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# PERCEPTIONS

JOURNAL OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Summer 2013  
Volume XVIII Number 2

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PERCEPTIONS - Summer 2013

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# Introduction: From the Balkan Wars to a Balkan Peace - A Century of Conflicts and Challenging Transformations

Birgöl DEMİRTAŞ\*

The Balkans was continuously at the forefront of global politics in the last century, witnessing three successive world orders. During this period the Balkan countries did not only have to yield to the hegemonic aspirations of the global powers, they also experienced problems of hard and soft security within and among themselves. Although a century has passed since the end of the Balkan Wars, one can still mention continuing state- and nation-building processes, inter-ethnic disputes, border problems and global rivalries.

Despite the violent conflicts of the 1990s coming to an end with the intervention of the great powers, there is still only a very precarious peace in the Balkans. On the one hand, the countries have had to heal the wounds of the conflict-prone years, and on the other hand they have had to face the challenges of globalisation and the European Union accession process. This special issue aims

to deal with different aspects of the historical processes that the regional countries have experienced from the Balkan Wars onward.

The Balkan Wars showed what kind of tragic events would occur if expansionist micro-nationalisms joined forces with great powers' ambitions. The then neighbouring peoples who shared multiple identities and often spoke several languages became each other's rivals- even enemies- when they turned out to have single and exclusionary identities.

The security environment in the Balkans in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is different from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. With the wars of the 1990s finished, one way or another, the Balkans has not received the attention of academia and the media. But there are still salient issues within and between the countries. Although there is no longer ongoing military conflict, the region has not reached the stage of positive peace yet. Among the security issues facing the region, one of the most predominant problems is the prevalence

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of ethnic nationalism in most of the countries. One should acknowledge that the wars of the ex-Yugoslavia replaced multiple identities with mono-ethnic ones, and how that process can be reversed is still unknown. Although more than a decade has passed since the wars, the electoral processes prove the continuing impact of the single national identities.

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Another important issue is the increasing homogenisation stemming from the migrations during the conflicts. As a result of displacement of people, the multi-cultural territories of the previous period have lost their authentic structures. This means the loss of the historical characteristic of the Balkan lands.

World history has showed that in order to have a positive peace in a particular region, all territorial issues should be solved. It is mainly because of the solution of all the major territorial issues that there is now a durable peace Western

Europe. In the case of the Balkans there are still disputed borders, which mean the persistence of existential problems that might possibly require emergency solutions.

Organised crime, economic problems aggravated by the European economic crisis, and the ambivalence of the European integration process are some other important problems facing the regional countries. Easy solutions to these complicated problems are not in sight. Another important issue is the reluctance of the actors to deal with the past in a critical way, be it the Balkan Wars or the Yugoslav wars of succession. Though there have been some small steps taken in the recent years, a lot more should be done if there is to be durable stability and peace.

The special issue covers articles whose topics vary from historical analyses of the Balkan Wars, to issues concerning the transition period, to internal politics, to foreign policy and to the policies of external actors towards the region.

The Balkan Wars have been dealt with in many academic articles and books but most have based their analysis on traditional state-to-state relations and military history. This special issue of *Perceptions* includes two articles on the Balkan Wars from non-traditional perspectives. The first sheds light on the

state of war by examining an important memoir. The second looks at the issue from the perspective of human security.

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The first article of this special issue is written by Prof. Dr. Maria Todorova on Trotsky's book on the Balkan Wars, *The War Correspondence*. Working as a journalist Trotsky witnessed the Balkan Wars himself. Prof. Dr. Todorova critically examines his writings and analyses his observations, and comments with regard to the state of socialist movements in the Balkan countries and the situation of the wounded people during the war. This rare analysis of Trotsky's war memoirs is an important contribution to the literature on the Balkan Wars.

The second article is concerned with the humanitarian situation of Bulgarian soldiers on the front lines, and examines this topic by looking at their letters sent to their family members. How were their living conditions? How did they feel? What kind of illnesses did they suffer from? The article by Dr. Snezhana

Dimitrova is a notable contribution to the humanitarian analysis of the Balkan Wars.

Many myths and debates are produced and reproduced with regard to Central and Southeastern Europe. Some argue that nobody foresaw the end of the Cold War, while others claim that the processes between 1989 and 1991 cannot be called a revolution. Prof. Dr. Sabrina Petra Ramet examines these two myths. At the same time, she analyses debates on transition versus transformation and the reasons for different paths of transition and democratisation. She also provides some comparative analysis of regional progress.

Another article with regard to the transition period of the region is written by Dr. Othon Anastasakis, who sheds light on how the illiberal start at the beginning of the 1990s affected the transition process in the region. If the Balkan states today are experiencing many problems, as stated in the previous pages, Dr. Anastasakis' article shows the links with the late 1980s and early 1990s.

Prof. Dr. Predrad Simić analyses the perceptions of Western actors towards the region and tries to unlock the prejudices and process of otherisation. Based on the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace's reports on the Balkans in 1914 and in 1996 he argues

that the Western view of the region was full of misperceptions. The author refutes the ancient hatreds argument to explain the wars on ex-Yugoslav territories, instead he states that the main reason leading to the emergence of conflict was the use of nationalism.

One of the key countries in the region is Macedonia. The country lived through a difficult time because of the civil war in 2001. The Ohrid Framework Agreement signed between the parties was an important milestone in Macedonian history. Dr. Sasho Ripiloski and Dr. Stevo Pendarovski critically analyse the period after the agreement and shed light on the current domestic politics in the country.

The last article is written by Dr. Birgül Demirtaş on Turkey's approach to the Balkan region. The paper analyses Turkey's regional policies in the last decade in order to understand the main continuities and changes. The main research question of the study is as follows: Has there been any considerable

change in Turkey's relations with the Balkan countries? The study has two fundamental arguments. First, although the main aims of Turkish foreign policy remain the same, different instruments have been implemented to an increasing degree. Second, relations have been transnationalising thanks to the spillover effects of globalisation.

I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to all the contributors to the special issue. They were very kind to give their assistance whenever needed. I am also indebted to the anonymous referees whose careful reading of the articles contributed considerably. Special thanks go to the professors and experts at the Center for Strategic Research at the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Without their encouragement and kind help this issue would not have been possible. I hope that the articles of this issue will contribute to critical and alternative readings of the past and to the establishment of a stable and peaceful region in a not so distant future.

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# War and Memory: Trotsky's War Correspondence from the Balkan Wars

Maria TODOROVA\*

## Abstract

*Based on a critical reading of Trotsky's celebrated *The War Correspondence*, this article addresses the complex links between war and memory. It offers a detailed analysis of the correspondence, arguing for its present relevance in several aspects, beyond its polemical brilliance: firstly, its detailed information and personal evaluation of the socialist movement in the Balkans; secondly, its testimonies of wounded officers, soldiers, and prisoners of war, reproduced in extenso, in combination with interviews with politicians, serve as a rarely preserved primary source. The article considers *The War Correspondence's* formative significance on Trotsky himself by juxtaposing it with his later autobiography and political activities, and follows his evolution from a passionate defender of liberalism to one of its most bitter opponents. It finally utilises the distinction between *lieux* and *milieu de mémoire* to comment on the present memory of wars and the centenary of the Balkan Wars.*

## Key Words

Trotsky, Balkan Wars, memory, war, socialism, liberalism.

## Introduction

In the fall of 1912, Trotsky was sent from Vienna to the Balkans as a military correspondent of *Kievskaya Mysl* to cover the events of the Balkan Wars under the pen name Antid Oto. Trotsky, born Lev Davidovich Bronstein, had escaped from his exile after the 1905 Russian Revolution and by 1907 had settled in Vienna. Most of his efforts were spent on reuniting the different Menshevik and Bolshevik factions in exile. From 1908 until 1912 he published the hugely popular *Pravda* (not to be confused with the later Leninist *Pravda*), which was smuggled into Russia.<sup>1</sup> He also contributed to the Bolshevik (*Proletary*) and the Menshevik (*Luch*) papers, as well as to German and Belgian socialist periodicals. However, he earned his living, supporting his family as well as *Pravda* (co-edited and co-financed by Adolph Joffe and Matvey Skobelev), almost exclusively from the articles that he contributed to *Kievskaya Mysl*. At the time, this was the paper with the largest circulation in Kiev, and the most popular

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liberal and leftist paper in the south of Russia. Trotsky wrote on diverse topics, from Ibsen, Maupassant and Nietzsche to the plight of the Russian peasantry. He jestingly coined the pen name Antidoto, having stumbled across the Italian word 'antidoto', in order to 'inject the Marxist antidote into legitimate [sic] newspapers'.<sup>2</sup>

From October 1912 until November 1913, Trotsky wrote several dozen articles published in *Kievskaya Mysl* as well as in *Luch* and *Den*. These correspondences, supplemented by some additional articles as well as a few unpublished items from his archive, appeared in book form in 1926 as the sixth of the twelve volumes of his uncompleted *Sochineniya* [Works], published between 1924 and 1927.<sup>3</sup> The original title of volume six was 'The Balkans and the Balkan War' [*Balkany i balkanskaia voina*] and it was part of the second sub-series 'On the Historical Threshold' [*Pered istoricheskim rubezhom*] of his collected works. The editorial introduction of the 1924 volume provided a brief historical background of the Eastern Question and grouped Trotsky's writing in three parts: the first- 'On the Threshold of War' [*U poroga voiny*] - comprising articles written between 1908 and 1912; the second on the war itself [*Voina*]; the third dedicated to post-war Romania [*Poslevoennaia Rumynia*]. This volume

was translated into English only in 1980 under the slightly misleading title *The War Correspondence of Leon Trotsky. The Balkan Wars 1912-13*, highlighting the second (and, granted, the largest) part. It was reprinted in 1993 to great acclaim as a primary source on the Balkans, at the height of the Wars for the Yugoslav Succession, named the Third Balkan War.<sup>4</sup> *The War Correspondence* has been hailed as a masterpiece, and Isaac Deutscher compared Trotsky's experience 'as a conscientious military correspondent [that] would one day be of use to the founder of the Red Army' to Edward Gibbon's experience as a Captain of the Hampshire Grenadiers, which he utilised as a historian of the Roman Empire.<sup>5</sup>

