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THE BALKAN NATIONAL STATES AND NATIONALISM: IMAGE AND REALITY*

KEMAL H. KARPAT

INTRODUCTION

Historical nationalism is, more often than not, built on false premises and nourished by myth; yet it is an extremely powerful doctrine, with the capacity to play a fundamental role in the creation of political states and to affect profoundly the course of human history. The truth of this assertion is nowhere made more evident than in the Balkans.

The "national" territorial states of the Balkans were created by Britain, France, Russia, and Austria through the mechanism of the Berlin Treaty of 1878. The purpose of these nations was purely self-serving. The arrangement sanctioned by the Treaty was designed to avert an all-out war over the division of the spoils from the partitioning of the Ottoman Empire. The Congress of Berlin was held after Russia, with the subtle connivance of Britain (the traditional "protector" of the Turks), who had inflicted a crushing defeat on the Ottomans. It was however unthinkable that Russia should gobble up all conquered territory. Even Italy was belatedly exhibiting a desire to take a large portion of the Ottoman possessions. Thus the establishment of autonomous or independent territorial nation-states in the area was seen by the participants in

*The Berlin Treaty created states and implicitly left them free to establish their "nations", which they did out of imagined history and mythologized events, and placed them within boundaries drawn on the basis of historical romantic recollections rather than demographic, ethnic and religious realities. All of what is said above does not mean that some of the basic elements necessary for modern nationhood, such as language, incipient ethno-national consciousness, even territories settled with a given compact ethnic group, did not exist at all. One may even cite a variety of "national revolts" against the Ottoman administration which achieved relative success due mainly to the intervention of the Big Powers but were hailed as struggles for national liberation. All these elements of modern nationhood existed in various forms and stages of development throughout the centuries but did not create by themselves a nation. The "nation" had to wait for the state to give it form and essence, although the histories written after the establishment of the state would claim that the "nation" was there since time immemorial. Yet, the march of the nation-state was unstoppable, and eventually the Ottoman Muslims would be turned into "Turks" and compelled to create at last their own national state.
the Congress as the only reasonable solution to the "Eastern Question" that would keep their own rivalries from getting out of hand.\(^1\)

The Berlin Treaty prescription, formulated by the European powers as an inoculation against the disease of war among them, was a prescription for continuing strife in the Balkans. Not a single one of the new territorial states was based on a true nation. As Nicolae Batzaria, a Vlah from Macedonia, noted in his memoirs: "... it was not unusual to find one brother claiming to be Greek and others claiming to be Bulgarian or Serbian, according to their interests".\(^2\) The Slavic-speaking Muslims did not mind being called "Turks" but identified themselves with the Ottoman state rather than with ethnic Turks. After 1878 a good number of the Slavic-speaking Bosnians and Herzegovinians migrated to and settled in Anatolia, and today their descendants identify themselves as Turks even though they are of non-Turkish stock. The case of the Montenegrin Muslims is even more telling. The number of Muslim Montenegrians was relatively small but included close relatives of the ruling imperial family, which had not been torn apart by differences of faith. Yet one night in 1879, after long, convivial festivities, the Muslim relatives of the imperial family took advantage of the post-drinking stupour that had overcome the guard and fled to the Ottoman-controlled territory. Then, leaving their huge fortunes behind, they went to Istanbul and lived there on a meagre pension.\(^3\)

The official boundaries of the new Balkan territorial states did not encompass all of the people considered by the leadership of these states as "kin" and, thus, as members of the "nation". Furthermore, within the boundaries of each of these states there were substantial groups of those viewed as "non-kin" — the "they/them" against whom "we/us" were ranged in defence of the "nation". "They" were primarily Muslims, although the Serbians and Bulgarians often regarded the Orthodox Christian Greeks as enemies also, for the Greek patriarchate was deemed to have been the suppressor of the "national culture" of these states. The position of the Catholics (some Albanians, Croatians, and a few Bulgarians) was somewhat ambiguous: they had accepted papal authority and thus fell outside the Orthodox fold, but they were not clearly regarded as part of "them". Ethnic origin was obviously secondary in the identification of those within the country who were to be considered true kin, for the Muslim Bosnians, Pomaks, and Herzegovinians were of Slavic stock just as the ruling groups in Serbia and Bulgaria claimed to be. Ethnicity was important to extra-territorial kinship claims, however, and language growingly became the criterion for defining ethnicity. Thus, although it was agreed under the Berlin Treaty that all people living within a state were to be regarded as citizens, those of different religion or ethnicity from the ruling majority were, in fact, treated as co-nationals in name only. On the other hand, each state declared that all ethnic kin living under foreign rule were also its nationals. Thus there were from the beginning two different levels of "nationality" operating in the Balkans: that sanctioned by the Treaty and based on residence within a certain area, and that proclaimed by the leadership of the states and based on religion and ethnicity. The emphases in the definition of the latter sort of nationality changed from time
to time depending on the changing needs and policies of the various governments.4

Bulgaria provides a good example of the way the "nation" was defined and redefined under changing circumstances. "Bulgarians" were proclaimed to consist, first, of all the people who lived on the territory of the principality, although a large part of this population consisted of Turks, Greeks, Vlahs, and others. The leaders then claimed that their "nation" included also "Bulgarians" living in Macedonia, Serbia, Romania (Dobrudja), etc., applying the criteria of ethnicity and religion. Bulgaria, Serbia, and Greece all regarded their Slavic- or Greek-speaking Muslim co-nationals as aliens, even though many Muslims were ethnically related to the Christians. Bulgaria, however, has always had a Muslim population that was very large in relation to the total (about 2 million out of a population of 8.4 million in 1992, according to the unofficial census results). Thus, in order to inflate the proportion of "ethnic Bulgarians", the leadership began ignoring the religious classification and counted Bulgarian-speaking Muslims, that is, the Pomaks, as ethnic Bulgarians.5

The Balkan rulers, provisions of the Berlin Treaty notwithstanding, never regarded the territorial state as coinciding with the "nation"; they rather tended to define it arbitrarily. For them, the boundaries established by the Treaty were to be respected only when the cost of violating them would be too high. The state was regarded as merely a military-administrative-economic instrument, one of the primary duties of which, after 1878, was to forge the true nation, to give enough of the people within the new state boundaries enough of a sense of solidarity with each other and identification with the ruling group so as to maintain control. This they sought to do through the rewriting (or often simply the inventing) of "national histories".

There was a great outpouring of nationalist literature from the Balkans after 1878, all subjecting the history of the area to radical reinterpretation. It was a basic claim of each of the new nation-states that it had really existed from time immemorial but was only now being given its proper due; that the lack of prior recognition was the result of centuries of oppression and repression, mainly by the "Turks" who are synonymous with "Muslims" in Balkan eyes; that its pre-Ottoman past had been glorious; and that it actually had historical claims to more territory than that allotted to it under the Berlin Treaty. Thus the literature sought to create a solid national core by giving the state an attractive history/mythology and by clearly defining the enemy — the "them". While a few sound works were produced during this period, most were exercises in historical design in which fact and fiction were freely intermixed. Unfortunately, these works received the blessing of Western writers such as R.W. Seton-Watson.6 Thus credence was given to these mythical "national histories" of the Balkan states and the ideologies that drove them were legitimized. In the post-Second World War era the Balkan historians had to wrestle to adapt their national history to the Marxist version of events only to succumb to the attraction of nationalism, often on the order of their leaders. The interpretations produced under these circumstances were awkward, to say the least. For example, the late

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Bistra Svetkova of Bulgaria, after declaring that feudalism was a global social phenomenon, patriotically claimed that Bulgarian feudalism was, however, "superior" to Ottoman feudalism, although no facts to support this statement were produced.

COMMUNALISM: THE LEGACY OF THE OTTOMANS
Balkan nationalism embodies special characteristics that set it apart from its Western European counterpart. My term for it is "communal nationalism" because its blend of religion and ethnicity exists in symbiosis with a vital, grassroots form of communal association that accounts for its staying power. The strength of this grassroots element is such that it provides an inexhaustible font of support for any leadership that cares to call upon it. Thus, although all of the Balkan states have claimed to be secular and have from time to time seemed to make real efforts to promote secular virtues, such as scientific knowledge and humanitarian ideals, these efforts have fallen by the wayside when the regimes — whether democratic or dictatorial — have felt the need to rally popular support for their programmes or policies. In practice, therefore, these states have consistently espoused religio-ethnic nationalism even while assuring the West that they are secular.

This strong grassroots communalism upon which the Balkan leadership today depends for its legitimacy and power is the legacy of the Ottomans, but minus the Ottoman safeguards which kept it apolitical and harmless. Furthermore, the ethnic kinship element that is part of the communal-nationalism symbiosis developed and became strong during the period of Ottoman administration. Even the Orthodox Christian religious ties were strengthened while the area was ruled by the Muslims, not because constant common dissatisfaction with the regime made the people cling to each other, but because the Ottomans considered religious ties between people to be the most important sort and set up the administrative system to promote the free development of religious communalism — Christian and Muslim.

It was under the millet system, in force for 400 years, that the Orthodox Christian citizen of the Balkan area deepened his sense of religious identity and attachment to the faith and to those who represented the faith and the community and, also, forged the ethnic identity that became the other element in his modern political identity. Although the latter development was not foreseen or encouraged by the Ottoman administration, it was the purpose of the millet system to encourage the former. Thus the importance of that institution cannot be overemphasized.7

The system originated in the traditional Muslim concept of Christians and Jews, the People of the Book (Ahl al-Kitâb), as dhimmîs, that is, people entitled to protection by a Muslim ruler and to freedom of worship (because Islam considers Christ and Moses and the other Old Testament prophets messengers of God — just as Muhammad was — and the Christian and Jewish Bibles as books containing God's commandments — more or less just as the Qur'ān). This principle was given practical form after the Ottoman conquest of
Constantinople in 1453. Mehmet II (1451–81), who established the *millet* system, believed that he was the rightful heir to the Ottoman khans, the Byzantine emperors, and the Roman Caesars and, as such, was required to establish an order acceptable to every monotheist believer. Though Mehmet’s point of departure was Islam, he used the *kannunnames* — that is, laws enacted under prerogative of the ruler to issue legislation as necessitated by circumstances — to establish the *millets.*

He founded the Orthodox Christian *millet* in 1454, and placed it under the authority of the patriarch in Istanbul, who, by precedent and political necessity, was a Greek: the first patriarch was Scholarius Genadi, the head of the party opposed to the union of the Byzantine church with Rome. All religious, cultural, and family matters of the Orthodox people came under the jurisdiction of the patriarch and his synod (council). Thus, politics and religion were separated from each other and the patriarch was freed from the tutelage of the emperor as had been the case under Byzantium.

