

**“Claiming Macedonia:
The Struggle for the Heritage, Territory and Name of the
Historic Hellenic Land, 1862-2004”
By George C. Papavizas
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“This Government considers talk of Macedonian “nation,” Macedonian “Fatherland,” or Macedonian “national consciousness” to be unjustified demagoguery representing no ethnic nor political reality, and sees in its present revival a possible cloak for aggressive intentions against Greece. The approved policy of this Government is to oppose any revival of the Macedonian issue as related to Greece.”

Secretary of Edward R. Stettinius, Jr.
U.S. Secretary of State,
December 26, 1944

“The Macedonian Question” is an international problem that presents many puzzling historical and political problems. Originally, the problem dates back to the era immediately following the Greek War of Independence and the ill-fated attempt of Bulgaria to annex the former Ottoman region.

The modern fabrication of the so-called “Macedonian Question,” however, is one of the greatest cases of historical revisionism and fraud that was fabricated by the Josip Broz Tito, Communist leader of Yugoslavia in 1944. The Communist government of Yugoslavia, invented the pseudo-state by changing the name of “South Serbia,” (or “Vardar Macedonia”) to “Macedonia.” To go along with the new name, came an attempt to create a new cultural-historical heritage: A new language from the South Slavic dialect of the region was officially “declared”; A new, self-proclaimed “Macedonian Orthodox Church,” not recognized by any other Orthodox churches; and a fabricated history that denies the Hellenic character of the land of Alexander the Great!

Seeing the creation of the Skopje pseudo-state, the administrations of Presidents Roosevelt and Truman categorically denounced the apparent land grab and historical fraud at the expense of Greece and Hellenism.

The current political problem has come about with the breakup of Yugoslavia in 1991, when the United Nations, NATO, European Union and most nations recognized the new state as the “Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia,” or “FYROM.” Successive governments of Greece have clearly stated that they have no territorial designs on this area, but do not want to relinquish the Hellenic character, history and heritage of Greek Macedonia. With strong historical evidence of this Hellenic character, references to Macedonia are found in both Herodotus and Thucydides. Further, Mt. Olympus was the home of gods in Greek mythology.

The struggle for Macedonia is one that has perplexed and agonized Hellenes. This is a problem of more than just geo-politics, it is the wholesale distortion of history to promote the creation of a state at the expense of Hellenic heritage. The poet, Odysseus Elytis reminds us that "Our name is our soul," and therefore, who can give up their soul? What becomes necessary, is a clear, candid, historical analysis of the "Macedonian Question," through its unique Hellenic character. This detailed argument from a Greek perspective is given by author George C. Papavisas in his "Capturing Macedonia."

Papavisas has written a thoughtful account of the Macedonian issue, unlike any other publication to date. He examines the nature of Hellenic Macedonia and traces Macedonia's Hellenic past. He focuses on the deliberate creation of a fraudulent history to promote wholesale misconceptions of about Macedonia's past and present. The author gives us a clear insight to the evolution of the problem from its beginnings as a Bulgarian land grab, through a Communist historical hoax to the present dispute with the Skopje, FYROM, government. He gives us a very comprehensive study of the issue from an accurate historical, cultural and political perspective. To those wishing to understand the Hellenic viewpoint, the author's comprehensive study covers the conflict from initial stages to the present challenges.

George Papavisas states his intentions clearly in his Preface:

"It is not my intent to add another historical book on Macedonia. It is to add a different book, one with uniquely interpreted approach, easily read and understood by the common English-speaking people interested in the Macedonian issue and in the long political, diplomatic and military struggle for the heritage, the territory and the name of the Hellenic land." To his credit, the author certainly has achieved this lofty goal and his book is a must read to Hellenes and Philhellenes that want both historical accuracy and the preservation of heritage. In the words of former Congressman John Braedemas, "The proper teaching of history can be crucial in promoting tolerance and peace." To this noble end, George Papavisas has given new meaning and appreciation to the "Macedonian Question" and Hellenic heritage.

Reviewed by,
Dr. James F. Dimitriou
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