When, seventeen years later, in 1929, Trotsky penned his autobiography in Istanbul, he reiterated the significance of his experience: 'In many respects, this was an important preparation not only for 1914, but for 1917 as well.'<sup>6</sup> Yet he devoted barely a page and a half to this episode, and did not explain in any depth what it was that was so significant about it. He summarised his articles in one sentence as an 'attack on the falsity of Slavophilism, on chauvinism in general, on the illusions of war, on the scientifically organised system for duping public opinion', and on Bulgarian atrocities against wounded and captured



Turks, which put him at odds with the Russian liberal press. This, then, encapsulated Trotsky's memory of his Balkan experience. While he cautioned that 'memory is not an automatic reckoner' and 'never disinterested', he was somewhat disingenuous about the stated deficiencies in his memories of different types. He claimed that his topographical and musical memories were weak, his visual and linguistic memories fairly mediocre, but his memory for ideas considerably above average.<sup>7</sup> In fact, only some of his earlier ideas persisted, i.e., were remembered, only the ones that did not contradict the narrative persona that was constructed to make sense of his memory. His brilliant, biting and not always fair attacks on liberals, both in *The War Correspondence* and especially in *My Life*,<sup>8</sup> neatly omitted the liberal persona he himself inhabited in 1912.

*The War Correspondence* moves from analytical pieces to impressionistic dispatches, to what *de facto* amounts to interviews, and to political portraits. There are excellent surveys of the internal economic, social and political situation in each of the belligerent countries (Serbia, Bulgaria, the Ottoman Empire after the Young Turk Revolution, and Romania) as well as their mutual relations; a prescient section on the Armenian Question; colourful and well-informed portraits of

a whole array of politicians and literary figures (Nikola Pašić, Lazar Paču, Stojan Novaković, Constantin Dobrogeanu-Gherea, Christian Rakovsky, Andranik Ozanian); in-depth analyses of great power- especially Russian- diplomacy and its aims in the Balkans. Trotsky is especially informative on the state of social democracy in these countries, in particular Bulgaria, where the socialist parties were strong. His descriptions of and conversations with wounded soldiers and officers as well as with prisoners of war are heart-rending. He also writes powerfully on the larger framework of the War, describing in detail the feelings in the rear, the queues, the anticipation and the fear. Throughout, his prose shines with vitality, often with verbal brilliance, especially when his polemicist temperament is challenged.

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And still, one wonders what is left of these articles today, one hundred years after they were written? While the analyses are interesting, do they have a

cognitive significance aside from their historical value of being written by such a major figure as Trotsky? Are they more informative than the dispatches of dozens of other war correspondents of major European papers? Were they revolutionary in their analysis even at the time? Apart from being a testimony to Trotsky's rhetorical and polemical brilliance, would we care to go back to them? Some people actually did go back to them in the 1990s, in order to find confirmation of their often completely opposing political preferences or prejudices.<sup>9</sup>

There are three aspects that make them interesting and relevant today. One is the very detailed information and personal evaluation that Trotsky gives of the socialist movement in the Balkans at the time. This, to my knowledge, has been little if at all utilised. Secondly, there are the several sections made from testimonies of wounded Bulgarian officers and soldiers, as well as witness accounts of Turkish prisoners of war, reproduced *in extenso* as quotes. There are also lengthy citations from the interviews with politicians. Lastly, there is the question of *The War Correspondence's* formative significance on Trotsky himself as well as the question of memory in general, which is the principal topic of this article. What is most striking (and unexpected) about the tenor of Trotsky's

war correspondence is the curious mix of conventional Marxist dogma, Russian revolutionary patriotism with notes of great power condescendence and, most surprisingly, classical liberal posturing reminiscent of this undying breed in praise of Western civilisation.

The first section of the volume provides the background to the Balkan Crisis of 1912 by collecting Trotsky's newspaper articles on the Young Turk Revolution of 1908, as well as on issues of Balkan social democracy (mostly on the Bulgarian but also partly on the Serbian case). The two articles on the Ottoman Empire ['The Turkish Revolution and the Tasks of the Proletariat' and 'The New Turkey'] came out in *Pravda* (# 2, 17/30 December 1908) and *Kievskaya Mysl* (#3, 3 January 1909). Turkey, this 'hornet's nest of the Near East' had been a tyrannical state 'from times immemorial';<sup>10</sup> it was unreformable, the epitome of backwardness, stagnation and despotism. Its industrial development was obstructed because of the Sultan's fear of the proletariat;<sup>11</sup> had they read his writing, the Young Turks would have been surprised to learn that their 1908 revolution was 'the most recent echo of the Russian Revolution' [of 1905], which caused a fiery surge of proletarian movements in Western Europe and woke up the peoples of Asia.<sup>12</sup>

Otherwise, Trotsky welcomed the 1908 revolution and the newly convened parliament, but in a succinct and prescient analysis clearly described the fault lines between centralisers and federalists. What to him was the only desirable solution for the Eastern Question – a democratic Turkey as the basis of a larger Balkan federation on the model of Switzerland or the United States of America – was passionately opposed by the Young Turks. Nevertheless, in these articles Trotsky primarily exposed the stance of the Russian government concerning the fate of the Serbs living under the Austrian occupation and annexed by Austria-Hungary in 1908. The tsarist government used liberal Slavophilism as a fig leaf to legitimise its imperial ambitions and Trotsky rightly pointed out that fellow Slavs, like the Poles, were faring far worse under Russian rule than the Serbs under Austrian rule.

Trotsky's writings on the Balkans and his war dispatches shed important light on the socialist tradition in the south-eastern margins of Europe during the period of the Second International. Trotsky was no stranger to the region, having been sent there on several occasions, among others on an unsuccessful mission of the Socialist International, alongside Krístiu (Christian) Rakovsky and Camille Huysmans, to mend the split within the socialists' ranks.<sup>13</sup> Trotsky

was particularly close to Bulgarian social democrats and lavished praise on their activities, especially their press and other publications. Most recently he had been the Russian delegate to the congress of the Bulgarian Social Democratic Workers' Party (the 'Narrows') in July 1910 in Sofia. He heaped praise on the Bulgarian socialists who used the occasion to invite delegates from several Slavic social democratic parties – Poles, Russians, Serbs, Czechs and Ruthenians – as a counterweight to the all-Slav congress, this 'all-Slav comedy',<sup>14</sup> that had been convened a couple of weeks earlier in Sofia. They not only demonstrated that there were two Bulgarias, two Serbias, two Russias – the one reactionary-dynastic, the other revolutionary-proletarian, but also showed that 'the only way out of the national state of chaos and the bloody confusion of Balkan life is a union of the peoples of the peninsula in a single economic and political entity, underpinned by national autonomy of the constituent parts'.<sup>15</sup> This was the only way to rebuff the 'shameless pretensions of tsarism and European imperialism' and enjoy the advantages of a common market of the Balkans.<sup>16</sup>

That a common market was the best solution came from the antipathy Trotsky shared with (or derived directly from) Marx and Engels towards *Kleinstaaterei*, especially the

*Kleinstaaterei* of the southern Slavs. His derision of the ‘Lilliputians’, the ‘dwarf states’, the ‘broken fragments of Balkan Slavdom’, and the ‘broken pieces’ of the Balkan Peninsula, could be assuaged only if they unified in a federal republic in order to create a common Balkan market as a precondition for industrial development.<sup>17</sup> The Balkan countries that he depicted in detail- Serbia and Bulgaria -were backward, and the trope of backwardness was ubiquitous: there was a ‘lag in Bulgaria’s historical development’, they had a low level of social differentiation,<sup>18</sup> their literatures lacked tradition and were unable to develop their internal continuities, their cultures were ‘obliged to assimilate the ready-made products that European civilisation had developed’,<sup>19</sup> their bourgeoisie, like the bourgeoisie in backward countries in general, was not organic,<sup>20</sup> and, worse, ‘it had not yet managed to throw off its Asiatic features’.<sup>21</sup> Sitting on the train to Belgrade, Trotsky comments derisively on the ‘multilingual, motley, culturally and politically confused East, ...an Austro-Hungaro-Balkan International!’<sup>22</sup> The Bulgarian peasant democracy was primitive, because it was ‘rooted in elemental relations of everyday life, like our own Russian village community’.<sup>23</sup> Trotsky knew very little about the ‘peasant question’ in Bulgaria but

assumed it followed the Russian model.<sup>24</sup> It gave him, however, an opening to ridicule the Narodnik utopia of a direct way to socialism.

