

which now only Muslims and Croats participate, has no real power. War-lords on all three sides are making the situation completely confusing. The UN protective forces, which are presently in Bosnia-Herzegovina as well, has a mandate only to look after humanitarian convoys.

None of the minority issues in Serbia has been solved and there is a permanent pressure on and violence against the Croats and Hungarians in Vojvodina, the Muslims in Sanjak and the Albanians in Kosovo. All those minorities are denied any collective rights, old autonomies of Kosovo and Vojvodina are abolished. Macedonia has not yet been recognised because Greece blocked EC initiatives on account of dubious reasons which are not far from open territorial claims.

The situation is without doubt a vital test for the "New World order". All-sided observance of the international boundaries, as well as reciprocal guarantees for minority rights must be ensured by serious, not only formal, pressure against those who do not accept negotiation. The central and the key-problem is Bosnia-Herzegovina. All other solutions are very much influenced by the situation there. Can it be saved within the existing boundaries? A solution is not to be seen, especially not if searched for among local communities. International protection seems to be the only way, otherwise sooner or later existing division will be accepted. That would legalize Serbian territorial expansion reached by force and by crime.

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2. All the quotations are given according to original documents as they were published in Croatian in the daily newspaper "Novi Vjesnik", Zagreb, Croatia. Statistics are taken from 1991 census results for Yugoslavia and for the republics

Macedonia: A War of Words?

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"What's in a name?" When the name is Macedonia, the answer is as extensive as it is ambiguous. Were it not for Alexander, and possibly his father Philip, few people outside the area could name a "Macedonian". Yet, for instance, both Kemal Ataturk and Mohammed Ali, respectively founders of modern Turkey and Egypt, were born there; the one is always described as a Turk, the other usually as an Albanian, thus hinting at the ethnic complexities of this archetypal Balkan powder keg.

Alexander put Macedonia at the Old World's geopolitical centre, but the empire which he had

created in the space of 13 years (336-323 B.C.) and which reached to the Indus and into Central Asia did not survive his death. Though Macedonian cities, notably Thessaloniki, to which St. Paul had occasion to write, never lost all their importance, "Macedon" never again became an independent whole, let alone the core of an empire. Rather it became peripheral, but as the periphery of others' cores, it not infrequently became central to these other exterior interests. It thus lived on as a potentially valuable pivotal location, attracting outsiders, traversed by such great routes as Rome's Via Egnatia, and settled by a diverse mixture of peoples. In addition to those established by or during the Classical and Roman periods, these included Slav groups, from the Sixth Century, Turkish and other Islamic elements, from the Fourteenth Century and, after their expulsion from Spain in 1492, a commercially important Jewish community which was based in Thessaloniki until its elimination in World War II.

Macedonia thus lived on, not as a political expression but as a geographical location. As such, its boundaries are vague. The core is clearly the lowlands at the head of the Aegean Sea where several locally important rivers, notably the Aliakmon, the Vardar (Slav) / Axios (Greek) and the Struma (Bulgarian) / Strimon (Greek) have their exits. It also includes considerable upland tracts extending to the Aegean watershed in the north, in the vicinity of Kumanovo, the lignite-rich basin around Kozani in the west, and the three-pronged peninsula of Khalkidhiki in the south. This peninsula itself includes the interesting political unit of Mount Athos [the Holy Mountain], officially an autonomous theocracy and idealistically a haven of male Orthodox Christian inter-ethnic harmony. The Khalkidhiki is also the face of Macedonia most likely to be familiar to the visiting as it is the centre of northern Greece's rapidly-growing tourist industry.

Macedonia's limits, apart from the Aegean Sea, are essentially mountainous: the Sar Planina [2700m] in the N.W., the Rila and Pirin Massifs (2900m) in the N.E., the Pindus (2600m) in the S.W. and Mt. Olympus (2900m) in the S. So defined, these lands have for most of this century been shared by two states, Greece and the former Yugoslavia. A small but significant piece, commonly called "Pirin Macedonia", lies in Bulgaria and is essentially the Struma valley from Blagoevgrad southwards, whilst the Macedonian lakes of Ohrid, Prespa and Little Prespa all have an Albanian shore, thus adding credence to Albania's claim to be considered as one of the Macedonian states.

The area of this territory is some 64,000 km², with Greek Macedonia comprising 34,200 km² and the ex-Yugoslav area accounting for 25,700 km². The current (1993) population is estimated at approaching 5 millions, with Greek Macedonia (2.3 millions) having a slightly greater total than in the former Yugoslav area. The latter thus has, at some 815/km², a significantly higher population density than in the Greek area (c. 670/km²).