The organizational structure of the *millet* in the countryside is discussed in great detail elsewhere. However, as the form of organization was significant in the development of a strong sense of ethnicity a brief discussion here is appropriate. The members of the Orthodox *millet* were of diverse ethnic stocks, they continued to live in their own communities and to speak their own languages, and wherever one particular ethnic group was in the majority the prayer services were often conducted in the language of that group. Eventually the language of the dominant group would gain wider acceptance and become, in effect, the community language. (Upper level churches had services conducted in either Greek or Church Slavonic; the latter, the old liturgical language of the Bulgarian and Serbian churches, was given official recognition as early as the ninth century.) The local clergy was supported by the community, as were the local schools, which were usually in or near the church and staffed mainly by priests. As in the Muslim communities, religious subjects dominated the curriculum in the schools in Christian communities. The patriarchate, which held much property that was treated as *vakif* — that is, pious foundation property exempt from taxes — and also often received revenue from its wealthier churches, did not provide money to support the local institutions. Thus each community came to rely on itself, and a strong sense of solidarity developed among its inhabitants. (It should perhaps be noted here that the head tax — *jizyah* — paid by non-Muslims was in lieu of military service, so the Orthodox youths were able to remain in their villages — the very small number of *devşirme* notwithstanding — and contribute to their development.) At the higher ecclesiastical level, the old Serbian church at Pec (Ipek) and the so-called Bulgarian church at Ohrida (actually built in honour of the Emperor Justinian, who was born in that town) were re-established in the latter part of the sixteenth century at the urging of Grand Vizier Mehmet Sokollu, a converted Slav whose brother Makarius, then became head of the church at Pec. Orthodox Christian religious writing and arts flourished under Ottoman rule, as may be seen from the Caria masterpieces in Istanbul and a variety of places in Serbia and Bulgaria.
The claim that the Ottomans undermined or destroyed the ethnic identity of the people of the Balkans is false. To the Ottomans ethnicity was unimportant. They had no "ethnic policy" until they developed one very late in the nineteenth century; nor did the idea of Turkishness gain any significance in Ottoman thinking until that time. Furthermore, no strong ethnic consciousness, or even any great political consciousness of religious identity, existed in the Balkan peoples of the period of the Ottoman conquest of the area (as will be seen from the discussion in the following section). Diverse groups spoke different languages and had their own customs, and the Ottomans made no effort to change these. The various different communities continued to live essentially as before; but under the millet system religious consciousness was strengthened and made the primary one, while the differences in language and culture, with whatever special identity these conferred, were submerged in the universal religious identity.

Beyond establishing the system under which the religious identity would become the paramount one, the Ottomans did not interfere. Thus within the Christian Orthodox community ethnic change and/or realignment went on in a natural manner, unchecked and undirected by any political authority. Over time, some local languages were abandoned, although local customs and manners of dress were not. The numerically larger Slavic groups assimilated some of the smaller ethnic groups and then split into a variety of subgroups, reunited again, etc. in a continuing process. The average citizen of the Balkans did not at that time think of himself in ethnic terms: if asked his identity, whether Serb or Bulgarian or Vlah he would reply that he was Christian — or Greek or Roman, which meant Orthodox. Nevertheless, the ethnic identity was there, submerged in the religious one, and when the nationalist leaders had suitably defined the enemy — as the Muslim Turk, the Catholic Croat, the hellenizing Greek, or the territory-usurping Bulgarian (or Serb) — they started also the mobilization process to induce the Orthodox Serb (or Bulgarian) to rise up and go to war against the "them". The mobilization was a long and arduous task, but the intelligentsia managed to make the community see "faith" and "fight" as synonymous, even though they often fought their co-religionists.

PRE-OTTOMAN BALKAN STATES: MYTH OR REALITY?
I have stated in the previous section that no strong ethnic consciousness existed among the Balkan populace at the time of the Ottomans' advance into that area. What, then, did exist? Were there flourishing national states, the predecessors of the modern Balkan nations, as lavishly claimed by Balkan nationalist writers? Such "states" — if the claim is to be sustained — must have been characterized by populations of large, homogeneous groups that were fully and politically aware of their ethnic origins, that were clearly identifiable as Serbian, Bulgarian, etc. Clearly, no such national entities existed. What the Ottomans found as they gradually overran the Balkans in the fourteenth century (1361–1396) was a populace comprised of a variety of ethnic groups, most still in the tribal stage, without any common ethno-political consciousness or
awareness of their past. The chief bond between these groups — albeit a weak one — was religion; but the faith had taken shape and found its meaning in the persons of the various rulers. The rulers and a small religious-political elite around them were the only ones conscious of their particular group status. The elites was conscious of their leadership position, which, although legitimized by the faith, resulted from their association with the rulers, not from their ethnic ties to the people they ruled.

What the modern Balkan leaders refer to as the medieval "states" in the area had little in common with the nineteenth-century nation-state. These entities, like the Ottoman state itself until the nineteenth century, were essentially small political-administrative-military structures without organic ties to the people administered. The dynasty controlled the state (it was not uncommon for a sovereign to sell or lease part of his "state" and population to another), and the rulers' policies more often than not were aimed at territorial aggrandizement to satisfy the greed and desire for power of the ruling elites. These early Balkan "states" were, in fact, political estates patterned after Byzantium, which was their religious model.

These pre-Ottoman Balkan estates/states were created by groups of warriors from other lands who swept into the territory and established control over the large body of Slavs who were living there at that time. The Slavs, too, had migrated there from outside and had replaced or mixed with the population already there: indigenous Illyrians, Greeks, and Latins and people left over from previous invasions by Huns, Avars, etc.

The Bulgars of Asparuch (Isperich), a Turkic group from the Middle Volga region, subjugated the Slavs living around the western edge of the Black Sea, thus becoming eventually the so-called "first Bulgarian state" in 681. The Croatians and Serbians, both allegedly of Iranian origin, subsequently conquered the Slavs of the northwestern part of the Balkans, the first Serbian estate/state being established in the ninth century (if it can be called that at all). These conquerors were ultimately absorbed by those they ruled, but not until after numerous bloody battles had been fought and a considerable time had elapsed.

It is obvious that claims of ethnic continuity between these early estates/states and the modern Balkan nation-states cannot be maintained. From the third to the fourteenth century the Balkans were in constant demographic turmoil. Huns, Avars, Slavs, Pechenegs, Cumans, Ghuz, and others came in waves to challenge and defeat the East Roman administration and establish their petty estates, while the population remained in great part pastoral and nomadic. The conquerors/rulers were never of the same stock as those they conquered — assuming that such "stock" could even be identified: in most of the territory the population was a very mixed breed. Only in a few places in the Balkans and north of the Black Sea did some groups from the Slavic invasion survive unmixed. (Today one can distinguish these "pure" Slavs from the majority of mixed Slavs and others by the differences in character, personality, and temperament they exhibit. The majority of the "Slavs" in the Balkans today are of different stock.)
The Bulgars kept their Turkic language and names for a long time after they had moved in, retaining for centuries the title "khan" for the ruler, but they, too, eventually were assimilated by the body of people they ruled. In about 924 they were powerful enough to annex the estate/state of the Serbians; but this so-called first Bulgarian state was destroyed in 1018 by the Byzantine ruler Basil II (976–1025) — known as "Killer of Bulgarians". The destroyed state was an illegitimate scion, at least in the eyes of Constantinople, which reasserted its title when it became powerful enough to do so.

What is claimed to have been the "second Bulgarian state" was established in 1186 by the brothers Ivan and Peter Asen, who took advantage of the weakened condition in which Byzantium found itself after the third and fourth crusades. The reason for creating this new political entity was not "national" but fiscal: Constantinople had imposed a new tax and there had been an uprising against it. The modern view is that the rulers, and especially the elites, in this second Bulgarian state were Cumans, members of a Turkic group that had moved into the Balkans in the eleventh century. The Cumans became divided: a large section became Catholic and accepted Hungarian authority, while another group moved into the Balkans and accepted Orthodox Christianity. Even if one accepts the older view that the Asens and their followers were Vlachs, it cannot be said that they were ethnically Bulgars.

The territory of the modern Bulgarian state had become home to a great mix of peoples by the fourteenth century. One such group, which remains identifiable today, is the Gagauzes. These were Seljuki Turkish followers of Izedden II Keykaus, who in the 1260s fled from the Mongol invasion, leaving their homes in Central Anatolia and settling along the shore of the Black Sea. They were baptized into the Orthodox faith some years later but preserved their Turkic language, which still is spoken by their descendants and closely resembles the language of the modern Turkish state.12 These people were considered Christians by the Ottomans but they successfully resisted efforts by the Greeks and the Bulgars to assimilate them, thanks to their compact settlements and strong cultural ties, formed under the Seljuki political state, and to the fact that their own leaders were treated as elites under both Byzantium and the Ottomans.13

Thus we find many examples to support the assertion of lack of ethnic homogeneity in the territory designated as Bulgaria in the pre-Ottoman times and, therefore, of lack of ethnic continuity from then until the nineteenth century nation-states were decreed. The same applies to Serbia. That estate/state was actually part of Bulgaria for a while, until Stefan Dušan (1331–1455) defeated the Bulgarians, after which he proclaimed himself "King of Serbia and Albania", a title that he subsequently changed to "Tsar". His was a multi-ethnic "empire", however. Greeks played a dominant role as landowners and office holders, and even the laws Dušan imposed were translations from Greek. After Dušan, the Serbian "state" fell apart overnight, for it had no national-ethnic — or even political — core, and its defeat at Kosovo in 1389 at the hands of the Turks was to be expected, for most of the inhabitants did not consider that they had a
"nation" that they needed to fight for. One cannot overlook the fact that Prince Lazar, the ruler who died at Kosovo, was struggling to pull together the many Serbian estates that emerged after Dušan's death.

