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Who Are the Macedonians?, by Hugh Poulton

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in the political and cultural history of interwar Poland.

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LUCJAN DOBROSZYCKI. *Reptile Journalism: The Official Polish-Language Press under the Nazis, 1939–1945*. Translated by BARBARA HARSHAV. New Haven: Yale University Press. 1994. Pp. xi, 199. \$22.50.

This is the last book published by the late Lucjan Dobroszycki, best known for *The Chronicle of the Łódź Ghetto* (1984). In this book, he has gathered together all that is known about the official Polish-language press in the “General-Government,” its extent, editorial content, administrative structure, and role in the shaping of Polish opinion. At first glance, this would seem to be a pretty unpromising topic in which to invest a lot of analytical energy. After all, a regime that really did not care whether most Poles lived or died, whose “governor” (Hans Frank) described his domain as a “country of plunder,” and whose economic, social, cultural, and political structure was to be “wrecked” was unlikely to devote much time and effort to winning over Polish hearts and minds. Dobroszycki understood that “the Germans really did not intend to win over any Poles for their cause” (p. 46), but he believed that a comprehensive, clearly organized account of the Nazi press in occupied Poland, however marginal its role in policy or its impact, would fill a void in the historical literature and be a useful reference for fellow historians. In the opinion of this reviewer he was correct: this appropriately slim book fills a basic informational void in a clear, thorough, remarkably dispassionate, and in some respects exemplary manner.

Originally, the term “reptile journalism” denoted Otto von Bismarck’s practice of planting pro-government stories in cooperative (but otherwise independent) journals in return for financial compensation from a “Reptile Fund” at his disposal. In Nazi-occupied Poland, however, all forms of indigenous Polish journalism were suppressed in 1939. Thus, the various journals that Dobroszycki treats are altogether creations of the occupying authority, “Polish” only in terms of language. They included only eight or nine daily newspapers for the more than twenty million residents of the General-Government (compared to fifty-five in Bohemia-Moravia); total daily circulation averaged about 700,000. Polish collaborationism was not entirely absent, but the Nazis allowed very little scope for its exercise. Polish journalists, most of them young and without prior journalistic experience or political prominence in pre-1939 Poland, worked only under German editors; the contents of this press were basically dictated by German authorities. Dobroszycki discusses some of the editorial shifts and nuances but does not try to exaggerate their significance. There are few real surprises, if we except his startling observation that the anti-Semitic content of the Nazi press was “in form and content . . . no different” from most of the

Polish underground press (p. 119). Only in 1944, as the Red Army was already entering eastern Poland, was something like an independent Polish collaborationist point of view permitted, including the interesting argument that Poles should resist the Red Army because Bolshevik rule would be worse even than German. As for the impact of this press, Dobroszycki considers it “wrong to believe that it had no effect at all” but concedes the impossibility of drawing up an “objective and documented analysis” of any such effect.

Incidentally, the story of this book’s research and belated publication in the West is nearly as revealing as its actual contents. It was researched and written in Poland in the 1960s, but authorities there vetoed its publication. It is not readily apparent why this book should have been politically objectionable to Polish Communists, unless it be Dobroszycki’s suggestion that Poles did actually read the official Nazi press in defiance of underground orders not to do so. But this should come as no surprise, for they were denied any other source of legal news; there was no Polish-language radio, for example. And as Dobroszycki demonstrates, one could actually learn quite a lot about the course of the war and other developments by reading between the lines of even this strictly controlled and censored press. Dobroszycki, who was Jewish, sought refuge in the West amid the official anti-Semitism that followed the Six-Day War and the Prague Spring, and a German-language version of his work was published in 1977; the present volume is a scarcely modified translation of that work.

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HUGH POULTON. *Who Are the Macedonians?* Bloomington: Indiana University Press. 1995. Pp. xvii, 218. \$29.95.

A little more than a century ago, the thorny problem that became known as the “Macedonian Question” appeared on the European scene. The region in south-eastern Europe became a cockpit of contention, with European powers intervening as the newly established states in the Balkans laid claim to then Ottoman-controlled territory in the name of national redemption. Now the issue has come full circle with the establishment of an independent state bearing a separate identity.

Hugh Poulton’s work reflects the changed circumstances as well as the author’s particular interests. It is concerned not so much with diplomacy but with the historical development of the Macedonian region, the new state, and the status of its peoples. The answer to the question posed in the title of the book, though not explicitly stated, is that who a Macedonian is (or is not) depends on whom you ask and to what historical era you are referring. Therein lies the problem for the future.

