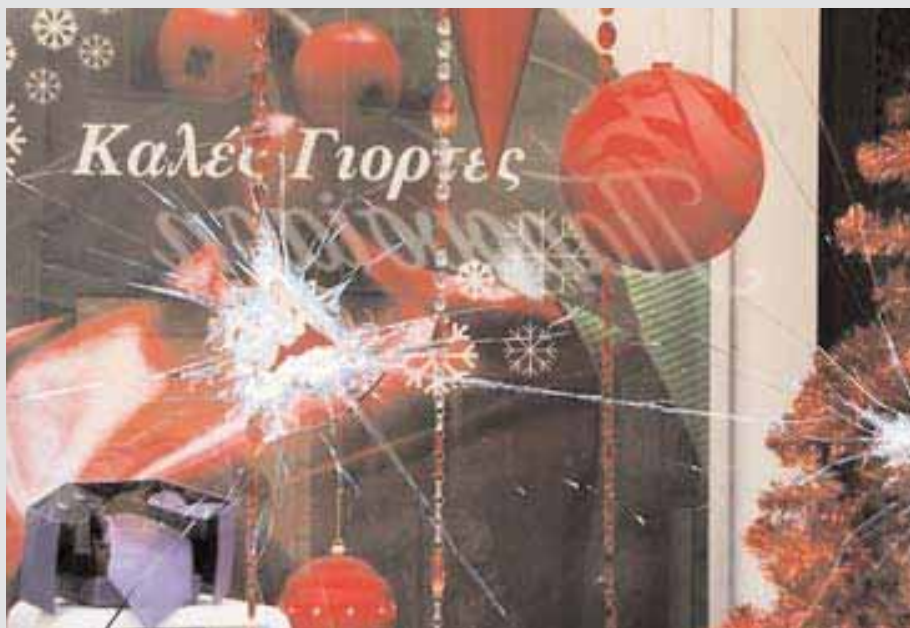
Couloumbis said the violence appeared to have been caused by "an abysmally insignificant group of destructive elements," whom students joined "for the fun of it." In a poll released Sunday, 62 percent of respondents said the riots following the shooting were inexcusable, compared to 35 percent who believed the violence was justified. The poll of 1,000 people gave no margin of error.

According to another poll, Greeks see more in the violence than a simple reaction to the shooting. Asked whether the riots were a social uprising, 60 percent said yes. Some 64 percent considered police unprepared for the violence.

The poll of 520 people published in the Kathimerini newspaper gave a 4.5 percent margin of error.

Demonstrations in support of the protests in Greece have been held in several European cities. In Berlin, a peaceful gathering on Sunday at Mauerpark drew about 50 people.

"We're not in favor of violence. We just want to show our support," said Yannis, 27, a Greek man who declined to give his last name. "We're not expecting any violence in Berlin because the circumstances in Greece are very different from those in Germany."



Pic of the day...

How we wish things we're different this Christmas season....