

British and American policies towards Greece were developed during the occupation and the early post-war period, how they interacted, how and why they led to the Truman Doctrine.

University of Thessaloniki

YIANNIS D. STEFANIDIS

Wolfgang Libal, *Mazedonien zwischen den Fronten: Junger Staat mit alten Konflikten*, Europaverlag, Vienna and Zurich 1993, 147 pp. + 4 maps.

In recent years, since the collapse of the federal structure of post-war Yugoslavia, the Macedonian Question has received a great deal of publicity, and continues to be an issue of some importance to the political leaders of the countries concerned. Wolfgang Libal's latest book joins the multitude of publications that have set out to describe and analyse the complex parameters of the Macedonian Question over the last few years. Mr Libal is a journalist of long standing, who has been involved with Balkan issues for many years; his decision to give an account of his professional experiences is a welcome one and will certainly assist his readers' understanding of the Macedonian Question.

At first sight, this book with its thirty-two short chapters may look like a simplified account of the subject addressed to the average reader. In the context of a problem which is bedevilled by historical arguments and political processes, an attempt to present the facts in a simple and straightforward manner can only be hailed as a constructive move. On the other hand, there is no denying that to the informed reader the very first pages seem to undertake a somewhat touristic approach to the geographical and historical aspects of the Macedonian Question. On page 7, for instance, Mr Libal states that Greece's only means of overland access to Central and Western Europe is through the FYROM; he does not mention the route through Bulgaria and Romania. On page 15 he says that the Macedonian Question exists because various Slavonic tribes settled around Thessaloniki, which is nonsense. And the map on the front cover seems to support this simplistic approach. The choice of colours conspires to produce associations of "good" neighbours (Albania and Bulgaria) and "bad" neighbours (Serbia and Greece) "besieging" poor little Macedonia. Similar interrelationships are reflected on page 85, in the account of the situation which developed after the end of the Second World War.

I have the following general comments to make about the book as a whole.

1. The writer is inconsistent in his bibliographical references. He does not always give the full details of the sources of his quotations (pp. 35, 50, 56, 71, 101-2, 112, 127, 136-7, 138).

2. He is inconsistent in his transliteration of, chiefly Slavonic, historical names and places. On pp. 17 and 145, for instance, he has Klement instead of Kliment; p. 19 Bjelašnica, Ograzden instead of Belasica, Ogražden; p. 25 Staro Nagoričino instead of Staro Nagoričane; p. 45 Halmi Pascha instead of Hilmi Pascha; pp. 121f. and 145 Ljubtscho Georgievski instead of Ljupčo or at least Ljuptscho Georgievski. And on pp. 80f. he does not seem to realise that Šarlo and Šatorov together form the double-barrelled surname of Metodi Šatorov-Šarlo (like Svetozar Vukmanović-Tempo).

3. Mr Libai has got some of his dates wrong: for instance, the 1991 referendum for the independence of the FYROM was held on 8 September not 7 September. It is also worth mentioning the backstage machinations that were involved in the referendum. Owing to the abstention of the Albanians (who held a referendum of their own on 11 and 12 January 1992 and produced a result of 99.86% in favour of territorial and political autonomy), 68.32% of those registered to vote and 95.09% of those who actually voted came out in favour of "a sovereign and autonomous state of Macedonia, empowered to participate in a union of sovereign states of Yugoslavia". But, both within the FYROM and abroad, the first part of the question posed by the referendum was emphasised —i.e. the autonomy (*samostojnost*), rendered as "independence" (*nezavisnost*), of the FYROM— while the second part was completely ignored.

4. Some of the information given about the status and background of certain people and institutions is wrong. On pp. 13 and 14, for instance, it is stated that the name "Macedonia" was unknown in the administrative structure of Greece until 1993. Under law 4134, promulgated on 28 February / 12 March 1913, the Governorate-General of Macedonia was established in Thessaloniki and continued to exist until 1955, when it was replaced by the Ministry of Northern Greece (under law 3200/1955). In 1988 this became the Ministry of Macedonia and Thrace. The Byzantine scholar G. Ostrogorsky (pp. 13 and 20) was not of Serbian but of Russian origin: born in St Petersburg, he received a German education, and lived in Belgrade. Ivan Mihajlov did not die in 1992 (p. 65), but in September 1990. The name of the leader of the SNOF was not Gocev (p. 97), but Goče (or Ilias Dimakis). Vojislav Šešelj and his Serbian Radical Party (p. 146) were active in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, not in the FYROM.