Although ethnic continuity plainly did not exist, it may properly be claimed that there has been religious continuity of a sort; but this does not have the "national" significance attributed to it. Christianity was accepted in 864 as the official religion of the Bulgars by the ruler, who bore the title Tsar Boris I. The temporary recognition by Byzantium of the Bulgarian rulers as "Tsars" is one of the bases upon which the modern Bulgarian nationalists have based the claim of nationhood dating back to medieval times. However, the bestowal of such recognition by the Byzantines was simply a device to keep within the Orthodox fold the ruling elites of what were really just fiefdoms on Byzantine territory. Boris I had showed great interest in the Frankish missionaries, and great pressure was put on him to remain with Byzantium — to the extent that he ended up sending the famous brothers Cyril and Methodius to proselytize among the Slavs and stop the advance of Carolingian-backed Catholicism. The Byzantines even went so far as to fool Boris' successor, Symeon (892–927), into thinking that he had been made "Emperor of the Bulgarians". The full-scale baptism of the Serbs as Orthodox Christians seems to have occurred later — in the tenth or eleventh century, after which they established their seat at Pec.14

To argue that the acceptance of the Christian Orthodox faith and the establishment of churches in these estates/states was an indication of an emerging sense of Bulgarian and Serbian "nationhood" is to subscribe to one of the nationalists' myths. The invaders who established hegemony over these pieces of Balkan territory were basically vassals of the Byzantines. They rebelled against Constantinople when they could, in order to gain some autonomy for themselves, and they fought each other for reasons pertaining to dynastic power. The drive to convert the Slavs was initiated by the Byzantines principally so that the invading groups could be brought under control, while the "national" churches of the Serbs and the Bulgarians were established principally to circumvent the religious sanction of the patriarchate. For example, in 1346, at a meeting with the archbishops of Serbia and Ohrid and the Bulgarian patriarch of Tırnovo, Stepan Dušan raised the Serbian archbishop to the rank of patriarch and installed him at Pec simply to avoid the necessity of going to Constantinople to be anointed king. Dušan proclaimed himself the ruler of Romania (Byzantine lands including Greece) and left his ten-year-old son Uroș as the king of Serbia. Both he and his patriarch were excomunicated. The church and the faith were at that time mainly the instruments used to implement the political decisions of the rulers, who were the heads not only of state but also of church. Dušan made several overtures to Rome implying that he was ready to accept the authority of Rome if the Pope supported his ambitious plans.

The Ottoman "state" was also dynastic, and it relied on its own elites — the lords of the marches (iç beyleri) — to carry forth its conquest of the Balkans. The Turkish lords often did this in association with Balkan Christians of the ruling class, to whom extensive land appanages were awarded. During
this period the Turkic element did indeed dominate the Ottoman state, but after the disastrous civil war of 1402–1413 the Ottomans reorganized as an international Muslim state, building a tight system of central control, a massive bureaucracy, a powerful army directed from the centre, and an economic system also under central control. Thus the Ottoman state established a definitive qualitative superiority over the Balkans. It had behind it seven centuries of Muslim civilization and political experience which it successfully used to organize and rule the primitive Balkan estates/states.

The powerful and relatively sophisticated Ottoman state could almost certainly have managed to convert and even Turkify most of the Balkan populace if it had so wished. However, having opted to be the governing body of a Muslim state, it sought only, as pointed out in the previous section, to establish a system under which those it ruled gave their primary allegiance to their faith. The Ottoman sultans at that time had not taken to themselves the title of caliph — i.e. spiritual head of the Muslim community — although they did so in the sixteenth century and especially in the nineteenth century after the Balkans had become independent.

The Ottoman rulers forcefully separated religion from politics among the Balkan Christians. Knowing that the Balkan khans, tsars, and kings commanded their subjects' loyalty mainly because of their association with the Christian faith, they liquidated almost all the Christian pretenders to the thrones of the area and put the "national" churches under the religious authority of the patriarchate in Istanbul. However, they left the citizens free to continue as Orthodox Christians, using wherever possible their language for liturgy (old Slavonic or Greek), thus ensuring the continuity of the religious faith cited as evidence of "nationhood" by the modern Balkan states.

What would have happened if these Balkan ruling dynasties would have survived for long and were able to establish themselves in and control a well-defined territory for their estates/states, it is open to question if they would have eventually evolved into true ethnic "nations". It is possible; but it does not seem likely, as they had not before the arrival of the Ottomans developed, among other things, the sort of urban structure, crafts (the names of many crafts in Balkan languages derive from Turkish), etc., that lead to nationhood. The urban culture of the Balkans was, in fact, created during the period of Ottoman rule (a fact that some Balkan historians have finally recognized). Thus the Ottomans, the arch enemy of myth for the Orthodox Christian Balkan nations of today, must be credited with helping to lay the foundation upon which these nation-states were built in the nineteenth century.

THE BREAKDOWN OF THE TRADITIONAL OTTOMAN ORDER AND THE RISE OF BALKAN NATIONALISM

The European powers began their thrust — both military and political — into the Balkans after 1683, and this was the first and primary factor leading to the disintegration of the Ottoman society and, both directly and indirectly, to the rise
of nationalist feelings that surfaced before the Berlin Treaty which established the independent states of the area.

Following the defeat of the Ottoman forces attacking Vienna in 1683, the Habsburgs occupied Buda (Pest) in Hungary and portions of Serbia. They liquidated the Muslim population under their authority and launched what amounted to a crusade, preaching the superiority of Catholic Christianity to Islam. But the Orthodox Christians were not persuaded into revolt by the Austrian crusade, for they mistrusted and disliked the papacy and still preferred the Ottomans. Nevertheless, the Austrian victory did show that the Ottoman order was not immutable and, in fact, had become vulnerable.

After the Habsburgs retreated from the Ottoman territories in Serbia (1690), a group of 200,000 Serbians under Bishop Arsenije III Cernojevic followed them and settled around Karlowac. It was this Serbian Orthodox community established in a Catholic country that became a centre of Serbian cultural activities and, along with Voivodina and other frontier areas, produced in the nineteenth century the first figures to become symbols of the Serbian political and cultural awakening — for example, Obradovic and Vuk Karadic; many of these were supported by the Habsburgs and remained always under Austrian influence. Eventually in this century, the Serbs laid claim to and made Vojvodina a part of Serbia, although the area had been an integral part of Hungary and was inhabited by a sizeable Magyar population.

The next moves on the Ottomans were made by Russia. Peter the Great succeeded in occupying several Ottoman towns and fortresses, but his main thrust into the European territory of the Empire turned into a debacle at Prut in 1711. Yet, Peter achieved the unthinkable: he attracted to his side Dimitrie Cantemir, the Ottoman vassal gospodar of Moldavia, an erudite man, greatly liked and admired in Istanbul, where he had spent a good part of his life. Cantemir's desertion to Russia was the result of his desire for power, but many regard it as a case of his Orthodox religious preferences prevailing over his Cuman Turkic heritage. Peter had appealed to Cantemir to join the Russians because they "all were Orthodox Christian brothers". The Tsar sought to play the role of the "liberator" of the Balkan Orthodox Christians. This was part both of Moscow's continuing expansionist effort to extend its own territory at the expense of the Ottomans and of Russia's own crusade against the Muslims, which had begun with the conquest of Kazan in 1552. Peter developed his campaign of anti-Muslim propaganda to such an extent that the Russian establishment itself — normally quite cynical about such political activities — became convinced of the correctness of the Tsar's assertions and the righteousness of his cause. The subsequent Russian-Ottoman war, which ended in the Küçük Kaynarca Treaty of 1774, won for the Tsar the right to "make representations" to the Porte on behalf of the Orthodox Christians living under Ottoman rule, most of whom were in the Balkans. The sultan's monopoly of power was thus broken, and the Orthodox millet was laid open to Russian influence. In the nineteenth century Russia's main lasting contribution to Balkan
nationalism was to turn Orthodox Christianity into a political ideology and use it to mobilize the Orthodox Christians against the Porte and the Muslims.

The Russians encouraged any sort of Orthodox Christian dissent within the Ottoman Empire, making use of various merchant colonies — mainly the Bulgarians — in Wallachia and Russia by offering scholarships for students and by using diplomats to spread pan-Slavism, which became synonymous with Orthodoxy. In January of 1858 Russian Slavists formed the Slavic Benevolent Committee for the purpose of giving support to the cultural and religious activities of Slavs under Ottoman rule and, incidentally, to prevent the Serbs from falling into the sphere of the "sinful West". A branch of the committee that opened later in St. Petersburg included among its members Count N. P. Ignatiev, the famous pan-Slavist who became the Russian ambassador to the Porte.17

The Ottomans' political reaction to the Russian incursion that was defeated in 1711 at Prut contributed to the demise of religious solidarity among the Christians by giving grounds for dissent to the non-Greek Orthodox clergy. A colony of Greek merchant families living in the Fener (Phar) district of Istanbul had become very prosperous by taking advantage of the newly developing opportunities to trade with the West. After the war, the Porte was distrustful of rulers of Moldavia and Wallachia because of their apparent tilt toward Moscow (as indicated by Cantemir's defection), and it replaced the hospodars of Moldavia and Wallachia, in 1711 and 1716, respectively, with prominent Greeks from Fener. Known as Phanariotes, these Greeks were the first non-Muslim group within the Empire to acquire real political power, and as an Ottoman sub-elite they exercised considerable authority over their Christian coreligionists. The Phanariotes were the first Orthodox Christian group to become a full-fledged political elite and rule a country, even though formally they were the Porte's vassals.