Though much of his portraits of Balkan politicians were witty, they were deeply marred by his contempt for their peasant origins. In his subtle evaluation of Nikola Pašić as a politician, Trotsky insisted that he was primitive, since he spoke German, Russian and French badly,<sup>25</sup> and Trotsky felt very much his superior. In his autobiography, as in many of his articles, Trotsky constantly fended off criticisms of his attitude towards the peasantry. In *Moja zhizn*, he emphatically denounced the allegation that in 1905 he had ignored the peasantry.<sup>26</sup> It is instructive, therefore, to read the unpublished memoirs of a Bulgarian activist of the agrarian party (BANU-Bulgarian Agrarian National Union), Khristo Stoianov, a lawyer and later minister of the interior in 1923 during the time of Alexander Stamboliiski’s agrarian regime, who found refuge in Yugoslavia after the regime’s fall. Back in Bulgaria, following World War I, he was active in the left agrarian movement, which, however, opposed the communists. In the period preceding the Balkan Wars, he had been in charge of closely observing the rival activities of the social democrats in the villages, and he was fairly well acquainted

with Krístiu (Christian) Rakovsky, Trotsky's close friend and collaborator. During the war, when Stoianov served as an officer, he spotted Trotsky, who had missed the train to Çorlu (present-day Turkey), at a provincial railway station. Stoianov invited Trotsky to his tent, and Trotsky stayed there for eight days. Trotsky gave lectures on the workers movement, on the Second International, on Jules Guedes, Jean Jaurès, August Bebel, Emile Vandervelde. Stoianov remarked: 'Trotsky could not bear to be contradicted. He did not like the peasant movements and did not recognise the peasantry as a class. We did not contradict him. We were buying, not selling.'<sup>27</sup>

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Comparing the stories of wounded soldiers and prisoners, Trotsky remarked that their views were extremely subjective and prone to simplistic generalisations, since they had seen only a small patch of the battlefield and had no idea of the complex strategic operations.

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The most astonishing thing about Trotsky's war correspondence was that he actually did not see the heat of war; journalists as a rule were not allowed on the front line. The value of his dispatches comes from the witness accounts he took

from officers and soldiers, but also from interviewing prisoners of war: 'We have to form our picture of the life and death of the army on the battlefields through interrogating participants, with the bias this inevitably implies'.<sup>28</sup> Some of his informers were casual acquaintances, but most often they came from his own social-democratic circles, 'men of high principle who had proved their personal courage and high character both in their political struggle and on the battlefield', and Trotsky gave their accounts greater credence.<sup>29</sup>

The evaluation of these texts as a rare primary source is somewhat delicate. That most are not attributed, given the restrictions of wartime, is understandable. We read about 'A Wounded Man's Story', 'An Officer's Story', 'Two Monologues' about the political parties and the war, 'Among Officers and Prisoners', direct quotes 'From the Stories of Participants', 'Conversation with a Bulgarian Statesman', 'Behind the Curtain's Edge', but all of these sources remain anonymous. It is unclear whether the large amount of direct quotes can be taken literally in a period when journalists did not go around with tape recorders and Trotsky explicitly states that he did not know stenography.<sup>30</sup> Some of the testimonies are suspiciously well crafted, almost philosophical. They display an educated authorship, either

Trotsky's own or of some of his Bulgarian comrades. In any case, although they are a rare glimpse into the genuine voices of the time, they should be used with a proper dose of scepticism.

The subsequent two world wars have produced such an enormous amount of literature (both documentary and fictional), which illuminates all aspects of war at the front and in the rear that Trotsky's dispatches, while extraordinarily moving, can add little in terms of knowledge about war trauma, atrocities, the psychology of the soldiers and so on. Yet when they appeared at the time, the detailed first-hand accounts must have been a rarity. Being Russian, Trotsky had no difficulty understanding Bulgarian and Serbian but, more importantly, he constantly had with him some socialist friend who would be his interpreter, and often his informer. In fact, a few of the articles in the volume are not dispatches, but fragments from *Sketches of Bulgarian Political Life* by Trotsky and Khristo Kabakchiev,<sup>31</sup> a book to a great extent authored by Kabakchiev, which was published in 1923.<sup>32</sup>

Comparing the stories of wounded soldiers and prisoners, Trotsky remarked that their views were extremely subjective and prone to simplistic generalisations, since they had seen only a small patch of the battlefield and had no idea of

the complex strategic operations. There was, however, one significant difference. While the Turkish prisoners of war were already demoralised from the outset of the war, 'the Bulgarian soldier regarded this war as necessary and just, as his own war... The terrible burden of militarism is accepted by every Bulgarian, right down to the most ignorant peasant, as a burden that has been placed on Bulgaria's shoulders *by Turkey*... For the ordinary man in Bulgaria, therefore, the concept of Turkey combines the Turkish tyrant, official and landlord of yesterday, with today's oppressor of his Macedonian brethren, and, finally, with the primary cause of the burden of taxation in Bulgaria itself'.<sup>33</sup>

Heartbreaking are the accounts given by Christian soldiers (Greeks, Bulgarians and Armenians) in the Ottoman army. On the one hand, they complained of constant abuse by their Muslim superiors.<sup>34</sup> On the other hand, their inclusion in the army 'inevitably destroyed the belief that Islam is the one and only moral bond between the state and the army, thereby introducing the gravest spiritual uncertainty into the mind of the Muslim soldier'.<sup>35</sup>

Standing out among the articles is 'An Officer's Story' which came from Trotsky's archive and was first published in this volume. The six printed pages are

extremely well written and are presented as a single quote. This could be the diary of a highly educated Bulgarian officer, who may have given it to Trotsky. It gives an account of the Bulgarian army's advance to Lüle Burgas, and the discrepancy between military theory and practice. It gives a disturbing depiction of being wounded and expecting death, and is full of incisive psychological reflections on fear:

Fear? You feel no fear while you are fighting- that is, when you are actually under fire. Before and after, though, you are extremely frightened- it's the same sort of fear that you feel, even if not so badly, when you have to sit for an examination, or make a speech in public. [...] Fear vanished completely, and its place is taken after a certain time by indifference. Cowards and high-strung men sometimes have sudden moments when they seem quite heroic...

Fear, as an acute response to mortal danger, disappears, but through the whole organism, through all your muscles and bones, there spreads a languor of fatigue. You are dreadfully, unbearably, infernally tired... As every day draws to its close you think: this is the end, things can't go on like this any more. But then another day passes, and another. You find yourself longing for the sight of the enemy.<sup>36</sup>

Trotsky exposed the horrors of war and the atrocities committed by the allied forces of Serbs and Bulgarians.<sup>37</sup> While he did not doubt that the Greeks and the Turks committed comparable massacres (and he did give appropriate accounts),

he protested that the Russian Slavophile press ignored the reports of Bulgarian and Serbian acts of violence and wrote only of the rest.<sup>38</sup> His indignation was strongly argued, especially when he defended himself against accusations of not having checked the smallest of details:

But however little and insufficient my knowledge, am I not obliged to raise my voice in protest to the Russian press? Is a journalist a prosecutor drawing up an indictment on the basis of investigation of all the conditions and circumstances of the crime committed? Is a journalist an historian who calmly waits for materials to accumulate so as to be able, in due course, to put them in order? Is a journalist only a belated bookkeeper of events? Doesn't his very description come from the word journal, meaning a diary? Doesn't he take upon himself obligations towards the very next day?<sup>39</sup>

This was a passionate and eloquent manifesto on the duties of moral journalism. And yet there was some truth in the allegation by Ivan Kirillovich, a Kadet, scientist and journalist, when he exclaimed listening to Trotsky: 'For you, it seems history exists for one purpose only, in order to demonstrate the illusoriness, reactionariness and harmfulness of Slavophilism.'<sup>40</sup>

Trotsky was especially livid about the Bulgarian military censorship, which wanted to 'keep from the eyes of Europe's reading public all facts and comments which [...] might show the seamy side of

any department of Bulgarian social life whatsoever, whether connected to the war or not.<sup>741</sup> Several times he successfully challenged the censors, explaining that he was reporting on issues removed from purely military matters. He wrote several fiery articles against the stupidity of the censorship and the compliant press which 'is tuned to make a cheerful sound', while the 'opponents of the war have been reduced to complete silence.'<sup>742</sup> Trotsky's particular vitriol was directed towards the chief military censor Simeon Radev, whom he described as a 'former anarchist' greedy for power, 'a thoroughly demoralised creature', 'a vulgar careerist', who did everything 'his uncouth nature is capable of to poison the existence of the European journalists who were obliged to have dealings with him.'<sup>743</sup> He wrote also against his erstwhile acquaintance Petko Todorov,<sup>744</sup> a romantic poet who only two years earlier had stood next to Trotsky protesting the Pan-Slav Congress in Sofia and now participated alongside other intellectuals in imposing the military censorship.