Now for some comments of a rather more specific nature.

1. With reference to the activities of the nationalist IMRO-DPMNE party

in the FYROM and the Greek fears engendered by those activities (p. 122), the following points must be borne in mind. Both the name and the manifesto of the party hark directly back to its late nineteenth-century homonym. Nor is it fortuitous that a State Department report of 1991 frankly describes it as a terrorist organisation that patterns its activities on those of the old IMRO¹. Furthermore, the party's main election poster depicted the whole of the geographical area of Macedonia accompanied by the slogan, "Take its fate in your hands". In its election proclamation, the party explicitly declared:

IMRO-DPMNU considers that those segments of the Macedonian nation living under a government of occupation in Greece, Bulgaria, and Albania are not an ethnic minority, but constitute the enslaved sections of the Macedonian nation; because a nation that has been living in its own homeland for ten centuries cannot be described as an ethnic minority. IMRO-DPMNU believes there is an urgent need for the spiritual, political, and economic unification of the Macedonian people [...] and it has a keen concern for those segments of the Macedonian people who are living in slavery in Greece, Bulgaria, Serbia, and Albania².

How telling that during the party's First National Conference at Prilep (6-7 April 1991) it was resolved that the next conference would be convened in Thessaloniki and the one after that in Blagoevgrad³!

2. On pp. 134-5, Mr Libal briefly refers to articles 3 and 49 in the constitution of the FYROM, which Greece regards as forming a basis for irredentist claims. Despite the additions and amendments inserted on 6 January 1992, the constitution remains strongly irredentist in tone. The main burden of the potential hostile propaganda and territorial claims lies in the controversial articles 3 and 49, together with their amendments, and articles 68 and 74.

However, the main resultant of the expansionist claims of the FYROM is the preamble to the 1991 constitution.

Resting upon the historical, cultural, spiritual, and statehood heritage of the Macedonian people and upon its centuries-long struggle for national and social freedom, as well as for the creation of its own state, and particularly upon the statehood-legal traditions of

1. *Patterns of Global Terrorism: 1990*, April 1991, Washington D.C., p. 18.

2. *Izbori '90: Političkite Partii vo Makedonija*, Skopje 1991, p. 137.

3. *Makedonski Glas* (Rockdale, Australia), 23 April 1991.

the Kruševo Republic [1903] and the historical decisions of the Anti-Fascist Assembly of the People's Liberation of Macedonia [1944] [...] the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia adopts the Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia.

These decisions signalled the foundation of the "People's Republic of Macedonia", as part of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. They explicitly proclaim the freedom and union of all the "Macedonian brethren" beyond the borders artificially created in the Balkans in the twentieth century.

It is important to bear in mind this excerpt from the *Report of the Organizing Committee of the Anti-Fascist Assembly of the National Liberation of Macedonia [ASNOM] Concerning its Activity from its Foundation to its First Session*, 2 August 1944:

At this instan[ce], when all fighting forces in Macedonia are engaged in combat against the Fascist occupiers, appealing to the other two segments of the Macedonian people to join the grand anti-Fascist front, since it is the only way to win the right to self-determination and the only path leading to the unification of the entire Macedonian nation in a free community of emancipated peoples of Yugoslavia. The fighting Piedmont of Macedonia has fiercely proclaimed that it will not stint on support or sacrifice for the liberation of the other two segments of our nation and for the general unification of the entire Macedonian people. When we know that the fighting Piedmont of Macedonia is a part of Tito's Yugoslavia, then it is obvious how great our support could be and how firm is our desire for the unification of our entire nation⁴.

