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Tar baby – Macedonia in the international relations (1991-1993)(*Бебето од катран - Македонија во меѓународните односи (1991-1993)*) , by Denko Maleski, Kultura – Skopje: 2012. 518 p. Reviewed by Enver Abdullahu, PhD cand.

DOI: 10.2478/v10306-012-0022-5

The last book by Prof. Dr. Denko Maleski, titled ‘Tar baby - Macedonia in the international relations (1991-1993)’, is an autobiographical book and publicistic blossom which belongs to the genre of memoirs. Beside the author’s claims that his very frequent journeys and responsibilities as a Minister of Foreign Affairs did not give him much opportunity to take regular notes from everyday activities as well as important events, yet, considering the content of this book, it can be called *Memoirs of a Foreign Affairs Minister*.

The interdisciplinary genre of this book it makes so hard for the reader to classify it correctly among the literature, because both in terms of the content and the structure it represents very high standards of political sciences and international relations, and it qualifies this book for modern European integration studies. In the following part of this review we will see and understand this, respectively.

Professor Denko Maleski as a researcher and lecturer of the international relations represents a synonym for ‘real politics’ paradigm, which has been proved by those who know the circumstances in Macedonia very well, those that are familiar with the above mentioned situations as well as analytical literature. However, the appearance of the very key concepts in the international relations, such as: state, ethnicity, speaking unanimously in the foreign policy, defining the national interest, consolidation of the democracy in the post-communistic societies, as well as the organic multiculturalism and its reflection in state-making and policy - making contexts, can only the researchers with the encyclopedic knowledge and culture such as him touch upon these topics with a marvellous artistic mastery.

The title of the book symbolically indicates the very condition of the ‘embryo-state’, as well as the first twentieth anniversary of its existence in the international relations, where professor Maleski uses in a contemporary context old political expression ‘a tar baby’. This

expression metaphorically and literally shows how impossible is to get rid of that tar, or in other words, to be in no way out situation (the name dispute with Greece).

The book begins with the author's family background descriptions and with the aspirations to solve the cultural and ideological paradoxes of the limited scoped Balkan as well as his childhood experiences as a diplomat's son in some Middle East and African countries all way up to his intellectual maturity. Here he describes the influence of some of his professors, his position as assistant in the Law Faculty in Skopje as well as the liberal-ideology movement of the 70s and continues with the downfall of the liberal ideology of the 80s of the previous century, the incapability of the society's liberalization and the first signs of the collapsing tendencies of totalitarianism (which makes the author most competent actor in the international arena with intra knowledge about federal Yugoslavia) .

Further on the author describes the political climate in Yugoslavia (the situation of the 80s, the instability of the political system during the second half of the 80s, the reforms, and alike); the first parliamentary elections in Macedonia; the efforts by European and world diplomacy to stop the terrible ethnic wars in ex-Yugoslavia; his meeting with Lord Carrington – the head of the conference for Yugoslavia; his meeting with the chairman of arbitrary commission on Yugoslavia, Mr. Badinter; his meeting with UK Foreign Minister – Douglas Herd, and so on. In the book all these are presented very clearly and under separate headings.

This book is an analytical-critical description, too, where the author's abilities in researching and depicting the whole events chronologically does not fade away at any moment. By using original facts and data he is presenting the very difficult situation of Macedonia and the absence of good will to create a multicultural-functional democracy. He shows all this in the best possible way and taken from the standpoint of regional, European and worldwide analysis.

As for his liberal and democratic beliefs, which are based on the perspectives of the real policies of international relations, he has no hesitations to describe the difficulties he came across while creating the common values. Further on he tells how he could openly speak in 'Sobranie' for the high expectations of the Albanian community from newborn Macedonia'. Also he tells about 'fear of the minorities from the majorization by Macedonians'. In his writing he is very open and realistic with the reader about his attitudes for the historical context when Macedonia was a 'newborn' democracy and 'everything but popular' (p.161).

Being an expert minister in the government of experts created by Klusev, prof. Maleski tries to resign two times, and when his foreign policy will succeed after Lisbon, he will resign and will take part only in the parliament ceremonies with the invitations from the president Gligorov. In the beginning of the book, prof. Maleski adds '...I postponed writing this book... because I didn't want to uncover what had happened, I did not want that my misunderstanding with the president Gligorov to be misused by the people, who are by nature so quick to criticize and so slow to praise... after twenty years I am still searching for the truth. However I am still thinking...' (p.3)

In line with the description and documentation of all the details of state-making position of a country as well as the difficulties through what it had to go in the process of becoming a member in the United Nations and European Community (and later EU), he shows the historical importance of the people who were leading the country at that time, and in particular the first President - Gligorov.

Very artistically he is reflecting upon the approaches and the role of Gligorov in the down fall of Yugoslavia and his politics for Macedonian independence. Nevertheless, to some moderate extent, he is criticizing his external politics and his approach towards the issues of Albanians and other minorities in the country.

It is interesting though, that apart from the long time gap since when these events took part - twenty years, the topics are still very actual in daily politics of Macedonia, such as: the name issues, the level of society consolidation, democratic institutions capacity ... up to the very tense inter-ethnic relations.

By reading this book the reader is kept so busy and alive and becomes more and more curious to find out all about the Macedonian political history. All this is achieved with a cynical humour as well as thorough description of many details of the Macedonian past. The book is very 'erving goffman-style', full with artistic descriptions of diplomats interactions, state representatives in the conferences upon Yugoslavia's issues, the atmosphere in the 'Macedonian Sobranie' (Macedonian Parliament), and finally protocol interactions *tet-a-tet* in diplomatic circles.

This last book by prof. Denko Maleski has a very broad values. Except its historical importance for Macedonian past, the book is considered to be a must among all the literature for all the researchers of international relations and European studies.