Half of the book is devoted to a historical survey of

the area and the various peoples who have settled there. Covering the time from the beginning of human habitation to the eve of World War II, it sets the framework of the current controversy, which is an accretion of the interaction between time, space, and the movement of peoples refracted through ethnic politics. Based primarily on selected secondary works, this summary account of developments over the centuries highlights but with a bias, some of the key points that need to be considered in examining the Macedonian problem today.

To begin with, this area, like much of the Balkans, has experienced the migration and settlement of many peoples who have maintained distinct identities even while subject to the several large states that controlled all or part of the region at one or another time. Second, by going over this ground Poulton points up the raw material that nationalists have scoured in making (often competing) claims to the territory based on "history." Western Europeans have also had a hand in this business, sometimes adding more smoke than light to the matter. Third, Poulton's account shows that by the end of the nineteenth century, Macedonia was witnessing not only the joining of peoples to nations but the remaking and simplifying of the ethnic diversity that was its hallmark through war, involuntary migration, and the assimilation of peoples.

After a brief chapter on developments during and immediately following World War II, a period in the Macedonian question that needs detailed examination, Poulton devotes the remaining pages of his book to describing the construction of a Macedonian national identity in Tito's Yugoslavia and, ultimately, of a Macedonian state, with the attendant consequences for the peoples and states in the area. He wends his way, with partiality for the Macedonian position, through the dense thicket of ideologically charged politics, nationalist and socialist, in southeastern Europe, linking them to broader affairs during the Cold War. He does not fail to note the role of emigrés (whether positive or negative depends on one's point of view) in the nationalist politics of the Macedonian issue.

This brings us to the crux of the problem regarding Macedonia: the political stance and economic role of states dealing with diverse ethnic communities. It is clear that Poulton is concerned with human beings and their future. He assiduously discusses the situation of the various peoples, from politically dominant groups like the Slav Macedonians to small and vulnerable communities like the Muslim Torbeshi. When it comes to current developments, this becomes rather like a chronicle of anecdotes. Poulton notes, for instance, the "extraordinary rise in nationalism" in Greece (p. 170), but he does little more than offer incidents by way of explaining this development.

Macedonia is not a problem unique in the Balkans or even to the Balkans. In the region, it is closely linked to other areas where ethnic problems exist. Poulton's account raises questions that newly declared

nation-states as well as the long-established ones must confront. What, for example, are the benefits of assimilation against the costs of maintaining and even encouraging ethnic diversity? Can and need ethnic characteristics such as language and religion be equated with national identity? Must ethnicity coincide with territory? But the fundamental issue for states and humankind, of course, is whether people relate to one another as a body of citizens or as ethnic collectivities.

Perhaps because of haste in bringing out a book on this timely issue, there are some typographical errors in the text, and the writing style does not flow well in places. No doubt more original research is needed, resulting in a more balanced account than Poulton's contribution.

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DAVID H. CLOSE. *The Origins of the Greek Civil War.* (Origins of Modern Wars.) New York: Longman. 1995. Pp. xiv, 248.

This book by David H. Close makes a valuable contribution to the Longman series, "Origins of Modern Wars," and to the growing literature on modern Greek history. It will be useful to professional historians and undergraduates. The political narrative focuses on elite decision making among the major foreign and domestic actors in the Greek drama between 1916 and 1949. Close's thesis is that the Greek Civil War was not inevitable. The British Government did not have to give its full support to the return of the king during the Axis occupation. The Communist leadership could have expected British intervention in December 1944, and Stalin and Tito could have acted differently in 1946 by giving full support to the Greek Communist Party. Close argues that the Communists, who were driven more by hatred of those who had previously oppressed them than anything else, decided "unnecessarily on a course leading to war: in September 1943, November 1944, and February 1946" (p. xi). Each decision had long-term consequences for the Greeks. Close claims that Britain was too weak to restrain "its Greek clients in the years 1945-1946" and thus prevent the "slide to renewed civil war" (p. xi). The overwhelming majority of Greeks desired peace in 1944-1946, but fanatics on the extreme left and right took actions that plunged Greece into a spiral of barbarism and cruelty.

Close traces the polarization that developed between 1916 and 1943. Indeed, the first six of the book's eight chapters focus on this period. Close makes extensive use of American, British, and Greek archives (Communist and non-Communist) and of the wave of recently published memoirs, particularly those by former leading members of the Greek Communist Party as well as secondary sources. This territory has been previously examined, but Close presents a fine synthesis with force and clarity.