The Phanariote rule in Moldavia and Wallachia lasted until 1821 — that is, for more than a century — which was a long enough time to produce a change of the order of things there and elsewhere. About 1750 the Phanariotes entered upon a venture (still awaiting definitive study) aimed at restoring the old Byzantine Empire, but in a thoroughly hellenized form. They influenced the Orthodox patriarch in Istanbul to persuade the sultan that the Bulgarian and Serbian churches re-established by Suleyman the Magnificent should be abolished. Acceding to the wishes of the Patriarch, the Porte closed down these non-Greek churches in 1767. The Patriarch dismissed most of the Bulgarian, Serbian, Vlah, etc. bishops and priests and appointed Greeks in their places. The use of the Greek language for services was made obligatory and the patriarchate's extractions of money from the peasantry to support the church services and the new appointees increased. While this action did not seem to have had great repercussions among the ordinary people, it caused a sharp negative reaction among the non-Greek clergy whose positions were eliminated or threatened, who labelled it a breach of Christian solidarity and a threat to their "national" (ethnic) existence. The Porte was eventually convinced to allow them to re-establish their own "national" churches, and these institutions came
to speak for each one of the major ethnic groups and became, after 1878, the political instruments of the new states.

The final nail in the coffin of Ottoman political unity and inter-ethnic-religious harmony under the sultan was driven by the Reform Edict of 1856. This declaration, issued for the purpose of satisfying the European powers who were increasingly trying to involve themselves in Ottoman internal affairs, promised "equality" to the Christians, which in actuality turned out to mean placing them under the informal protection of the Europeans and beyond the jurisdiction of Ottoman law whenever any one of the powers chose to assert that such law was not fair to some Christian subject. This European protective umbrella unfurled over the activities of the Christians, coupled with the effects of the ever-increasing commerce with the West (two commercial treaties greatly favourable to England were entered into in 1838 and 1861 and helped promote ever greater commercial interaction), allowed the rapid penetration of capitalism into the Ottoman economic system, and this, in turn, led to the socio-economic upheaval and to the further transformation of the Ottoman social structure. In fact, the ability of the foreigners to stimulate nationalist excitement in the Balkans would have remained rather limited had it not been for the socio-economic revolution their policies generated.

The intensification of foreign trade, notably in agricultural commodities, began at the end of the eighteenth century and resulted in the transformation, first, of the agricultural system and, then, of the entire society in the Ottoman state. State ownership of productive land was gradually replaced by private ownership as local notables (ayans) gained power and influence in the countryside and simply took possession of state lands. In 1808 they forced Istanbul to recognize their hereditary property right in these lands, thus undermining the authority of the central government in the provinces and helping to stimulate the rise of Christian nationalist movements. The best known example of such a successful provincial ayan is Ali Paşa of Yanya (Janina), who played an important role in the Greek "national" movement. As agriculture became commercialized and profit-oriented, the Ottoman state as a whole became a dependent agricultural subsidiary and market for Europe. This development particularly benefited the Christians, who, in the words of the Marxist historians, "were the first to adopt the capitalist mode of production" and who, in addition, found partisan support for their enterprises by Russia, England, and France. The classical Ottoman order based on the four social estates was brought to an end and the society opened up for gradual restructuring along class lines. Class stratification based on income and ethnic and religious affiliation was the final result.18

A new middle class arose, made up primarily of upper agrarian groups and the well-to-do commercial bourgeoisie — both groups for the most part bound economically to Western interests — and from among this class there emerged an intelligentsia that looked toward the West and became, in the nineteenth century, the intellectual architects of, and spokesmen for, Balkan nationalism. The development of the new commercial relations made obvious to
all — to Muslims as well as Christians — the insufficiency of the religious law in the area of the regulation of such relations, and this, of course, caused many to look at religion as less than relevant to practical affairs. Ottoman society, which had never been a homogeneous cultural and political whole, split along religious lines, and the ethnic differentiation of the Orthodox millet accelerated under the influence of the Christian intelligentsia, who took advantage of various destabilizing events and influences to achieve their aims.

One of these aims was the development of an adversarial relationship between the Muslim and Christian communities, the result of the Russians' continuing use of Christian Orthodoxy as a political tool in their anti-Muslim crusade. Another was the penetration of the concepts of Enlightenment and Rationalism, which undermined the foundation of the classical Ottoman intellectual order. The revolt against traditionalism, which had its basis in religion, affected both the Christian and (later) the Muslim intelligentsia. The idea of Enlightenment led also to increased individual self-awareness and a search for a new type of relationship between the individual and his group as well as to a new understanding of authority.

The modern school system, which found acceptance among many Christian communities, gradually generalized the main idea of the Enlightenment — i.e. that the individual had the capacity to determine his own destiny — and improvements in communications allowed its rapid dissemination. The first modern schools began to be established in the Balkans in the 1820s and 1830s, but their number and impact remained limited for a number of years. All schools in the Ottoman state were privately financed and run until 1869, and even afterwards, especially among the Christians. Public schools supported by the government gained the upper hand among Muslims, especially after 1885. Modern schools required new investment in materials and, especially, qualified teachers, and within the Christian community they were opposed by the church (except in Serbia, which had already acquired a measure of autonomy) on philosophical grounds that had also a "national" flavour because of the opposition of the Slavic intelligentsia to hellenization. It was not until after 1878 that the modern school system became well-established throughout the Balkans and became an important instrument in spreading the gospel of nationalism.

The sense of ethnic identity was strengthened, however, as more individuals educated in the rationalist spirit sought to establish special group connections, and the increasing importance of being able to communicate new thoughts and ideas gave the ethnic language an increased value. Community of language does not necessarily produce ethnic or national self-identification of an individual with the group to which the particular language is native. Greek was the official liturgical language of the Orthodox community, as was Old Slavonic, until the middle of the eighteenth century, and Arabic served the same purpose for the Muslims until the twentieth century; Russian is today the common language of the Central Asian intelligentsia, despite their deep animosity towards Moscow, in the same way that English today has become the language of
communication for much of the world's intellectual community. In none of these cases has the use of a particular language had any effect on the ethnicity or nationality of the non-native users. Language acquires an identity-giving function that can lead to political consciousness, however, if it is assigned that function, i.e. deliberately made the political marker of a particular group. In the Balkans, language acquired almost overnight the key role as the distinguishing sign of ethnicity and, eventually, nationality. A major reason for this was that in Europe, and especially among the school of German nationalists, for whom a prominent spokesman was Johann Gottfried Herder, the "nation" came to be defined as consisting of people who speak the same language — in effect, setting a new criterion for social and political organization. The second reason that language became the mark of ethnicity/nationality was that it provided a link to the group's past. The Greeks were the first to employ their language — however much changed — to forge connections to their Byzantine past and then, thanks to Adamantis Korais, to the ancient Greeks (whom the Byzantines had emphatically rejected because they were pagan). The Slavic idioms — as distinguished from Slavonic — were put to a similar use among the non-Greek Orthodox peoples as a way to separate from the Greeks and assert ethnicity in the new form.

The church was the first political tool of the entities that became the nation-states of the Balkans. Greece and Serbia, for examples, were early users of the "national" church as a core around which to unify their disparate religious communities. Serbia, which had gained a degree of autonomy in 1815, established its national church in 1834, while Greece, which won independence in 1830, created its own Orthodox church system over the period 1829-1835. Thus the patriarchate in Istanbul was circumvented and the universal Orthodox community began to be broken up into smaller ethnic-national communities in which language acquired an important status as the distinctive political identifier of the group. A handful of Bulgarian intellectuals established a "national" church in Istanbul and then, in 1870, secured a decree from the sultan that created the Bulgarian exarchate, which in a few years became the foundation stone of Bulgarian nationhood. Slav nationalists waged a vicious propaganda campaign that accused the Greek universal patriarchate of having been the "tool of the Turks".

Thus, the last quarter of the nineteenth century found the heretofore Orthodox church, which under the Ottomans had functioned as a universal institution free of partisan political pressures, divided into a series of "national" churches bound to the service of would-be states, which used it to convert the universal religious identity into a group of narrow ethnic-political identities. The only common link between all these "national" churches was animosity toward the Turks, who, as mentioned, were synonymous with Muslims. Those human attributes that had been in the service of the faith — loyalty, obedience, total dedication, and willingness to sacrifice — were eventually channelled into service to the "nation", that is, the state that was touted as its political embodiment. Legitimization of human activity, which had been regarded as
coming from God through the medium of the church, now became the prerogative of the states, which nevertheless continued (and still continues) to rely on the churches to provide the popular political leverage necessary for building their true nations and holding them together. The more nationalist the Balkan regimes became, the more they resorted to the church and its emblems - the cross, icons, ceremonies - to appeal to the populace. (The fascist regimes that arose in all the Balkan countries in the 1930s were notorious for their use and abuse of religious symbols.) The faith was glorified for the purpose of mobilizing public opinion and enthusiasm for the bloody national conflicts engaged in by the states, against Muslims or non-Muslims. Secularist in theory, these states still do not have real separation of religion and state, in the sense that the churches remain subservient instruments of the governments rather than true spiritual offices ministering to the many that still hold a sincere religious faith and are devoted to the church. (An indication of the failure of the state-manipulated religious offices to provide true spiritual nourishment for these people is the rapid growth of Protestantism among the Orthodox. Despite appearances to the contrary, Islam also functioned in the Balkans without government tutelage.)