Trotsky's blanket pontification on the war censorship, in a rhetoric almost as if lifted from present-day liberal think-tanks, provoked the wrath of Petko Todorov, who sent him a letter that Trotsky published in *Kievskaya Mysl* on 30 November 1912 alongside his own response. Todorov

protested that 'all reproaches that you level against Bulgarian democrats, and me in particular, are due to the misunderstanding that constantly arises between us and the Russians who come to Bulgaria, and which results from the facts that all of you, to employ a splendid Russian saying, try to apply your own rule in someone else's monastery.'<sup>745</sup> In a style paralleling Trotsky's own liberal pathos, he further extolled Bulgaria's democratic traditions, its constitutionalism, rule of law and civic discipline. In a war that had been viewed widely as a patriotic enterprise, even by the anti-war parties and individuals,<sup>746</sup> foremost among them the socialists and the agrarians, Todorov saw his participation as the fulfilment of his duty as a citizen: 'Just as hundreds of thousands of my fellow countrymen have been sent, some to fight at Çatalca, others to besiege Odrin, so I have been placed in a position where I am entrusted with the safeguarding of our task of liberation from all those conscienceless spies and marauders with whom the press organs of Europe's usurers have now inundated our country.'<sup>747</sup> He further accused Trotsky of irresponsibility and intransigence and contrasted this to a sense of proportion, which was the most valuable legacy bestowed by the Ancient World: 'You see how far we Bulgarians are from your Russian flight from responsibility. We, unlike you, see in this



the very foundation of our civic spirit, and it is with this sentiment that we, like European democracy, seek to secure our rights as men and citizens. Similarly alien to us is your uncompromising attitude, which we are inclined to see as an anomaly that has been fortified in you by the regime under which you are obliged to live without rights; though also, it seems to me, behind this intransigence of yours, you hide from yourself your social impotence and lack of any practical sense.<sup>48</sup>

Trotsky dismissed this as 'a very primitive level of political culture.'<sup>49</sup> He confronted Todorov with the crimes committed by the Bulgarian army 'that must evoke shudders and nausea in every cultured person, in everyone capable of feeling and thinking.'<sup>50</sup> He further detailed the atrocities: the destruction by artillery fire of a Pomak village with its entire population; the killing of prisoners and of the peaceful Turkish inhabitants of Dimotika; the particularly heinous deeds of the Macedonian Legion; the corpses lying on the roads of the victorious army; the stabbing to death of wounded Turkish soldiers in the fields with the knowledge and under the orders of Bulgarian commanders. All of this he had learned from the returning Bulgarian officers and soldiers who had told him these stories with 'complete frankness [...] turning their eyes away'.<sup>51</sup>

Some told the stories of stabbing to death wounded men and shooting prisoners 'with instinctive disgust, others "in passing" and indifferently, yet others with conscious moral indignation'.<sup>52</sup> Trotsky's indictment was as harsh as it was just:

You, the radical, the poet, the humanist, not only did not yourself remind your army that, besides sharp bayonets and well-aimed bullets, there exist also the human conscience and that doctrine of Christ in whose name you are alleged to be waging your war – no, you also tied the hands of us European journalists behind our backs, and placed your military censor's jackboot on our chest! Light-heartedly you put on your poet's head a uniform cap with a censor's cockade in it you assumed responsibility to and for your general staff, to and for your diplomacy, to and for your monarchy. Whether your red pencil contributed much to the extension of Bulgaria's frontiers, I don't know. But that the Bulgarian intelligentsia was a fellow traveller, and therefore an accomplice in all those fearful deeds with which this war will for a long time yet, perhaps decades, poison the soul of your people - that will remain an indelible fact that you will be helpless to alter or to delete from the history of your country. Your public life is still only in its cradle. Elementary political and moral concepts have as yet not been established among you. All the more obligatory is it for the advanced elements of your people to watch intransigently over the principles of democracy, the politics and morality of democracy.<sup>53</sup>

Was this one of the important lessons Trotsky carried over into preparations for

1914 and for 1917? He clearly shared this state of mind at the beginning of the Great War in 1914. Immediately after the end of the Balkan War, he commented that civilisation inspires the false confidence that 'the main thing in human progress has already been achieved- and then war comes, and reveals that we have not yet crept out on all fours from the barbaric period in our history'.<sup>54</sup> This was the viewpoint of the peacetime liberal habitus Trotsky inhabited at the time in Vienna, and it came in a period when he was enamoured by a modernising and civilising pathos. Deutscher describes this stage as the mission of all Marxists to 'Europeanise' Russian socialism, but each fighting faction followed its own way. This cry to Europeanisation came most naturally from Trotsky, as the most 'European' of the Russian émigrés, according to Deutscher.<sup>55</sup> To the surprise of Deutscher, his close ties were not to Luxemburg, Liebknecht or Mehring, 'but to the men of the centre group'.<sup>56</sup> He continued his internationalist stance as one of the leaders of the Zimmerwald movement. As legend has it, Karl Kraus, when told that Trotsky organised the Red Army and saved the revolution, exclaimed: 'Who would have expected that of Herr Bronstein from Café Central!'<sup>57</sup>

This state of mind was in apparent contrast to another celebrated war

correspondent of the Balkan Wars, Filippo Tommaso Marinetti (1876-1944). The author of the 1909 'Futurist Manifesto' was the war correspondent of the Parisian daily *L'Intransigeant*. Before that he had covered the Italo-Turkish War in Libya (1911). Arriving in Sofia, he seems to have had much better luck than Trotsky, because not only was he allowed on the front, but he was flown in an aeroplane during the siege of Adrianople (November 1912 - March 1913). He had already been aware of the new role of aerial war during the bombing of Ain Zara in Libya in 1911, the first use of aeroplanes in war. The following year, the Bulgarian army experimented with air-dropped bombs and conducted the first night bombing on 7 November 1912. As a result, Marinetti started looking at 'objects from a new point of view, no longer head on or from behind, but straight down, foreshortened; that is, I was able to break apart the old shackles of logic and the plumb lines of the ancient way of thinking'.<sup>58</sup> In 1912 he published his 'Technical Manifesto of Futurist Literature' in which he promoted *parole in libertà* (words-in-freedom), foregrounding sound and sensation over meaning. He himself said that words-in-freedom were born in the battlefields of Tripoli and Adrianople. Marinetti's experience in Adrianople inspired him to start working on a visual

and verbal account, a combination of letters, pictures and sound, whose very title – *Zang Tumb Tumb: Adrianople 1912: Words in Freedom* – evoked the sounds of bombs, artillery shells and explosions. He finished his work in 1913 and performed it in London, Paris, Berlin, Moscow and St. Petersburg, before publishing it in 1914.<sup>59</sup>

For Marinetti, neither the Balkan Wars, nor the ensuing First World War were a rupture. Already in the 'Futurist Manifesto' Marinetti had proclaimed that 'We want to glorify war- the only cure of the world- militarism, patriotism, the destructive gesture of the anarchists, the beautiful ideas which kill, and contempt for woman. We want to demolish museums, libraries, fight morality, feminism and all opportunism and utilitarian cowardice'.<sup>60</sup> He might have wanted (and succeeded) to shock, but he was also serious not only in his aesthetics but also in his politics. In many ways, some disagreements with the specific policies of Mussolini's regime aside, he remained consistent in his views and support for fascism to the end, although his individual radicalism was blunted.

Similarly, for Trotsky, and despite his own verdict, neither 1912 nor 1914 served as a breakthrough. As we saw above, he remained loyal to his liberal

democratic ideas until his final return to Russia in May 1917. However, he was a very different person only half a decade after the Balkan War. At Brest-Litovsk, as the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, and during his whole career as the leader of the Red Army, he was the one framed as the barbarian. Trotsky had 'forgotten' some of his own ideas that he espoused in 1912: he refused to allow the Red Cross to move across the fighting lines, despite Lenin's permission, so as not to let them witness the devastation from the bombardment of Kazan.<sup>61</sup>

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**'Making sense' of memory comes at a moment of rest, some time after the event, usually during peacetime, or as Trotsky himself called it a moment of 'pause [in the author's active political life]'.**

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Trotsky's most strident attack on the illusions of liberal democracy came in 1920, at the height of the Civil War in Russia, when he published his *Terrorism and Communism* as a polemical response to Karl Kautsky's book of the same title.<sup>62</sup> Kautsky had made the prophetic statement that, while bolshevism had triumphed in Russia, socialism had suffered a defeat.<sup>63</sup> He lamented the violence of the 'Tatar socialism' and wrote that 'when communists assert that

democracy is the method of bourgeois rule... the alternative to democracy, namely dictatorship, leads to nothing else but the method of the pre-bourgeois law of the jungle'.<sup>64</sup> His conclusion about the world revolution asserted that it would be fulfilled not through dictatorship, canons and guns, and the destruction of political and social adversaries, but through democracy and humanity. 'Only thus can we reach this higher form of life, whose creation is the historical task of the proletariat.'<sup>65</sup>

Trotsky's response was devastating. This is not the place to evaluate this most controversial of Trotsky's works, but suffice it to say that it was a passionate defence of the ruthlessness ('*besposhchadnost'*) of the revolutionary methods. In chapter 4, 'Terrorism', Trotsky confronted the accusation that his tactics differed little from the tsarist ones. His response was that the terror of Tsarism was directed against the proletariat, while the revolutionary terror shot landlords, capitalists and generals who strived to restore the capitalist order. 'Do you grasp this distinction? Yes? For us communists it is quite sufficient.' No mention about 'human conscience' and 'the principles of democracy, the politics and morality of democracy', which he had addressed to Petko Todorov seven years earlier.

All of this is not intended to establish and expose Trotsky's alleged 'inconsistencies', let alone his bloodthirstiness. The latter is based on the naïve belief in the immutability of some basic core identity. Nor is it intended to enter into the intractable debate about revolutionary terror and the dictatorship of the proletariat. It seeks to make one simple point: the Revolution was Trotsky's war. *Our wars* are usually capitalised: they are the Civil Wars, the Wars for Independence, the Liberation Wars, the People's Wars, the Peasant Wars, the Revolutionary Wars, the Great Patriotic War, the War on Terror, even the Great War, and they are mostly *just wars*. Other people's wars, whose motif is unclear or not immediately appealing, are just *wars*, calamities. With time this befalls gradually the capitalised wars too, once they pass from memory into history. This happened both with the Balkan Wars and with the October Revolution.

