

Macedonian Tribune - History of the Macedonian Tribune

Past Editors

Luben Dimitroff Was Third *TRIBUNE* Editor

By M. Tsakova

Luben Dimitroff served as editor of the *MACEDONIAN TRIBUNE* for more than 31 years. For his devotion to the paper and the Macedonian cause, he was called the spirit, the brain and the conscious of the MPO.

He was born in 1903 in Bitola. His father Anton Dimitroff was director of the Bulgarian High School for Girls in Bitola. After the Balkan Wars and the partition of Macedonia, the family moved to Bulgaria. Luben graduated from high school at Stara Zagora and studied law at the Sofia University. In 1926 he became president of the famous Student Society "Vardar." He worked as editor of the literary magazine "Rodina".

At that time Luben wrote and published poems dedicated to enslaved Macedonia.

After Zograff resigned as editor of the *MACEDONIAN TRIBUNE* in 1930, Luben Dimitroff was invited by the Central Committee to come to the USA and replace him. He arrived in 1931 and served as editor until his death in 1962.

Luben Dimitroff was editor during a most dramatic era of changes in the Balkans and in the world. He stayed strong and firm and defended the ideas of the Macedonian Liberation Movement as a patriot, anti-communist and journalist.

It was the time of the Great Depression when everyone needed a little encouragement to donate money, time and effort to the organization and the paper. And Luben knew exactly how to do it.

Immediately after his arrival in the USA, Luben became involved in one of the biggest projects of the MPO at that time - the publication of the magazine "*Macedonia*." The magazine, published in English, was addressed to English speaking readers and friends of Macedonia, and had as writers the most prominent scholars of the old country and the States. Among them were Prof. Lubomir Miletich, Prof. Stephan Mladenoff, John Bakelless, Kondrad Kruger, Herbert Gibson etc.

It was also the time when a pro-Comintern communist group, the Macedonian National Union led by Georgi Pirinski, Sr., tried to create problems for the paper and MPO through its propaganda, provoking friction at meetings, and by simply spreading their communist ideas for the future of Macedonia. And Luben knew exactly how to answer them in the *MACEDONIAN TRIBUNE*.

It was the time when the Zveno group through a military coup took the power in Bulgaria and banned all legal Macedonian organizations, newspapers and magazines. The pro-Serbian government imprisoned the leaders of the Macedonian movement and forbade all their activities.

From that moment the *MACEDONIAN TRIBUNE* became the only Macedonian newspaper in the world to protect the human rights of our people and their struggle for freedom and independence. The newspaper, thanks to Luben, became a strong voice of the truth.

It was the time when World War II started and brought much hope for the unification of Macedonia. During these years Luben Dimitroff was not only the *TRIBUNE*'s editor, but also advisor of the Commission of Balkan Experts. In several letters, he explained to them that the only way to solve the Macedonian Question was to create an independent country.

Then it was the time of devastation after World War II when the communists took power and the Balkan peninsula became a concentration camp for millions of Macedonians, living both in Bulgaria and the former Yugoslavia. The *MACEDONIAN TRIBUNE* was again the only voice of our people. It was the only place in the world which reported the killings and imprisonment of our people who did not agree

with the communism of either Tito or Georgi Dimitrov. It was the time of the tragic Greek Civil War when our people suffered both from Greek policy and the betrayal of Tito and his army.

Luben worked hard during this period. He was not only editor of the paper, but also acted as a diplomat and politician. He led several delegations to the UN in New York, the State Department in Washington, D.C., the White House and Europe.

For many years Luben Dimitroff was member of the Central Committee.

Luben Dimitroff passed away on October 14, 1962, and was buried in Toronto. Thousands of Macedonians from Canada and the USA attended his funeral. Ivan Mihailoff, Assen Avramoff, Peter Atzeff, Chris Anastasoff, Christo Nizamoff and many others wrote touching articles to show their respect and gratitude for his talents as a journalist and writer, and his understanding of the Macedonian Question.

Luben was survived by his wife, Milka, now deceased, whom he married during his trip to Bulgaria in 1936. Milka's family was originally from Resen. She was a niece of the famous Bulgarian politician and one-time prime minister, Andrey Lyapchev. Luben and Milka are survived by their daughter Gloria and their son Anton and his family which includes their only granddaughter, Kate.

The 66th MPO convention, held in Cincinnati in 1987, was dedicated to the 25th anniversary since Luben's death. His widow was the grand marshal of the parade.

Soon after his death a Toronto MPO chapter was named after him.

Borislav Ivanoff activist, editor, organizer dedicated to Macedonia's freedom