Thus, over the period extending roughly from the Peace of Jassy (1790) until the 1870s, a period which I consider to have been the first phase of the "national" movement, the Balkans became both agent and beneficiary of a special type of political engineering the goal of which was the creation of nations. The Porte itself helped to accelerate the movement toward nationalism, partly of its own accord and partly as a result of heavy European pressures. Requests for permission to establish national churches were being favourably treated, looked upon as an inherent right of the Orthodox believers to worship as they chose and as a means to encourage the patriarchate to continue their affinity with the Ottomans instead of moving over to the Russian side. Thus a Bulgarian village church, which had functioned for centuries as part of the large establishment of Christian Orthodox churches would find itself suddenly - through Ottoman government action rather than group initiative - transformed into a Bulgarian ethnic church. However, the reformation of the classical millet system in the period 1862–1865 was carried out at the instigation of Europe. Under the new system, laymen were allowed to occupy key positions in the administration of their religious communities and this resulted in the ethnicization of these communities, and "secularization" at the level of some individuals. The village priest in the Balkans was often the symbol of greed and gluttony (as expressed in the saying, "you have the stomach of a priest") until the Communist regime's materialism made the commoner realize the spiritual symbolism embodied in the church and its representatives.

While before the 1850s the average citizen of the Balkans saw himself first as a Christian, gradually came to see himself as a member of an ethnic group sharing the same faith, and religion became a component of ethnicity rather than vice versa. Kings imported from the West were baptized as Orthodox in "national" churches, and they (or their descendants) adopted the names of old
rulers — Boris, Simeon, Constantine, etc. In Romania, the Hohenzollerns retained for a time their German names — Carol, Ferdinand — but the last one took the name of a native prince, Mihai. In due time religion began to be described as the fuel that kept the "national" flame burning during five centuries of "Turkish (for which, read "Muslim") oppression". That the Ottoman government policy in fact led to the strengthening rather than suppressing of the Orthodox religion was almost entirely disregarded.

The phase of Balkan nationalism that began after 1878 was conditioned by the establishment under the Berlin Treaty of independent or autonomous states in which territory was the essential condition, of, and the yardstick with which to measure the scope, of nationhood. It has been a phase in which the efforts of the regimes to create nations where, in fact, none existed before were marked by territorial aggression, myth-making and history-revising, propagandizing, and "ethnic cleansing". Refusing to accept the boundaries drawn by the Treaty, these regimes have defined their "nations" as properly residing in the territories of the ancient medieval "states", the imagined communities, and each of them has laid claim to practically the entire peninsula, resulting in strife and bloodshed. Part of the rhetorical effort to which the intellectuals in each of these countries have been put has been the recreating of history of these medieval "states" — with suitable accompanying maps — so as to provide support for these territorial claims sufficient to arouse the people to fight for some bit of "historic" land. Evidence of ethnic continuity being an important element of the proof of one regime's "right" to lands assigned to another, the intellectuals were also put to the task of proving the previous existence of their historical ethnic "nations" that were "suppressed" by the "Turks". At the same time, it has been they who have been required to show that these "suppressed" groups persisted, repeatedly rising up against their oppressors in ethnic-national revolts. Romantic tales of battles to preserve the "nation" are abundant. Finally, it has been considered vital to establish within each country a "national majority", the existence of which is demonstrated to the outside world by the creative use of census statistics by these same intellectuals. Where the regimes have felt it vital to establish in fact the ethnic majorities they have claimed for themselves, they have adopted policies of forceful assimilation and/or physical elimination of embarrassingly large minorities. Large numbers of Muslims deemed incapable of assimilation have been killed or expelled from their homes in the various Balkan states since independence, with major incidence of such actions as occurring in 1878, 1912–13, 1917, 1932–37, 1951–52, 1986–89, and, most recently, in 1992–1993. Guilty of this "ethnic cleansing" of their "national territories" in past years have been Serbia, Bulgaria, and Greece; most recently Serbia and Croatia, which declared themselves independent after the disintegration of Yugoslavia, have turned on the Muslims of Bosnia-Herzegovina, who for the most part had previously been spared this horror because in the period 1878–1918 the area was under Austrian occupation and subsequently became a province of Yugoslavia.
The facts are, as we have pointed out previously, that the ancient medieval "states" were not really states at all but merely fiefdoms — with periods of independence — under the Byzantines; that the ethnic pattern throughout the area formed a mosaic made up of a multitude of different, small tiles rather than a map upon which there were large blocks of colour representing areas of homogeneous ethnic settlement; that the political upheavals that took place in the Ottoman state in the period 1780–1850 were not "nationalist-ethnic uprisings" as is claimed but the economic-social churning resulting as the Ottoman classical system disintegrated and was replaced by capitalism; and, finally, that European intervention, not stubborn resistance to oppression by Balkan ethnic-national groups, was the major factor in both the decline of the Ottoman state and the creation of the independent Balkan nations.

The last observation on the subject remains to be made. The Ottoman Empire preserved the mosaic of ethnic and religious groups in the Balkans that it had inherited from Byzantium; the Ottomans were the political heirs and successors of the Byzantine Empire. Whereas Byzantium tried but failed to tame and rule the Slavs by converting them to Christianity, the Turks were able to do both and establish "Pax Ottomanicum" for at least two hundred years, by creating a new relationship between faith and ethnicity. Nationalism grew out of that relationship.

**NATIONALISM IN SERBIA AND BULGARIA**

In this section I shall examine in some detail the Serbian and Bulgarian cases. These will serve to demonstrate fully the processes and characteristics of Balkan nationalisms. First, however, I shall discuss very briefly the other nations of the Balkans, some of which did not reach statehood or autonomous status until the twentieth century. This failure may be attributed in large part to their strategically unfavourable situations, particularly with regard to the western Europeans. Wallachia and Moldavia are cases particularly on point to show how a favourable strategic location worked to the advantage of some "nationalist" uprisings.

These two areas had enjoyed some autonomy, being ruled (until Cantemir's defection) by their native boyars, whose relations with the Porte were not coloured by any national sentiment but by local and regional interests. Subsequently, after having been ruled for a century by Phanariote Greeks, who tried to hellenize all the Orthodox Christians in the Balkans, they were more interested in getting rid of the Phanariotes than the Ottomans. In 1858 these two principalities were united under the name Romania, after Romanian national feeling had developed in the period 1830–1848, particularly as a result of the Magyar feudal regime imposed on the Transylvanian "iobagi", the Romanian-speaking peasants of the area. The creation of the Romanian state was supported by both the Porte and western Europe because of its strategic location: it was hoped that the country would be a buffer against Russian westward expansion.

Greek "national" awareness began to develop in the eighteenth century, and in their restructuring of their historical past the Greek leaders claimed that
they were the heirs of both the classical Greece — which was of interest to the West but was sternly rejected by Byzantium — and the Byzantines, from whom their Orthodox religious credentials and true personality, culture, etc., were derived. The Greek independence movement started in 1821 in the Crimea with the revolt of Ypsilanti. It was backed by Russia, which, of course, wished to get rid of the Ottomans so that it could expand into the Balkans, but failed because, as mentioned above, the Wallachians and Moldavians wanted to get rid of the Phanariotes and, instead of rebelling against the Porte, tried to liberate themselves from their Greek overlords. The Greek revolt that started in the Peloponnesus succeeded, however, because it started as a *bona fide* social uprising that received considerable help from Ali Pasha, the ayan of Yanina, and was supported finally by Russia, Britain, and France, each for its own reasons.

Macedonia's "national" history illustrates the problems faced by a group in an unfavourable strategic situation. Sandwiched between much larger groups of Greeks, Serbians, and Bulgarians, all of whom laid claim to Macedonian territory for one reason or another; with no large, powerful state as a neighbour; and of no special interest to any western European power during the nineteenth century, the Macedonians had to wait until after the Second World War to achieve autonomous status as part of a Yugoslavia newly reorganized as a federation. In fact, the rise of national Macedonian consciousness came mainly after the Second World War under the Tito regime in Yugoslavia. (Tito could rightfully be called "the father of modern Macedonia"). When in 1870 the Bulgarian exarchate was established in Istanbul, it meant that all the other Balkan Christian Orthodox had their own religious foci, as it were; but no such national church was created by, or for, the Macedonians — which no doubt delayed the crystallization among them of a national consciousness. Until 1912, the majority of the Macedonian population was Muslim — Turks, Albanians, Vlachs — although the Bulgarians asserted that the Macedonians were Bulgarians, or hellenized Bulgars if they spoke Greek, while the Greeks claimed that they were Slavicized Greeks (and annexed southern Macedonia), while Serbia declared the northern section of Macedonia to have been the part of the medieval Serbian "state" and annexed most of the northern section in 1912–13.

Of the other territories that were made autonomous parts of Yugoslavia after the Second World War, three — Slovenia, Croatia, and Bosnia-Herzegovina — were of more direct interest to Austria, which occupied them until 1918. This, of course, saved them from the depredations of Serbia, but naturally it delayed nation formation in these areas, especially in Bosnia, where a good part of the Muslim elite came to believe in and accept the idea of Slavic ethnic coexistence, and even "brotherhood" with Serbs and Croats. Both Slovenia and Croatia — which were not defined areas under the Berlin Treaty — are Catholic, which partly accounts for Austria's special interest in them. (It may be noted that Slovenia's proximity to and close connections with Austria seem to have protected it from Serbia once again in the 1990s.) Montenegro, the boundaries of which were laid out in 1878, is a mountainous, inhospitable land that was never completely under the control of the Ottomans. It was mainly left alone by
its immediate neighbours and the Europeans, and it, too, developed its real sense of nationhood only under Tito.

Albania was the first Muslim state to detach itself of its own free will from the Ottoman Empire. Convinced that the final disintegration of Ottoman authority in the Balkans was imminent and unwilling to be gobbled up by the Serbs, it chose to become independent in 1912. In this it had the backing of Italy, which had developed a belated interest in having some input into what happened to the different parts of the dismembered Ottoman state.

I come now to Serbia and Bulgaria, which illustrate so well all of my points about the development of Balkan nationalisms, including my assertion about the importance of a favourable strategic situation. Serbia was much more successful in exploiting its alleged historical heritage than was Bulgaria, although Bulgaria could actually boast of a comparatively older history, because Serbs had an association and territorial connection with Austria, while Bulgaria had the backing mainly of expansionist Russia.