There are some obvious points and conclusions to be made. Firstly, memory alone is meaningless. We make sense of it through a framework. In his first chapters, describing his early years, Trotsky did not want to impose a framework, a 'meaning' to his childhood, and they are full of vivid memories that belie his claim of a weak memory in the absence of ideas. Their impressionistic

character, however, cannot be subsumed in a single consistent narrative, which begins only with his adolescence, when he is swept by the revolutionary ideas, and subsequently the 'revolution' becomes the overarching framework of his whole life. Memory thus is 'packaged' and the historian's task is to un-package it, but, even more importantly, to study the packaging itself in its different forms: autobiography, biography, memoirs, academic histories, popular histories, journalism, novels, poems, monuments, cemeteries, museums – each having their specific narrative sways and consistencies.

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**History offers accurate accounts of past events and has credibility, but witness accounts, just like myths, possess both credibility and authority.**

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Secondly, 'making sense' of memory comes at a moment of rest, some time after the event, usually during peacetime, or as Trotsky himself called it a moment of 'pause [in the author's active political life]'.<sup>66</sup> For him this was the year 1929 in Istanbul. And, finally, there is the all too obvious conclusion that these moments themselves change, that it is always the present moment of recollection that most decisively inflects the memory. Immediate experience is

the crucial vector. In the much cited words of Michael Oakeshott: 'The past in history varies with the present, rests upon the present, is the present... There are not two worlds – the world of the past happenings and the world of our present knowledge of those past events – there is only one world, and it is the world of present experience.'<sup>67</sup>

If all this seems too obvious, is it worth restating it? The memory of war is today a formidable business, in a very literal sense, with tourism at war sites, principally of the First and Second World Wars, but also going as far back as the Napoleonic Wars, and in some rarer cases medieval battles, in addition to commissions to sculptors, architects, filmmakers, fiction writers, and, let us face it, also to academics. The most lucrative topic in United States history is the Civil War. One can be certain to find work with this topic of war history, and with its paraphernalia, such as violence and its containment. All of this is packaged under the rubric 'learn in order to prevent'. There is undoubtedly an idealistic element in this appeal and while not wishing to deny genuine idealism in many cases, one suspects that in many other cases, there is a certain degree of voyeurism about violence, garnished with a puritan moralising and hectoring. Today the memory and commemoration of the Second World

War are an especially important topic in Europe, because of the search for a common *lieux de mémoire* in an attempt to build a common culture of the European Union.

Two ideas, which were not so obvious immediately after the end of the Second World War, have now become central (one very gradually from the 1970s onwards, the other in the last two decades). The first is the mandatory elevation of the Holocaust as the metaphysical event of the twentieth century, something that deserves its own history, but in a nutshell it is the remarkable transformation of the Holocaust from a German guilt to a pan-European one, and the imposition of the specifically German *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* as a normative solution even in cases that fell outside the paradigm. The second is the equalising of Nazism with the Soviet experience at large, not simply Stalinism. Both ideas have their supporters and detractors, both have weighty arguments and, without delving further into them, one wishes to point out that this is the present state of 'war and memory' in Europe today. However, as with any historical space, it is not all-encompassing and it is transient. Take the delicate issue of the comparison of the two totalitarian regimes of Hitler and Stalin. While the extent of the crimes committed by both sides was recognised, until recently

the emphasis in its assessments was on the difference between the two, but today the dominant trend is to point out the similarities. Perhaps the most reductionist, but also the most powerful, move is the broadening of the notion of 'genocide'. Does it matter, the most extreme yet also the most powerful argument goes, whether one is killed because one belongs to an ethnic or religious group, or to a social and political one? Most likely not. But let us imagine that a hundred years from now a global history of the twentieth century will appear from a new hegemonic centre and in a new hegemonic language- Chinese. One can imagine that the mass violence of the twentieth century will be painted with a broad brush, not making much distinction between regimes, because, in the end, does it matter whether one died in the gas chamber, with a bullet, or in a labour camp in Europe in the first half of the century, or because one was being saved from unsavoury regimes while being napalmed or bombed into democracy as collateral damage in Southeast Asia and the Middle East in the second half of the century?

This brings us to the last point, that of experience. The stakes today are high, because what is being remembered still has the status of testimony, of immediate experience. In my Balkan history class I did a little exercise with my students and

asked them, among other things, how war is best remembered. While I had the expected array of answers – art, poetry, literature, cinema, monuments, history – the overwhelming majority pointed to personal stories, witness accounts, especially ones they had heard themselves from participants. The Second World War is immensely popular, because grandfathers served in it (or were its victims). Witness accounts are not necessarily the most accurate ones, but they have a particular legitimacy. History offers accurate accounts of past events and has credibility, but witness accounts, just like myths, possess both credibility and authority.<sup>68</sup> In a sweeping move, I will suggest as a hypothesis that the power of personal testimony, its authority, is at its height for three generations. There is the Swahili saying that the deceased who remain alive in people's memory are the 'living dead'. It is only when the last to have known them passes away that they are pronounced completely dead.<sup>69</sup> I would venture that this process begins roughly at the third generation, and then is accelerated until it reaches obscurity. Conversely, the premium of immediate experience goes beyond the individual who has experienced an event; it also anoints those who have had immediate knowledge of that person.

Pierre Nora has become an obligatory footnote to any study of memory, but

few pay attention to the fundamental distinction he made between *lieux* and *milieux de mémoire*. English does not translate *milieux*, although there are quibbles over *lieux*, ranging from 'realms' to 'sites' to 'places' to preserving the French original. *Milieu* indicates sites of living or lived memory, or rather sites that provide direct access to living traditions. Once these traditions have passed away, the sites evoke only intimations, often nostalgia. Nora uses *lieu* to designate the exterritorialised sites of collective memory. Speaking specifically about contemporary France, he maintains that a shift has occurred from a kind of naturalised collective memory to a self-conscious, uninspired and rather mechanistic activity of preserving memory. He thus posits a transformation from sites of internalised social collective memory to fixed externalised locations. These sites form an exhaustive inventory, consisting of architectural and textual artefacts: monuments and shrines, histories and textbooks, museums and archives. Commenting on the *lieux*, Nora says, 'It is no longer genesis we seek but rather the deciphering of who we are in light of who we are no longer.'<sup>70</sup>

This seems to be happening also with the Balkan Wars. Between 2012-2013, there has been a proliferation of celebrations, commemorations, documentary and photo exhibits in all

participant countries. There are school and academic competitions on the topic. Academia is using the centenary to organise national and international workshops and conferences all over Europe and North America. There are reprints and new publications, especially memoirs and other witness accounts.<sup>71</sup> The press in the Balkan countries does not miss the opportunity to publish interviews with historians, literary scholars and politicians. The web is a particularly rich source of activities.<sup>72</sup> However, no new monuments are being

erected, and there have been merely calls to repair the older ones that have been allowed to crumble.<sup>73</sup> It seems that they had lost their function as *milieux*, and now there is a desire to turn them into attractive *lieux*. The passage from *milieux* to *lieux* is inevitable, because in the broadest sense it hinges on the immediacy of lived experience. There is nothing tragic about it. If only it were possible in the future that ‘war and memory’ would be enshrined solely in *lieux de mémoire!*



## Endnotes

- 1 *Pravda* had 25 issues between 3 October 1908 and 23 April 1912, and with its non-factional politics became popular with industrial workers as well as with different émigré factions. In 1910, for a brief period from January to August, it was made the central, and thus party-financed, organ of the temporarily reunified Russian Social Democratic Labor Party.
- 2 Leon Trotsky, *My Life: An Attempt at Autobiography*, New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1930, p. 127.
- 3 Leon Trotskii, *Sochinenia*, Seria II. Pered istoricheskim rubezhom. Tom VI. Balkany i balkanskaia voina. Moskva, Leningrad, Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo, 1926. The collected works of Trotsky – *Sochinenia* – were conceived as a major enterprise comprising 23 volumes in seven series. Editorial work began in 1923 and the volumes began to appear from 1924 onwards. In fact only 12 volumes were published (3 appeared in two parts, thus 15 volumes altogether) before work was suspended in 1927 when Trotsky was expelled from the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. In January 1928 he was banished to Alma Ata and in February 1929 was exiled to Turkey where he stayed until 1933. A digitised version of all volumes in Russian can be accessed from Lubitz' TrotskyanaNet (LTN) at <http://www.magister.msk.ru/library/trotsky/trotsky.htm>; Volume 6 can be found at <http://www.magister.msk.ru/library/trotsky/trotm083.htm> [last visited 22 March 2013].
- 4 Leon Trotsky, *The War Correspondence of Leon Trotsky. The Balkan Wars 1912-13*, transl. Brian Pearce, New York, Monad Press; Australia, Pathfinder Press, 1993, (first published 1980). The phrase 'Third Balkan War' is sometimes used by journalists and historians to refer to World War I (as in Joachim Remak's famous 1971 article in *The Journal of Modern History*), but is mostly used to refer to the Yugoslav Wars of the 1990s: Misha Glenny, *The Fall of Yugoslavia: the Third Balkan War*. London, Penguin Books, 1992.
- 5 Isaac Deutscher, *The Prophet Armed: Trotsky: 1879-1921*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1954, p. 228.
- 6 Trotsky *My Life*, p. 227.
- 7 *Ibid.*, p. viii.
- 8 Thus, he wrote dismissively of the remarkable Georgian Menshevik Tsereteli (1881-1959), who had joined the Provisional Government after the February Revolution as Minister of Post and Telegraphs, and returned to Georgia after the Bolshevik Revolution, from where he finally emigrated to Paris in 1923, that he 'had a profound respect for liberalism; he viewed the irresistible dynamics of the revolution with the eyes of a half-educated bourgeois, terrified for the safety of culture. The awakened masses seemed to him more and more like a mutinous mob', '[i]t took a revolution to prove that Tsereteli was not a revolutionary' (Trotsky, *My Life*, p. 289). And he did not mince his words about the tragic leader of the Provisional Government Alexander Kerensky (1881-1970), whom he thought 'personified the accidental in an otherwise continuous causation. His best speeches were merely a sumptuous pounding of water in a mortar. In 1917, the water boiled and sent up steam,

and the clouds of steam provided a halo' (ibidem). The revolution should be viewed from a 'world' point of view, concluded Trotsky, 'to avoid getting lost in complexities' (ibidem). His greatest wrath, however, was heaped on Pavel Miliukov (1859-1943) – a leader of the Constitutional Democratic Party (Kadets), right-wing Slavophile and promoter of Russian imperialism and later an intractable foe of Bolshevism who was editor-in-chief of *Rech*, the organ of the Kadets – the true *bête noire* of *The War Correspondence*.