Macedonia as a geographical expression is clearly not in dispute, unlike the use of its name. Its boundaries are however vague and currently defined, at least in Greece and ex-Yugoslavia, by local administrative limits which, whilst essentially non-controversial at that level, when raised to international status have clearly the potential for causing conflict. Even more contentious is the composition of its population. To be described as "Macedonian" has invariably either had no single ethnic, linguistic or religious overtones, being simply a geographical description, or it has been specifically used as a statement of political affiliation in the evolving regional power struggles.

The recent, and in the context of the present crisis, most relevant history of Macedonia, begins in the late Nineteenth Century. Then this area, again centred on Thessaloniki, was the most important commercial, agricultural and strategic European remnant of the Ottoman Empire, apart from Istanbul itself. It was surrounded by three recently-independent states, Bulgaria, Greece and Serbia, all eager to expand and incorporate what they perceived as rightfully theirs, using a combination of historical, topographic and ethnic arguments which were inevitably intertwined so as to maximise the legitimacy of their claims to the Macedonian space. Inevitably these claims clashed and the two Balkan Wars of 1912-1913 were the immediate consequence. The Macedonian space was eagerly divided, Greece and Serbia being essentially satisfied with the result, with the Albanians, Turks and, especially, the Bulgarians regarding themselves as defeated, albeit temporarily.

Greece's claim, knowing that the ethnic argument was weak, was based on "natural" geographic boundaries which supported her historic claims; Bulgaria argued that the Macedonian population was linguistically Bulgarian, whilst Serbia developed the pan-Slav principles and argued that the Macedonians, though a distinct ethno-linguistic group, were nevertheless fellow-Slavs. The demographic outcome of these wars was the culmination of a process which had been well under way before these wars began and which, though not called by the name at the time, the world would now describe as ethnic cleansing. This proceeded in two very different ways: one was the physical transplanting of large numbers of the "wrong" sort of people, either by voluntary or compulsory means, with the latter often being authenticated by international population exchange agreements; the other was by persuading the population that they were not one thing but another. Thus, for example, in Greek Macedonia, not one of the five northern border districts which Greece gained had had even one quarter of its population classified as Greek in 1912, yet by the mid-1920s, none of the five had more than a tiny percentage of non-Greeks. This heightened spatial separation of the former population of Macedonia was given a further dimension by the arrival of large numbers of newcomers, notably Greeks from Asia Minor, who were settled in the area, often with League of Nations assistance, during the 1920's. The other method inducing change, that of "awakening new ethnic consciousness", had been going on for some time and usually involved a process of government-sponsored cultural infiltration, whereby educational, religious, commercial and charitable institutions were set up by the rival sides in the hope of winning the population round to a particular way of thinking. Thus:

"in one and the same household (can be found) presentatives of all branches of the human family; the father claiming for himself the Serbian descent, the son swearing that nothing but Bulgarian blood flows in his veins, while the daughters, if they are allowed a voice in the matter, will be equally positive that Helen of Troy or Catherine of Russia or Aphrodite of Melos was their ancestress. The old mother is generally content to embody her national convictions in the declaration that she is a Christian." (G.F.Abbott, "The Tale of a Tour in Macedonia", 1903).

Note that at that stage there was no suggestion that anyone might consider themselves to be "Macedonian".

The European upheavals of the next sixty years did not radically alter this political situation. Boundaries were briefly altered and even swept away, as when Bulgaria, from 1941-44, gained

access to the Aegean via control of the port of Kavala. Invaders came and went and the ideological struggle between Communism and the West split Macedonia in two, thus strengthening the division between the Greek and Yugoslav (and Bulgarian) halves in every way. Yet the "Macedonian Question" seemed basically to have been resolved, at least to the satisfaction of the Greeks and the Yugoslavs.

In this context it is easy, with hindsight, to see why the elevation of Yugoslav Macedonia to the status of one of the six federal republics in 1946 was such an important political act. Previously the territory had been regarded as part of Serbia's recovered lands and as such an integral part of a United Kingdom. Superficially, this change of status can be interpreted as being within the Yugoslav "federal spirit", which gave equal status to each of the spatially-distinct southern Slav peoples and encouraged them in those aspects of their cultural distinctiveness deemed to be beneficial to the united interests of the new Yugoslavia: one of these was "unity through diversity". Beneath that surface, however, two other motives emerge. One is that this decision by Belgrade, which was not the consequence of any particular local agitation for such a status, gave credibility to "Macedonian" as an ethno-linguistic group, thus bolstering the sense of separate identity in the area whilst simultaneously hinting that the surest way to preserve this identity was via the constructively positive federal constitution of Yugoslavia. The other is that this development was totally at odds with both the Greek and the Bulgarian views of the nature of the Macedonian population, which, for different reasons, were that no such distinctive population existed. This decision to create a Republic of Macedonia within Yugoslavia can therefore be seen as a deliberate rebuff both to the Bulgarians, who have consistently argued that the Macedonians speak a Bulgarian dialect and that Skopje looks naturally to Sofia, only 80km beyond Macedonia's border, rather than distant Belgrade, and to the Greeks who, at that stage in their Civil War, were hardly in a position to object. Nonetheless, Greece consistently refused to acknowledge that "Macedonia" could be anything other than a Greek name for a Greek place, even though, under Greece's internal administrative structure, "Macedonia" did not become a meaningful word until much later.