The Serbian upheaval of 1804 is viewed by most Balkan historians as having triggered the explosion of nationalist revolutions in the area. Some, however, who must be called mythologists rather than historians, trace the beginning of Serbian nationalism to the battle of Kosovo (1389), which is declared on the one hand to have been "the grave of Serbia" and, on the other, as the beginning of its modern nationhood. A recent publication stated, for example, that "the collective [Serbian] mind, tenaciously kindled [sic] throughout the centuries of oppressed existence, remembered Kosovo . . . as a tragic break in the continuity of national history".21 Others trace the beginnings of nationalism to the group of Serbians who settled at Karlovac in Hapsburg territory in 1690, to Dositej Obradovic and Vuk Karadzic and a variety of other literary and political figures in the effort to prove the early development and continuity of Serbian national consciousness and existence of a passion for independence that finally burst out under the leadership of George Karageorgievic. In fact, the Serbian revolt of 1804 was a classic peasant uprising caused by the breakdown of Ottoman central authority, which encouraged the janissaries to try to take over peasant lands. These were the followers of Osman Pasvanoglu, the ayan of Vidin, who had rebelled against Istanbul and established his personal rule over west Bulgaria and eastern Serbia some eight years ago. (This was a classic example of the aynas' revolt against Istanbul, mentioned in the previous section.)22 The peasants had initially fought with the sultan's troops against Osman, having been given the arms to defend themselves against the ayan's forces by Selim III (1789–1807).

Karageorgevic was responsible for giving the 1804 peasants' uprising a Christian political colouring. A former officer in the Hapsburg army, then a pig merchant, Karageorgevic, first had the support of Russia, which was, of course, anxious to see the Ottoman state broken up into easily devoured pieces. Russia ceased supporting Karageorgevic, however, because he opposed the creation of a central Serbian state; the support was transferred to Milos Obrenovic. Obrenovic proved to be a good diplomat, and he managed in 1815
to obtain a degree of autonomy for Serbia and recognition for himself as "the chief knez of Serbia". By 1830 he had gained an even higher degree of autonomy, thanks to the Russian victory over the Ottoman forces in the war of 1828 and the subsequent Peace of Adrianople (1829).

It was Russia that in 1834 persuaded the Porte to give Serbia the right to establish a national church with the specific intention of ending the Greek influence there. (Greece had brought an end to Russia's plan of using it as a Christian pawn in the Balkans when it threw in its lot with Britain.) With the church firmly under the authority of the state, it could play its "national" role as required by the government. Obrenovic, a true despot, remained a loyal vassal of the Ottomans (in 1817 he captured and executed Karageorgevic, sending his head to his Ottoman superior), but he also used the help of the Russians to gradually establish the foundation of a Serbian state. In 1831 he set up a printing press in Belgrade, and in 1833 he put into effect the first law on education, although the effect of these measures in the spread of the nationalist gospel was felt only later, after 1850.

Obrenovic was not himself a Serbian nationalist but a man interested in power and wealth (he managed to amass a colossal fortune) who needed a constituency to support him in his ambition. Serbia happened to be his constituency. In fact, Gale Stokes asserts that until 1839, when a constitution was adopted, there was no nationalism in Serbia, only Obrenovic with his effort was able to establish some sort of local Serbian government. Indeed, Obrenovic emulated the Ottoman sultans in dress and perceived habits (he had a sort of harem), but he nevertheless managed to establish a constitutional regime and to create an intelligentsia (after 1840 increasing numbers of students were sent abroad to study) that later proved useful to the Serbian nationalists.

As early as 1844 (as indicated in the Illija Garaschin programme of that year), even though Serbia was encountering severe economic difficulties of its own, its politicians were planning for expansion into Bosnia, Herzegovina, Banat, Albania, and Montenegro, foreseeing the imminent disintegration of the Ottoman Empire due to the traumatic events in Egypt and the ascendency of Britain in the Mediterranean over the period from 1833 to 1840. After 1860 Serbian intellectual-political endeavour, under the leadership of Obrenovic's sons, Mihailo and Milan, was centred more openly on plans for expansion, even as the trappings of nationhood, including an army, were being created. The Kosovo myth was revived at this time to serve as the historical justification for the planned expansion.

In 1876 Serbia attacked the Ottomans with the intent of conquering those territories she had designated as part of "Greater Serbia". The Serbian army was badly defeated in this attack, and only Russian intervention prevented the country from being occupied and thus losing its autonomy. The First Balkan War that began in 1877 and ended in the Berlin Treaty of 1878 resulted in Serbia's being given full independence, despite the Ottomans' victory in 1876. Serbia was also granted the territory around Nis, thus whetting the country's imperialist appetite that had been briefly dampened by the defeat of its army.
Serbia was then in the position of being recognized internationally as a true territorial nation-state, a position not won by its own "fierce" and "valorous" soldiers but achieved through the intervention of the European powers, especially of Russia, which many Serbians today view, rightly, as the protector of their state.

Despite the international acknowledgment of its "national" status, the state apparatus of Serbia itself was chiefly responsible for its development as a true Serbian nation after 1878. It did this partly by expanding the institutions created in the 1850s, such as the Serbian academy and the educational system (literacy was only 6 per cent), but even more it sought to propagandize itself to nationhood. The tone of nationalist writing became extremely strident, and the greatness of medieval Serbia was touted and territorial claims stemming from ancient times were asserted. But the 1885 war with Bulgaria, similar to the 1876 one with the Ottomans, ended in a shameful defeat as ragtag units fielded by the new Bulgarian principality crushed the larger and more seasoned Serbian army.

Nevertheless, Serbia continued to claim that any and all territory that had at any time in the past been ruled, however briefly, by any obscure Serbian prince or other petty despot was part of the national patrimony and the rightful property, therefore, of the modern "nation" of the Serbs. The fact that these territories had been ruled for longer periods of time by other Slavs, Greeks, Magyars, Latin, or Ottoman rulers and encompassed large non-Serbian minorities was completely ignored. Kosovo was annexed in 1913, along with the northern part of Macedonia, even though the Serbian population in these areas was an insignificant minority. (The Ottoman census of 1905/7 indicates that the Macedonian provinces of Kosovo, Manastir (Bitola), and Salonika had a population consisting of around 1.4 million Muslims and 1.2 million Christians — Greeks, Vlahs, Bulgarians—, but no Serbs.)

The dream of Greater Serbia appeared close to fulfilment after the First World War when Slovenia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Croatia were joined with it in a kingdom to be named Yugoslavia. This new nation was from its very inception a battleground on which Croatia and Serbia fought for domination. Serbian intransigence was equalled by Croatian obstinancy and sense of western superiority. After the Second World War the federal form of government was decided upon as the only workable solution, and Yugoslavia was held together by Tito, who was popular and powerful, as long as he lived. The Serbians, however, were not happy in a federation in which the rights of other Slavic groups — especially Bosnians and Macedonians — were taken into consideration despite the preponderance of Serbs in the federal army and bureaucracy. When the breakup of Yugoslavia came, Serbia was right there with her claims that all Serbians are part of the larger "nation" and cannot rightfully be expected to live under Bosnian, Croatian, or any other rule but Serbian. The vicious civil war that ensued has generated atrocity stories that continue to fill newspaper columns until now, but has failed to move Western Europe to defend the very principles of humanity, democracy, and respect for life that it had preached for so long to
the Third World nations. The Balkans have returned once more to their pre-Ottoman state.

While Serbia apparently suffers from undiluted delusions of grandeur, Bulgaria, for all of its overt proclamations of its historic nationhood, is a prey to feelings of "national" insecurity, both political and psychological. Contemporary Bulgaria is a living reality as a nation and was formed through a series of well-known, legitimate social, economic, and political processes, yet its leaders cling stubbornly to the idea of an ancient and glorious historical Bulgarian nation and keep seeking to turn this myth to reality, to make it a homogeneous nation of Bulgars. The sense of national insecurity stems from the fact that, despite frantic government efforts to make it so, Bulgaria is still not homogeneous. In 1956, according to official statistics, the country was home to seventeen different ethnic minorities; the census of 1992, which showed an overall population decrease presents an incomplete picture of the minority makeup of the state. The truth is that, despite its prolonged efforts at assimilation, Bulgaria still has a population thirty percent of which is not Bulgarian, ethnically or otherwise. Another truth is that the picture of a glorious nation that has existed continuously for 1300 years, although suppressed under the Ottomans, is pure fantasy.

In 1981 the Bulgarian Communist government celebrated, with great fanfare, the 1300th anniversary of the establishment of the First Bulgarian State. Scores of foreign scholars were invited — all expenses paid — to a conference at which they were to help solidify the Bulgarian government's claims. The conference was not a real demonstration of scholarship but an exercise in political salesmanship designed to show the rank-and-file Bulgarians, with testimony from the Western scholars, that their nation is an old and venerable one. It was important to the leadership to hold this public demonstration to prove the historical existence of the Bulgarian nation, regardless how shaky the ground of their claim actually is, in order to buttress their own power and prestige. Zhivkov saw himself in the image of a great czar, as did Ceausescu in Romania: his office was adorned with the pictures of the most successful Wallachian princes.

As already pointed out in this article, the so-called first and second Bulgarian states and sub-states are to be defined in relation to Byzantium. They crumbled quickly and left little trace because they did not have sound national, social, cultural, or political bases. At the time the Ottomans came, the total number of Bulgarians in the Balkan territory consisted probably of some 200,000 souls, for their numbers had been decimated by wars among three ruling princes. History does not record any "national" Bulgarian presence or activity under the Ottoman rule from roughly 1400 to 1800. No foreign traveller speaks of the Bulgarians, although Serbs, Bosnians, Vlachs, etc. receive frequent mention. It seemed that the Bulgarians had simply disappeared, just as had the Pechenegs, Cumans, Avars, Gepids, etc. in the past. The fact is, however, that the Bulgarians were ever-present and eventually underwent under the Ottoman
rule, especially in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, a profound and probably unique social and ethno-religious transformation.