- 9 See readers' reviews of the book on Amazon: [www.amazon.co.uk/War-Correspondence-Leon-Trotsky-1912-13/dp/0913460680](http://www.amazon.co.uk/War-Correspondence-Leon-Trotsky-1912-13/dp/0913460680) and [www.amazon.com/War-Correspondence-Leon-Trotsky-1912-13/dp/0873489071](http://www.amazon.com/War-Correspondence-Leon-Trotsky-1912-13/dp/0873489071) [last visited 5 April 2013]. Some read it because it is 'an indispensable background to the fighting going on in the region today' providing a *déjà vu* picture. Others appreciate it for its anti-imperialist passion and materialist analysis. Still others see precursors of Serbian mass murder of the Albanians, or read it for the roots of anti-Semitism in Romania. Some are fascinated (or perhaps nostalgic given the paucity of today's print journalism) by the profundity of discourse, the ability to bring in complex analyses of the economy, politics and religion in an expressive style.
- 10 Trotsky, *The War Correspondence*, pp. 3-4.
- 11 Ibid., pp. 3, 12-13.
- 12 Ibid., p. 3.
- 13 Dimitir Genchev, *Pirvoapostolite na ideala*, Sofia, Izdatelska kishta 'Khristo Botev', 2006, p. 23.
- 14 Trotsky, *The War Correspondence*, p. 38.
- 15 Ibid., p. 39.
- 16 Given the fact that Trotsky lived at the time and place of the blossoming of the sophisticated Austro-Marxism, his own views on the rise of the national ideal were deterministic, not to say dogmatic: 'Economic development has led to the growth in national self-awareness and along with this a striving for national and state self-determination.' (Ibid., p. 157.)
- 17 Ibid., p. 12, 39-41, 152.
- 18 Ibid., p. 49.
- 19 Ibid., p. 82.
- 20 Ibid., p. 76.
- 21 Ibid., p. 53; The Zajecar revolt in Serbia was brought down with 'Asiatic ferocity'.
- 22 Ibid., p. 58.
- 23 Ibid., pp. 54, 157.
- 24 In the chapter on post-war Romania, however, he juxtaposes the Bulgarian army of 'free, literate peasants, possessing the vote' and the 'Romanian army of serfs'; Ibid., p. 390.
- 25 Ibid., pp. 73-74.

- 26 Trotsky, *My Life*, p. 204; Deutscher, *The Prophet Armed*, pp. 155-157.
- 27 Bulgarian Central State Archives, TsDA, Sp 3049 B, pp. 35-37.
- 28 Trotsky, *The War Correspondence*, p. 117.
- 29 Ibid., p. 288.
- 30 Ibid., p. 134.
- 31 Khristo Kabakchiev (1878-1940) was a leader of the Bulgarian Workers Social Democratic Party (the 'Narrows'). Educated as a lawyer, he was the editor-in-chief of its print organ 'Rabotnicheski vestnik' (1910-1923). In 1927 he emigrated to the USSR.
- 32 Leon Trotsky & Khristo Kabakchiev, *Ocherki politicheskoi Bolgarii*, Moskva, Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo, 1923. The articles in question are "The Balkan Countries and Socialism" (*The War Correspondence*, pp. 29-37) and 'Echoes of the War' (Ibid., pp. 213-225).
- 33 *The War Correspondence*, p.194.
- 34 Ibid., p. 194-197.
- 35 Ibid., p. 194.
- 36 Ibid., pp. 211-212.
- 37 Ibid., pp. 117-131, 266-271. While Trotsky does not acknowledge his source, this was most likely Dimitrije Tucović, the founder of the Serbia Social Democratic Party and the editor of *Borba* and *Radničke Novine*. During the Balkan War in which he was mobilised, Tucović wrote extensively about atrocities against the Albanians, later published as *Srbija i Albanija: jedan prilog kritici zavojevačke poliike srpske biržoazije*, Beograd, Kultura, 1946.
- 38 Ibid., pp. 287-312.
- 39 Ibid., pp. 304-305.
- 40 Ibid., p. 329.
- 41 Ibid., p. 258.
- 42 Ibid., pp. 26-261.
- 43 Ibid., pp. 263-264, 282. Given the eminent stature of Simeon Radev (1879-1967) as one of the major political and intellectual figures in the modern history of Bulgaria, this abuse is especially jarring. Trotsky admits that Radev was "a journalist not without talent" (p. 263), but his condescending dismissal is ridiculous. By 1912 Radev, who had graduated in law from the University of Geneva and was an active journalist and diplomat, as well as a highly cultivated intellectual, had published his major history of post-1878 Bulgaria – *The Builders of Modern Bulgaria* – a work that is still considered a masterpiece.

- 44 Petko Yurdanov Todorov (1879-1916) was a major poet, dramatist and writer. As a high school student he was influenced by socialist ideas and was in contact with Jean Jaurès. He studied law in Bern and literature in Leipzig and Berlin. In 1905 he became a co-founder of the Radical-Democratic Party. In 1912 he was on Capri where he befriended Maxim Gorky. He died in 1916 from tuberculosis.
- 45 Trotsky, *The War Correspondence*, p. 277.
- 46 To his credit, Trotsky saw the Balkan War as having “more in common with the Italian War of Liberation of 1859 than it has [...] with the Italian-Turkish War of 1911-1912”; *Ibid.*, p.152; In a remarkable article “Bulgaria’s Crisis” he even agreed with the analysis of a Bulgarian officer, who admonished Trotsky that “the duty of Russian journalists, and especially of those who are combating the reactionary nonsense of the Slavophiles, is to explain the role and significance of a free, independent, and strong Bulgaria for the destiny of Southeastern Europe”; *Ibid.*, pp. 346-347.
- 47 *Ibid.*, p. 278.
- 48 *Ibid.*
- 49 *Ibid.*, p. 279.
- 50 *Ibid.*, pp. 282-283.
- 51 *Ibid.*, pp. 283-284.
- 52 *Ibid.*, p. 304. Trotsky evidently used the dispatches of Vasil Kolarov from his diary as an officer in the Balkan War, which he published regularly in *Rabotnicheski vestnik*. They were published separately only in 2001 as *Pobedi i porazheniia. Dnevnik*. Sofia, Izdatelstvo ‘Khristo Botev’. Kolarov (1977-1950) was a lawyer and one of the leaders of the Bulgarian Workers Social Democratic Party (the ‘Narrows’). Following 1923 he lived in emigration in the USSR.
- 53 *Ibid.*, pp. 284-285.
- 54 *Ibid.*, p. 148. The famous report of the Carnegie Commission came to a similar conclusion that “war suspended the restraints of civil life, inflamed the passions that slumber in time of peace, destroyed the natural kindness between neighbours, and set in its place the will to injure. This is everywhere the essence of war” (Report of the International Commission to Inquire into the Causes and Conduct of the Balkan Wars, Washington, D.C., Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1914, p. 108).
- 55 Deutscher, *The Prophet Armed*, pp. 180-181.
- 56 *Ibid.*, pp. 182-185.
- 57 Cited by Slavoj Žižek, “Trotsky’s Terrorism and Communism, or, Despair and Utopia in the Turbulent Year of 1920”, in Leon Trotsky (ed.), *Terrorism and Communism: A Reply to Karl Kautsky*, London, Verso, 2007, p. vii.
- 58 Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, “From the Café Bulgaria in Sofia to the Courage of Italians in the Balkans and the Military spirit of Désarrois”, quoted in Leah Dickerman (ed.), *Inventing*

- Abstraction 1910-1925: How a Radical Idea Changed Modern Art*, New York, Museum of Modern Art, 2012, p.136.
- 59 Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, *Zang Tumb Tumb-Adrianopoli: Ottobre 1912: Parole in libertà*, Milano, Edizione Futurista di Poesia, 1914.
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- 70 Pierre Nora, "Entre mémoire et histoire", in *Les lieux de mémoire*, Paris, 1984, p. 1: xxxiii, cited in Patrick Hutton, *History as an Art of Memory*, Hanover, University Press of New England, 1993, p. 148.
- 71 In Bulgaria, alongside a plentitude of other minor publications, the Institute for Historical Research published a *de luxe* edition of war memories: *Balkanskite voini 1912-1913. Pamet i istoriia*, Sofia, Akademichno izdatelstvo, Prof. Marin Drinov, 2012.
- 72 Bulgaria alone has more than 700 websites dedicated to some aspect of the centennial. A game by Joseph Mirand, *Balkan Wars*, can be downloaded. It is only on these websites that one can gauge the reaction of the younger people to the anniversary, ranging from openly nationalistic ones to others critical of any display of jingoism. Even these blogs, however, which are usually fiery and confrontational, are relatively subdued.
- 73 See, in particular, <http://www.100godini-nalkanskivoini.bg>, the rubric on monuments, which lists dozens of monuments that should be or are under repair.