Again, the *Manifesto issued at the First Session of ASNOM to the People of Macedonia*, 2 August 1944, stated:

In view of the centuries-old ideals of the people of Macedonia, the first Macedonian National Council proclaims to the entire world its just and resolute aspiration *for the unification of the whole Macedonian people* on the principle based on the right to self-determination. This would put an end to the oppression of the people of

4. The University of Cyril and Methodius, Faculty of Philosophy and History, *Documents on the Struggle of the Macedonian People for Independence and a Nation-State* (hereafter *Documents*), vol. 2, Skopje 1985, p. 607.

Macedonia in all its parts and would provide conditions for genuine solidarity and peace among the Balkan peoples⁵.

The additions and amendments made to articles 3 and 49 do nothing to soften this expansionist tone. The addition to article 3 to the effect that the "Republic of Macedonia" has no territorial claims against neighbouring states is a step in the right direction, certainly; but in essence it is no more than a gesture, because all nations are forbidden by International Law (*jus cogens*) to pursue territorial claims by unlawful means (i.e. using violence or in contravention of international treaties). The rationale behind article 3, in association with articles 68 and 74 (which also concern the changing of national borders) rests on the perception that any change of borders relates to the annexing, not the loss, of territory belonging to the FYROM; for, according to the constitution, its territory is "indivisible" and "inviolable". Furthermore, the FYROM has not yet officially recognised its existing border with Greece.

Both the reference to minorities in article 49 ("the Republic cares for the status and rights of those persons belonging to the Macedonian people who live in neighbouring countries") and the amendment of 6 January 1992 to the effect that "the Republic will not interfere in the sovereign rights of other states or in their internal affairs" provide the FYROM with a lever for territorial claims against neighbouring countries. The unilateral, arbitrary reference in the constitution to the existence of "Macedonians" in neighbouring countries, when international treaties have never acknowledged any such thing, is in itself a fundamental form of interference in the internal affairs of neighbouring countries, on the pretext of protecting the rights of the so-called "Macedonian minority". Consequently, the amendment has neither substance nor value.

In conclusion, the overriding impression made upon the reader is that Mr Libal is trying to "appease" all three parties directly embroiled in the complexities of the Macedonian Question: the FYROM, Bulgaria, and Greece. He apports the "Macedonian" heritage, so to speak, among the three protagonists as follows.

He acknowledges the Greek claim to the historical parameters of the issue, particularly the ancient Macedonian period (on p. 12 he points out that the present territory of the FYROM has nothing in common with the geographical bounds of ancient Macedonia; on p. 131 he notes that the FYROM has nothing in common with ancient Macedonia either politically or culturally). The Greeks may also legitimately regard Skopje's appropriation of the

Sun of Vergina as usurpation (p. 139).

Broadly speaking, he grants Bulgaria all rights connected with the linguistic aspect of the Macedonian Question (p. 140). However, he leaves open the possibility of whether the "Macedonian" character of the present form of the language spoken in the FYROM will survive; it will prove itself or not, he feels, through the quality of the language itself.

However, as far as the political parameters of the Macedonian Question are concerned, and particularly the political situation since the FYROM became independent in 1991 (pp. 141-3), the "Macedonian" people of the FYROM have the first and last word. In Mr Libal's opinion, the FYROM has every right to use the name "Macedonia", because Greece raised no objection when it was adopted after the War within the framework of federal Yugoslavia. (The Greeks not only failed to protest, though they had every reason to do so, since the neighbouring Communist countries were assisting the Greek Communists; they even entered into an alliance with Tito). He also comments that he could understand Greek fears if the name "Macedonia" were applied to a nation in the framework of a Great Yugoslavia; but now that the FYROM is an independent (and moreover small and weak) state and must maintain harmonious relations with all its neighbours if it is to survive, Greek fears based on past events and situations are unjustified.

Mr Libal believes that if stability is to be maintained in the Balkans and, above all, if a political settlement is to be found for the dispute between Athens and Skopje, history must not be allowed to cast its gloomy shadow across the future of the region. In the Balkans historical considerations play a catalytic role and strongly influence the progress of the nation-states. So it remains to be seen whether, when the present heated phase of the Macedonian Question is over, the historical stereotypes will return to determine the political decisions of this new-born state. At all events, the constituent elements of this little nation will have a direct bearing on the process of national integration, which is based on history.