The bulk of the Christian peasantry on both sides of the Balkan range was Bulgarian. Greeks held the key ecclesiastical positions and were the merchants, but the Bulgarians formed compact ethnic communities at the grassroots. They worked the land as state tenants, and with the increased demand for agricultural products, the commercialization of agriculture, and the privatization of state lands that came in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century, they were in a very favourable position. They experienced great demographic growth and eventually produced the first genuine agrarian middle class in the Ottoman state. The jelep (merchants who bought cattle for the Ottoman markets) and, later, the chorbachî (notables in the countryside) were the forerunners of this industrious, modest Bulgarian middle class, whose urban representatives were more than eager to Hellenize and thus become "respectable". Because of this tendency to Hellenize among the upper-ranking members of this Bulgarian middle class, one may not speak of any "Bulgarian national consciousness" until well into the nineteenth century. There had developed, however, a class contradiction that found expression in a rather muted response by some Bulgarian-speaking clergy and intellectuals to the hellenization policy launched by the Greek patriarchate after 1767.

Scholars searching for a beginning of the Bulgarian national movement point to Father Paiji, who wrote a short, shallow Slavo-Bulgarian history in archaic Slavonic. Although Stoiko Vladislavov, who became bishop of Vrasta under the name Sophroni, was a worthy successor to Father Paiji, the latter's work became known only in the 1830s and was first printed only in the 1850s. Thus, to describe Paiji as "the father of Bulgarian nationalism" is to engage in myth-making.

It was the social and administrative developments under the Ottomans that helped establish the bases of Bulgarian state and nationhood. Besides being the first to benefit from the passage of Ottoman state lands into private ownership, the Bulgarians profited greatly from the Tanzimat reforms of 1839, especially from the choice of the Danube (Tuna) province as the pilot area for modernization, which resulted after 1860 in large government investments in agriculture, schools, roads, and improved administration. The Danube province comprised most of the area of north Bulgaria, therefore, the Ottoman modernization programme laid the social-economic foundation for a relatively modern Bulgarian state. It was under these circumstances that the Bulgarian middle class expanded rapidly and its intelligentsia felt the first stirring of ethnic — not national — consciousness. Until about 1840 the sons of the Bulgarian upper classes were educated mainly in the Greek schools at Izmir, Istanbul, Yanina, etc. However, these students reacted to the hellenization policy pursued by the independent Greek state and the sons of the prosperous Bulgarian merchant class living in Istanbul, Odessa, and Bucharest then began being sent to schools in Europe, Wallachia, and Russia. One of these merchants, Aprilov, who made a fortune in Russia, opened a school in 1835 in Gabrovo, Bulgaria,
and adopted the Lancaster method of teaching. Altogether he had opened twelve such schools by 1840, but this was not a sufficient number to instantly create an intelligentsia.

Seeds of Bulgarian nationalism sprouted elsewhere too. Neofit Bozveli and his friends established a Bulgarian church in Istanbul in 1845. Russia opposed this, but it had the approval of the sultan. The bishop of the new church, Iarion Makariopolski, named the sultan his superior during a religious ceremony, not the Greek patriarch as custom had demanded. This church served as representative of the large and prosperous Bulgarian community in Istanbul and played a major role in the agitation for a Bulgarian national church, which was finally established in 1870. The Orthodox communities eventually were allowed to opt for the Bulgarian exarchate or Greek patriarchate, as they wished, and the choice of church actually decided "nationality". The Bulgarian-speaking religious communities gained separate recognition, thus being transformed overnight into ethnic communities, and the members soon learned to regard themselves as Bulgarian nationals. From being spread out through the Balkans in a series of separate religious communities under the Greek patriarchate, the Bulgarians were now gathered under a single Bulgarian church, the distinctive mark of which was ethnicity.

The Ottoman sultan had thus inadvertently created the nucleus of a nation, although neither sultan nor Bulgarians foresaw clearly at that time the possibility of an independent Bulgarian nation-state. Others did. However, Russia made a special point of indoctrinating Bulgarian students in Russia and Wallachia with pan-Slavic ideals, while Count Ignatiev, the Russian ambassador at the Porte after 1864, worked to get more Bulgarian schools established in the Balkans and to have their curricula imbued with a Slavist Bulgarian spirit.

The first Bulgarian "national" uprisings were planned abroad and ended in failure because of lack of support from the populace. George Rakovski, Lyuben Karavelov, Levsky, etc. — all today called national heroes — organized secret societies outside the country (the Bulgarian Revolutionary Central Committee was founded in 1871 in Bucharest) and finally decided to try their hand at raising a revolution in the Bulgarian-populated areas of the Ottoman Empire. They crossed the Danube in 1875 and were unsuccessful in their attempts to get the peasants to rebel. A second attempt was made in 1876, this time with the blessing of Russia. The revolutionaries managed to massacre several hundred innocent Turkish civilians, which resulted in turn in disproportionate reprisals by the local militia against the Bulgarian peasants. Batak was the village worst hit, a total of 2,100 (according to Turkish sources) persons were killed there. Still, this incident would soon have been forgotten had it not been for the missionary zeal and political expediency of some missionaries namely, E. Schuyler, who reported on the event, and, especially, Gladstone, the Liberal Party leader, who used the incident to accuse Benjamin Disraeli, the Conservative prime minister and a converted Jew, of siding with the Turks against the Christians.28
The revolutionaries were persuaded to cross the Danube and try to raise the populace in 1875 and 1876 because they had come to believe their own propaganda, which claimed that in the land they called Bulgaria there was a "Bulgarian nation" impatiently awaiting leaders who would liberate it from the "Turkish yoke". (This was, in fact, exactly what the Bulgarian nationalists continued to say after 1878 when describing the situation under the Ottomans.) What the Bulgarian revolutionaries were unable to accomplish themselves, however, was handed to them on a platter — in name if not in fact — by Russia and the Western powers through the Berlin Treaty. Following the Treaty's declaration of Bulgarian autonomy, a Bulgarian state with a Bulgarian majority on the land designated as theirs but where the Bulgarians had been actually in the minority was still to be established. How this was done is well known. Russian soldiers and Bulgarian armed bands killed some 300,000 Turks and expelled an additional 1 million.39 Today this fact is acknowledged by impartial scholars and needs no further elaboration.

The Bulgarian willingness to serve first Russian and, later, Soviet policies in the Balkans — and this was the reason why Russia wanted an independent Bulgarian state — has not helped their national cause. The San Stefano Treaty, which preceded the Berlin Treaty, created a huge Bulgaria, but its size was reduced under the Berlin Treaty. Although the country was granted autonomy, which was akin to independence, Bulgarian anger at having been deprived of "its lands" — i.e. those envisioned under the unratified San Stefano Treaty — carried it into four wars, all of which ended in defeat.

The policies of the Bulgarian regime after autonomy was granted were more successful in creating their nation than were those of Serbia, notwithstanding the political passivity of the Bulgarians up until the nineteenth century. There actually was a large, homogeneous middle class in the country, along with the best labour force in the Balkans. The ministry of education established in 1878 aimed to provide teaching personnel and literature necessary to indoctrinate the populace with the ultra-nationalist view of Bulgaria's history and national greatness.30 At the same time, the state embarked on a revisionist-irredentist course designed to recoup all the lands claimed to have belonged at one time or another to various Bulgarian "states". It unlawfully occupied eastern Rumelia in 1885, thanks to the hesitant response of Sultan Abdulhamid, and in 1913 took over a small portion of Macedonia (after its allies — Serbia, Romania, and Greece — in the Balkan War had turned against it and crushed its army). In both the first and second World Wars Bulgaria fought as an ally of Germany, occupying large areas of Greek Macedonia, Yugoslavia, etc., only to be forced to give them up at the end of the wars, retaining only the southern section of Dobruja (there was an exchange of population between Bulgaria and Romania in 1940).

The dream of creating a homogeneous Bulgarian nation — udinstvo natia — remains on the agenda of the Bulgarian nationalists, be they democrats, fascists or Communists. Approximately ten years ago Todo Zhivkov's government began a campaign to assimilate its Turkish minority which
comprises the overwhelming majority of some 2 million Muslims. When assimilation was resisted, the government sought to expel the Turks, but this policy was apparently had to be abandoned in 1989. Probably not for very long.

**CONCLUSION**

The Balkan population was being constantly stirred up and mixed by the invasions of new peoples after the third century. Nomadic tribes, ranging from Huns to Avars, Slavs, Magyars, Cumans, etc. swept into the territory, replacing, assimilating, or mixing with those who had come before. None of these groups had any notion of nationhood or sense of ethnic identity. They were converted to Orthodox Christianity by the Byzantines, who claimed the area; but these Balkan tribes, whatever their origin, remained organized in small groups and did not have a deeply-rooted religious identity even after conversion.

The largest group to invade the area was the Slavs, but the Slavic tribes shunned authority among themselves and were prone to accept domination by any group with a modicum of political organization. Thus, when the Turkish-speaking Bulgars and the Serbs and Croats of Iranian origins moved into the area they were able to establish their rule over the Slavs by the use of rudimentary administrative organizations that policed, defended, and collected taxes from whichever area the ruler was able to control. The ruling elites were eventually Slavicized and evolved into quasi-dynasties. The territory controlled by these rulers were later called "states" but were really mere estates of the ruling group, fiefdoms held under Byzantium.

As in Byzantium itself, the "national" Orthodox churches eventually established by the Bulgarians and Serbs were the instruments used for carrying out political policies, for they were not just religious institutions independent of the rulers. The Ottomans changed this, sweeping away the "national" churches and freeing the religious establishment from the obligation to employ the faith and the faithful for the benefit of state political policy. All of the Orthodox churches were brought under the authority of the patriarchate in Istanbul and the Christians were brought into one universal community under the millet system. Under the Ottomans the Christians of the Balkans developed a strong Orthodox religious identity. Because they continued to live in their local communities as before but under the millet system had the responsibility for the maintenance of their local church and schools. They were thus drawn together around the church and developed a sense of ethnicity that was not obvious but was part of their religious identity.