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# Of Other Balkan Wars: Affective Worlds of Modern and Traditional (The Bulgarian Example)<sup>1</sup>

Snezhana DIMITROVA\*

## Abstract

*Nobody is so poor as not to leave any legacy behind when he dies, said Pascal. But what inheritance of war (also involving the problem of its heir) is left behind by the soldier who keeps writing his notes and sending letters from the front line when he faces something unimaginable – dying by cholera? What else invisibly stands behind such a soldier's urgent need: is it to bear witness, and is it to become an opportunity to accumulate other affective (of the soldier's anger, rage, hatred, anguish, pain, fear and bitterness) archives of the Balkan Wars? Is this witnessing a condition in itself for penetrating the other, the invisible reality of the fighting man's world, so as to problematise the other heritage of this war (the sensitive man who has let himself be affected) and its stakes (the questionable values of the modern and traditional)? This article searches answers to these questions.*

## Key Words

War, trauma, cholera, modern, traditional, soldiers' letters and notebooks, witness.

## Facing Something Worse Than War – Cholera

'Our regiment was in a fierce battle at Bunar Hisar, but we came out of it safe and sound. From there we went to the village of Tarfa, the foremost battle station where we *endured something worse than the war – cholera*. In war and under attack, death comes suddenly and without one seeing it, so it is not so terrible, but cholera is something that you over there cannot imagine. There's a man feeling healthy and joyful to have survived the battle and all of a sudden, 2-3 hours later, he drops to the ground and passes away. Moments ago you have been talking to someone and then you overhear that he is in agony or is already dead. And the worst thing is to watch your comrades near you die and shiver, and the fear that you might be next. [...] Thousands left their bones not because of a bullet but because of cholera. No need to say that *in such a time* everybody has to take care of himself, with no question of paramedical or doctor's help. People are dying like cattle. Even now I remember the dying cry: 'I'm dying, give me some water!' But who would dare to go and help when such help means certain death? All the newspapers write about is the Bulgarian victories, with not a word of truth said about the horrors that accompany war. All of that we experienced, and hoped would not happen again, but now that

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hope begins to fade away; the 18<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> regiments are returning to their positions; tomorrow maybe we'll leave too, and it is likely that the war will resume and, needless to say, that fortune will not always be with us. If not a bullet, the cholera will do the job. And bearing in mind that we sleep in holes, pens, starve and have lice, then one begins to lose all hope.<sup>2</sup>

This is part of a lengthy letter written by Gancho Ivanov, a teacher from Daskot village near Veliko Tarnovo, on 19 January 1913, the day before the resumption of military hostilities after the armistice in November 1912 that did not end in the 'long-awaited peace on the front' (the anticipation clearly expressed in soldiers' letters and diaries). But 'the conference in London', 'the stubbornness of Turkey', 'young Turks revolution' and 'conditions of peace' are the political news most commonly discussed by ordinary soldiers (reaching them via military bulletins, rumours and conversations with their 'better educated comrades'),<sup>3</sup> news overshadowed only by the knowledge that 'our allies are taking over Macedonia' and the 'deceitful neighbours, Silistra'.<sup>4</sup> This excitement amongst soldiers indicates that political consciousness was beginning to form and develop in the *rural* lower middle classes (teachers, artisans, financial clerks, farmers, lower military ranks, sergeant majors), those who were identified as (if inseparable from) the 'gray mass of

soldiers' (socially apathetic and politically indifferent) by the upper bourgeois class (metropolitan intellectuals, lawyers, doctors, pharmacists and senior professional military). This process became apparent with the emergence of a new political genre – the *Army Songbook* for the Balkan Wars as an indistinct form (strongly influenced by folk melodies), but with distinct content (articulated by an affected sense of justice), satisfied an urgent need of 'its author' – to communicate a problem, such as unfair treatment of soldiers, misery on the front, soldiers' pains and sufferings – often caused by disease, but also to tell of 'our people's grief' (loss of 'the lands for which we were dying').<sup>5</sup>

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The fact that soldiers' diaries and letters were preserved and passed on to the official archive as *historical* family heirlooms proves, among other things, that the soldier on the front encounters history as a direct experience.

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It is in the formal non-emancipation from the traditional (the lamenting folk culture) in the soldier's songbook through which the ordinary soldier seeks to give public expression of something *new* – his *affectedness* from that which struck him as



everyday injustice (diseases, history and politics), the interconnectedness of the two worlds stand out (the traditional and the modern), disclosing the condition that made it possible for them to merge – affect (pain and suffering from, but also anger, rage, hatred *against*).<sup>6</sup> From this other, affective, reality of the experience appearing in the soldiers' daily struggle for survival at the front, the other legacy of these wars emerges – the 'sensitive man', obviously the man who wrote this letter, the rural teacher G. Ivanov. The 'sensitive man' – the other one 'in the hardened warrior' – who actually let himself be affected, is the locus revealing another military experience (painful and tragic, the feeling of 'just and unjust'), and thereby *he* becomes an internal condition for affective mapping of the Balkan Wars – the research subject of this text.

Even in the very embitteredness and its residual effect (resentment) – witnessed in the village teacher's letter – in fact in the very process in which, *as if momentarily* the difference in social and cultural position of the soldiers on the front (poor and rich, educated and barely literate) are invisibly overcome, reveals the nature of their worlds (social and cultural, but also an ontology; the nature of 'just and unjust'). For *what* (in)visibly and (un)consciously embitters the soldiers, bringing them close but also

distancing them in the ways they display this affectedness outlines the points which merge – only in an instant – both political poles ('left and right'),<sup>7</sup> namely in *another*, truthful, attitude towards war. The relation to that other truth – 'the horrors that accompany war', is the point of political reconciliation between soldiers (from both 'lower and upper classes') in which lightning (as if in-and-only-for-an-instant) flashing their common historical shared past ('all this we experienced and we hoped...'), writes G. Ivanov in its authenticity – *suffered*, on the front in the name *of*. A truth on which the village teacher insisted, trying through his attitude towards it (the truth about what had been suffered) to unite the front and rear in a common experience, which the act of writing such letters from battle station (to his older brother) actually is, an act through which the person affected by history becomes visible; and thereby *another community*: a new historical subject, the 'suffering humanity', is to emerge.

The fact that soldiers' diaries and letters were preserved and passed on to the official archive as *historical* family heirlooms proves, among other things, that the soldier on the front encounters history as a direct experience. History hurts the soldier in particular, taking away what was valuable to him, turning him into a witness of his time, and by

this very fact endowing him with a historical past – *another* capital, *his* historical legacy: ‘we fought for our brothers’ freedom’, ‘for human rights’, the soldiers sang; the *new* place where the descendants connect with the present and future, as is evident from the historical timing of the act of donation, by which family heirlooms reached the official records, thus seemingly making it possible to restore the *authenticity* of historical time itself – the experienced.<sup>8</sup> A process by which the other unconscious *desire* of the soldier is practically satisfied – to find listeners to the *other* (not official) truth of war: the soldier’s pain, something ‘Bulgarian newspapers do not write about’, according to G. Ivanov, so as to bequeath something else—that in the name of which he suffered, for the sake of which he endured (carrying in this commitment other social messages about the future of the survivors).

One *other* war phenomenon also insistently indicates of the war’s other reality: a soldier is diagnosed with ‘nervous limb tremor’ because of a slight injury suffered under intense artillery assault at positions in Karaagach. The hospital record of soldier Demeter Yanev (25-year-old, single, a native of the town of Eski Djumaya, treated with psychotherapy, discharged from the military hospital in Montana uncured, and sent home on two months’ sick

leave<sup>9</sup>), reveals the *other* truth about soldiers’ lives at the front (the truth asserted by the village teacher) – the horrors of war.<sup>10</sup> That *other medical diagnosis* of the symptoms of the soldier’s neurosis, refusing to see in the ‘shaking soldier’ the obvious, in fact acknowledges that *other* truth – the soldier’s pain and suffering – and by this very fact bears witness to *another* reality from which a different soldier’s image emerges: the sensitive man who has allowed himself to be affected, to be sensitive (the other nature not only of the warrior, but also of the doctor). Spiridon Kazandzhiev, the first Bulgarian military psychologist, in a letter sent from the Thracian front, reports on this particular impact of war: ‘In this war the soldier has been given the opportunity to stand at a distance from life, to *estrangle from it* so as to better appreciate it; the war has revealed the value of life, the soldier would return home a different person, more self-aware and more sensitive to the surrounding world’.<sup>11</sup>