Steadily improving relations between these neighbouring states, coupled with the relatively low-key status of Yugoslavia's internal republics, meant that this festering problem was put to one side. From the late 1940's to the late 1980's the population of Yugoslav Macedonia rose from 1.2 to 2.0 millions, but despite constant federal investment and a huge input of international aid following the spectacular earthquake which hit Skopje in 1963, it remained Yugoslavia's poorest republic, with a per capita income less than half that of the state as a whole. South of the border, the Greek government was at last making serious attempts to remove some of their Macedonia's problems, which had contributed to a great outpouring of the population, especially towards Germany, in the 1960's and early 1970's. Never before had the economic contrasts between the various parts of Macedonia been so marked.

The twin crises which have hit this area since 1989 - the ideological collapse of Communism and the death of the old Yugoslavia have jointly produced the current crisis facing the Macedonia region. Yugoslavia, having lost Slovenia and Croatia, recognised the full independence of its Macedonia in late 1991. The new state's constitution, overtly multi-ethnic, was adopted in November 1991 by which time, although most of the paraphernalia of the old Yugoslavia's administrative apparatus had been withdrawn, some 30,000 troops of the old Yugoslav army remained; they were withdrawn only in June 1992. By the end of 1992 this independence had

only been recognized by the rump Yugoslavia, by Bulgaria (which recognized the state, but neither the legality of its boundaries nor the distinctiveness of its people), by Russia and by Turkey. All these recognitions were seen as essentially hostile acts by the Greek government, this being particularly so in the case of Turkey whose recognition was seen as deliberately provocative by the Greeks. Greece was, at least until early 1993, largely successful in its attempt to dissuade the world from granting recognition, using its EC membership as the main vehicle for its argument that the name "Macedonia" was a Greek monopoly and therefore dangerously inappropriate for the new state based around Skopje.

Though Greece's alarm is understandable, non-recognition conjures up even more alarming prospects. There is also some justification for the Skopje government's claim that this is grossly unfair since they, unlike many of the new crop of European states, have adopted a constitution which is fully in accord with the UN's concern for human rights, especially concerning minorities. This is of great relevance in this part of Macedonia where, according to the (disputed) census of 1991, 64% of the population was Macedonian, with important minorities including the Turks (5%), the Islamic Macedonians (5%) and, most significantly, the Albanians. Totalling 430,000, they amount to 21% of the total, a figure which Albanian sources claim is a considerable underestimation, and are spatially concentrated in the N.W. where they form a clear majority in the districts of Debar, Tetovo and Gostivar, and in certain suburbs of Skopje city (see Figure 1). The fact that this area is adjacent to both Albania and the Albanian-dominated Kosovo has not gone unnoticed. In contrast, in Greek Macedonia the population now sees itself as almost, but not quite entirely, Greek-speaking Greeks, but some sections note wryly that never before has the Athens government been so interested in associating itself with Macedonia and its problems



The economic outlook for the Skopje government is grim. Virtually forced into independence and with its access to the world's markets rendered precarious by virtue of the sanctions being imposed against the rump Yugoslavia and by the hostile attitude of the Greek government, it has few options and has seen its per capita income collapse from around \$2000 at independence to below \$700 in early 1993. The formerly heavily used two road and two rail links into Greece and particularly to the port of Thessaloniki, where the old Yugoslavia had special port concessions, are now largely idle. Links northwards, also two and two, are equally tenuous. There is no rail link with Bulgaria, only three inadequate road routes, whilst, although Albania's new railway between Durres and the Lake Ohrid town of Pogradec offers some potential, that is dependent on the ending of chaos in that area. Its isolation is thus extreme, in both the physical and diplomatic senses. The attitude of Greece is thus the key. Greece, probably more acutely than the rest of the world, is well aware of the dangers of a human catastrophe on its northern borders. With its support, the EC could yet decide to recognize President Kiro Gligorov's weak state: the alternative seems to be outside intervention and division, either following or precipitating internal collapse. Macedonia has not been so acutely divided for a long time. Perhaps this is what several neighbours want, but if Macedonia is not to become one further rung on the escalation ladder not much time for a positive initiative remains. "What's in a name?" Can it really matter so much to all parties?

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