Under the impact of European military and political interventions and the rapid penetration of the capitalist economic system, the classical Ottoman order began to disintegrate. Social and economic stratification and political realignment resulted from this breakdown. A new middle class arose and produced an intelligentsia that, in the Balkans, began to attach importance to ethnicity. This intelligentsia was influenced by the European model of the nation-state, the ideas of the Enlightenment, and the weakening of religious ties and beliefs. Furthermore, it was recognized that national statehood would have
to be claimed on the basis of ethnicity. Thus the intelligentsia created and
promoted the glorious past of each of their proposed states out of a few
historical events.

In the end, it was not through popular revolt that the national states in
the Balkans were established but through the power of the European states, who
for their own reasons supported the creation of the new independent countries.
None of these states was a true "nation" at the time when official sanction was
made; but the small group of intellectuals in each of them took possession of
the state apparatus and sought to build a nation in fact out of the patchwork of
ethnic religious groups within its assigned territory. One ethnic group was
chosen as the model for the "nation" and one language was chosen as the
"national" language. Religious appearances and organizations were preserved,
but the once universalized Orthodox religion became again the tool of the
political leadership in each "ethnic nation". This has proved disastrous.

These Balkan "nations", seeing themselves in the image of the religion,
regard their political values as supreme and as sacred as religious doctrine. The
state thus judges its own past deeds and its enemies in religious terms. Thus,
what the "nation" does or has done is righteous, while what others do or have
done in opposition is evil and deserving of whatever punishment the "nation"
can mete out. In the Balkan mythology, all of the failures of the "nation" or its
leaders, whatever their real causes, are held to be the result of the evil
machinations of the enemy — the "them" defined as the Muslim Turk, and every
act committed against the Muslim-Turk, however barbaric, is justified, right,
moral, and long overdue. This national self-centredness has prevented the
establishment in the Balkans of genuine liberal democracy and is the cause of
the strife, the viciously inhuman civil war, that even today tortures the body of
the former Yugoslavia.

1 For instance, Art. 28 of the Treaty creating the state of Montenegro indicates that the new
frontiers of the country start from "Ljubljana to the north of Klobuk, descend towards Trebinjacica
and towards Grancarevo, which is left to Herzegovina, and then goes upward along the course of
this river to a point situated at one km from the confluence of the Cepelica..."

2 Kemal H. Karpat, "The Memoirs of N. Batzaria: The Young Turks and Nationalism",

3 The issue is discussed at length in a forthcoming study by this writer dealing with the
population of the Balkans after 1850.

4 A typical subjective view is that of Dimitrije Djordjevic, Revolutions Nationales des Peuples
Balkaniques 1804–1914 (Belgrade: 1965).

5 See discussions on Bulgaria's handling of population statistics in Kemal H. Karpat (ed.), The

6 R. W. Seton-Watson (1879–1951) sent to the printer the manuscript of his The Rise of
Nationality in the Balkans (London: 1917) "without having been able to finish it", as the publisher
indicated in a note, in the hope "it will help to serve the great purpose of the War". The book was
issued in record time. Seton-Watson was at the time lecturer in East European history at King's
College and had already made a name — and enemies — for himself as a friend of Slavic causes and
as an avowed enemy of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. He defended the idea of a Greater Serbia,
became close friends with Masaryk, with whom he edited the review *New Europe*, and in 1922 he acquired a chair as Masaryk Professor of Central European history.

*The Rise of Nationality*, despite its partisan stand and polemical style, has played a unique part in providing the Balkan nationalist elites with a convenient and simple theory of nationality and nationalism at a time when these states were transformed from religious communities and principalties into larger polities as a consequence of the collapse of the Ottoman Empire in Europe in 1877–8 and the fall of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1917–20. To the best of my knowledge the book was not reprinted until 1967, a sure indication of the reticence of the scholarly community towards the book.

7The most recent work which comprises most of the relevant bibliography is B. Lewis and B. Braude (eds.), *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire* (New York: 1982).

8The roots of this secular concept of authority, the Greek political philosophy as interpreted by Ibn Sinā and Fārābī, both Turks of Central Asian origin, and in other sources. It should be remembered that as early as the fifteenth century and thereafter Ottoman political philosophers such as Tursun Beg and Kinali Ali produced important treatises on government.


12The Ottoman government recognized that the political representatives of the Gagauzes, such as Dimitri Sultan, although Christian, descended originally from Seljuk imperial families and respected their tax exemptions. The recognition stemmed not from common ethnic-linguistic ties but from the high status of the exemption seekers. Besides, they posed no political threat to the Ottoman state.


16Ibid.

17Karpat, *An Inquiry, op. cit.*

18The different forms taken by the Western ideas in the East have been debated but never fully explained. This view is echoed by Bela K. Kiraly, "The Political and Social Legacy of the Enlightenment to the Hungarian National Revival", *Canadian Review of Studies in Nationalism* (Spring 1983): 5–13. Recently (January 1993) in a talk delivered at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Ernest Gellner spoke of "good" nationalism west of Trieste and of "bad" nationalism east of it. Gellner actually echoed the views of a Balkan scholar who was educated and lived in England, but he did not elaborate.

19As late as 1934 a writer could write about the Balkans that, while it was not "difficult to define certain areas as predominantly Serb, Bulgarian, Greek and Albanian, there was left a great intermediary zone in which the population was not merely mixed, but actually, to a large degree, of uncertain nationality". C.A. Macartney, *National States and National Minorities* (London: 1934), p. 136.

20Wayne S. Vucinich (ed.), "Introduction", *Kosovo: The Legacy of a Medieval Battle* (Minneapolis: 1991), p. x. The content of the book, however, makes it quite clear that the myth of Kosovo was revived in the nineteenth century to justify the expansionist policy of the Serbian state. The first anniversary of the Kosovo battle (the 500th year) was celebrated in 1889 after the expansionist Serbian policy-makers realized that they needed a myth. In the Balkan War of 1912 Serbia occupied Macedonia, where the Serbian population was barely five percent, and claimed to
have avenged the Kosovo shame by defeating a demoralized Ottoman unit at Kumanovo. For the contemporary political manipulation of the Kosovo myth, see Marco Dogo, Kosovo. Albanesi e Serbi: le Radici del Conflitto, (Lungro di Cosenza: 1992); and my review of Vucinich’s book, Slavic Review (forthcoming). See also a similar approach based on folk tales in M. Petrovich, A History of Modern Serbia, 1804–1918 (New York: 1976).

For a general theoretical background see Andreas Kappeler (ed.), The Formation of Nationalities (New York: 1992). This work attaches basic importance to the elites of the non-dominant ethnic groups, to their social origin, channels of communication, historical myths, etc., used to develop their nationalism. The work overlooks, as usual, the Ottoman context of Balkan nationalism, except for Fikret Adanir’s excellent treatment of the Macedonians in the Ottoman Empire in 1878–1912, ibid., pp. 161–187. For a general historical treatment see Charles and Barbara Jelavich, The Establishment of the Balkan National States, 1804–1920 (Seattle: 1977).

22For bibliography see Karpat, An Inquiry; for a more recent study see Pedro Ramet, Nationalism and Federation in Yugoslavia 1963–1983 (Bloomington: 1984). The second edition of this volume — considerably amended, including the change of the author’s first name to Sabrina — was published in 1992.

23Gale Stokes, "The Absence of Nationalism in Serbian Politics Before 1840", Canadian Review of Studies in Nationalism IV/1 (Fall 1976): 77. Even a work such as that of the well-known Serbian activist-historian Vaso Cudriljovic, dedicated to the history of political thought in the nineteenth century, has little to say on the subject. See Gale Stokes, Nationalism in the Balkans, An Annotated Bibliography (New York: 1984), p. 163; Legitimacy through Liberalism (Seattle: 1975). The author claims that the West and not Russia influenced Serbian thought in the second half of the nineteenth century.


25The daily, "24 Hours" (Sofia), 4 April 1993, gave the following account of the population situation in 1992:

Every Fourth Bulgarian is Retired

According to the results of the last census conducted on December 4, 1992, [the] Bulgarian nation is getting older — every fourth of the 8,472,724 citizens of the country is retired.

The data were announced yesterday by the National Institute of Statistics:

- 822,000 citizens belong to the Turkish ethnic group and 288,000 are Gypsies, the census revealed;
- 87% of the country’s citizens are Christians (including 60% of the Gypsies and 1% of the Turks);
- 1,078,000 people declared Islam as their religion (including 2% ethnic Bulgarians and 113,000 Gypsies);
- 7,311,000 persons declared [the] Bulgarian language as their mother tongue, 28,000 of them belonging to the Turkish ethnic group, 19,000 being Gypsies, and 24,000 representatives of other ethnic groups;
- the average Bulgarian family has 2.88 members.

These contradictory figures need a proper revision. The number of Turks is probably around 1,200,000, the Muslims are about 2,000,000, etc. The census did not mention the Greeks, Rumanians, Gagauzes, etc.

26See Karpat, The Turks of Bulgaria, op. cit. The ethnic groups in Macedonia probably number at least a score. The same is true for the rest of the Balkans.

27See the section on Turkic settlements in Karpat, The Turks of Bulgaria, pp. 22 ff.

28Even R. W. Seton-Watson, despite his philohristian views and dislike of Disraeli as well of the Turks in general, was compelled to admit that the Bulgarian events had become an unfortunate matter of internal politics:
Thanks to this deplorable accident [Disraeli’s view that the massacres were invented by the Liberals]. The Bulgarian atrocities became what they never ought to or need have become—a burning issue between the two great parties in the state, with the result that for the next two years major issues of foreign policy came to be considered not on their merits, but from the angle of party prejudice and with a passion and bias such as is almost unequalled in our history since the days of Queen Anne.