The village teacher G. Ivanov, who had completed the third grade at Gabrovo (High) School, the founder of the socialist workers’ organisation in the village Daskot, the 37-year-old father of three sons and two daughters, one of them adopted, went to war with a clear awareness about the others – *the poor and miserable*, and with a pre-existing anxiety

about the meaning of human life and about justice and injustice. This was his perspective on the world, by which he connected with his environment and on the basis of which he built a relationship with his older daughter, the daughter of whose rearing and education he had taken great care (as indicated by his pre-war and war correspondences – part of it in French – between father and daughter).<sup>12</sup> On 30 September 1911, one year before the outbreak of war, he sent to Elisaveta Gancheva, a sixth grade pupil at the Veliko Tarnovo High School, a postcard with Franz Stuck's well-known war impressions from 1894 – *Der Krieg*, inscribed on the back: 'Strive constantly to think deeply into the rottenness and shabbiness of the modern system, strive to know if there is such a thing as a *fair war or fair poverty?* Strive towards knowledge, knowledge and knowledge. What are we? [...] What is nature? What is all this that surrounds us? How could that not bother a healthy person?'<sup>13</sup>

It was precisely this attitude towards the world that helped shape his relation to 'everything that surrounds him' during the war (as evidenced in his letters from the front), carrying unconscious testimony of a new feeling that strongly traumatised him, that place he could neither leave behind, nor stay in – his *premonitions* of death (judging by his diary, the locus at which he seeks

to connect to himself).<sup>14</sup> His diary entries, unlike his letters, are jumbled – torn lapidary messages, separate words, the Greek alphabet, his name scribbled on a separate page, clumsily scrawled images of what had obviously befallen him and which he could not put into words; notes behind which unprocessed affects emerge that seem to be repressed through another rationale – his material concern for the future of his children. As the rhythm of thought and speech 'normalised', the handwriting became legible when he set out to describe where the 'valuable documents' were (title deeds, loans given by him, adoption documents of his younger daughter, his life insurance policy, etc.) and when he wrote *a testament* to his heirs with personally addressed advice for their future, advice about their education and how they should help and trust each other, but all connected to a particular paternal wish: 'do not get married before 25 years of age and do not have more than two children', the fulfilment of which he purposely bequeathed to their mother.<sup>15</sup> The woman to whom he was committed at the will of their fathers with an early marriage and expectation for many children, a social horizon in which the individual drama of the (financially) unequal and unhappy marriage emerged (evidenced in the pre-war and war correspondences between father and

daughter, and daughter and mother). The woman with whom he seemed to have reconciled, making her a 'desired social comrade' when away from her at the front, he grew closer to not only in his concerns about the other 'eventuality' (the future of his family without a father), but also in another desired closeness and intimacy (of intellectual communion about 'knowledge of the world and of oneself'), entrusting her solely with his dearest, 'last things about himself': 'My *burning desire* to have on my grave an evergreen tree and fresh air will come true if I do not return to Daskot. If I die here, you must know that above and around me will forever grow a bush – a maple to which I will say "thank you"'.<sup>16</sup> This is the last written page of the village teacher's pocket notebook; he apparently stopped writing in it months before his death, but never parted with it until the end.

The crisis, whose traces are left in the soldier's notebook – as if written by *someone else* (not by the author of the letters, which reveal high epistolary skill), and in the parts where the village teacher was trying to deal with it (by leaving a testimony of what was most precious to him), is a sign of his other battle. That invisible and unconscious battle that he actually fought against the *other* fear, of the *other* death – from cholera, the fear of dying as cattle, a

death unlike a human one, which he could not rationalise and comprehend; it held no reward in return (he who had marched bravely to fight was defeated by the unimaginable – by cholera) and comrades in arms drew away, refusing to answer the calls for help. This refusal to answer makes cholera 'something uglier than a bullet' (as another village teacher writes in his diary),<sup>17</sup> it shows the *Other power* of the disease: the image of a soldier sick with cholera, the locus where the soldier is left at the limit of his existence – the possibility of imagining oneself sick. This impossibility reveals the other power that cholera holds: to bring a crisis upon the relations of an ethical ('good') and esthetical ('beautiful') order within human identity; when confronted with the disease, what was once seemingly an ontology – 'the just and the unjust' *by nature* – seems to lose power. The mute death, in turning cholera into something unimaginable, jeopardises the village teacher's humanity and masculinity, as it not only leaves the dead in the 'field of dishonour', but also transforms them into it – the contagious disease in the dead bodies, humiliated and often unburied, whose very sight seemingly could kill, also producing another *dishonour*, that of the survivor: the refusal (actually the fear) to face another 'obvious death' by lending a hand to those dying of cholera; a refusal difficult to explain by

the *absence* of disciplinary punishment for it (it is not a disciplinary offense subject to drumhead court-martial) nor by the contrasting willingness to head off to ‘apparent death from a bullet’. It can hardly be analysed solely in the disciplinary context of fear of military law. The refusal by the village teacher to risk another ‘obvious death’ by helping men dying of cholera, leaving him with the acoustic image (‘please, give me some water’) interwoven with memories of the irrepressible cries he heard, indicates not a lack of empathy (the fact of revealing the suffering of others is an empathic gesture) but something else, that *other* thing, persistent, unsettling and restless – *his affectedness*. The sight of those suffering from cholera annuls the everyday morality that has defined what is normal for humankind – ‘to give a little water’, in practice affects another symbolic locus of positive identity – ‘to stretch a helping hand’ to the sufferer (his *significant other*); a refusal which jeopardises the positive efficiency of the relationship, whereby the village teacher connects with the surrounding (the pre-war world) to invalidate the power of positive self - images; a crisis whose symptom is the very positive affirmation of another human nature (‘it goes without saying that in such a time everybody has to look after himself...’)<sup>18</sup> to normalise the unnatural (‘it is out of

the question to hope for help from a paramedic or a doctor’),<sup>19</sup> so it becomes something other than the professional and moral order.<sup>20</sup>

The power of cholera, which G. Ivanov bears witness to in his cry for ‘something you over there cannot imagine’, is the *place* where the village teacher apparently became alienated from *himself* and his surroundings, *as if* ‘estranged from life’ (in the words of the Bulgarian military psychologist); this alienation is itself a symptom of the crisis of public identifications, as evidenced from his notebook and letters from the front.<sup>21</sup> The soldier dying from cholera saturates the visual space with intense ‘inhuman sights’<sup>22</sup> that leave soldiers at the limits of the humane as an ethical and aesthetic possibility, and thus obstructs every channel, symbolic or physical, for connecting to the sufferer through active compassion; obstruction perhaps forced the village teacher to encounter other unfound answers to questions that troubled him before (‘what are we?’; ‘what is nature?’), and certainly confronted him with another battle for survival, probably against the fear of that other death, the process of his alienation from the world, if we were to trust the diary (in itself an indication that, whereof one cannot speak, thereof one cannot be silent either). In many war diaries, post-war memoirs, war novels

and plays, we can ‘hear’ the moans of abandoned soldiers dying from cholera, reflected in a different order of attitude towards the dying, and thereby we can trace the figure of the witness – he who has *let himself be affected*, i.e., who answered when ‘his humaneness was called to’.

## War as a Mood and Milieu

Perhaps this other *invisible* battle (hidden behind the visible battles against the enemy), embittered by other treatment of the soldier – condemning him to physical suffering (hunger, lice, cold, disease, etc.), daily undermining his expectations of a different attitude to those ‘sacrificing their lives’, expectations formed in the intertwined concepts of modern military order and patriarchal political morality – was mirrored in the village teacher’s perception of another trench war, a claustrophobic one; it impels him in his writing: ‘for four months now we have been put in the desert like in a prison’, and not that deprivation he pointed out, ‘not a word from the outside world’, and on which he insists in his lyrical outburst: ‘any letter from where you are is like a candle in the dark night.’<sup>23</sup> Since even this letter of his (written in response to the ‘generous gift’: letters, ‘your newspaper’ and the parcel with ‘all those things’)

shows that there was no particular shortage of information from the outside world (including receiving and sending uncensored letters and parcels). On the contrary, this very letter (highly critical of politicians and the military, claiming them responsible for ‘thousands of orphans and widows’, and then what future is ‘left to our fatherland’),<sup>24</sup> along with other soldiers’ testimonies<sup>25</sup> and documents of the military censorship department reveals a flow of ‘more knowledge’ about the outside world than was permitted by the official military institutions<sup>26</sup>. *Excess* knowledge indicates there were established and working communication channels between the front and rear, other connecting roads to fighting positions and home (beyond that permissible in a state of war),<sup>27</sup> despite the well-organised military mail service (evident not only from the soldiers’ testimonies, but also from the work of censorship and official regimental reports). This reality testifies to something *new*: the quest to satisfy a seemingly ‘insatiable need’ for ‘news from outside’ – in itself a sign of other soldiers’ desires (for communication, in order to connect with himself and the environment), whose insatiability reveals once again the crisis of the soldier’s relationship with the outside world, as well as the power of affect, whence the image of the undisciplined soldier

emerges. G. Ivanov was obviously such a soldier, violating the rules of censorship twice by his letter – containing all that it was prohibited to communicate: the positioning of troops, death and disease – which reached the village not by the military postal service, but through a ‘fellow soldier’. Apparently the invisible battles the soldiers fought (to deal with emerging unconscious critical relationship with themselves and others) brought about the critical front-line situation, shaping the soldiers’ moods of disobedience – the open opposition to censorship was a common reason for soldiers’ unrest and anti-war protests; resistance that was subject to military punishment, but remained practically unsanctioned by any severe punishment (imposed by martial law), hence recognising another soldier’s right: another connection outside the law with the rear; a recognition behind which another practice of connections and relationships within the military emerges – seemingly foreign to the modern disciplinary order and evidently closer to patriarchal values, thereby revealing the other legacy of this war: the contradictory stakes of paternalism, behind which are at play the shadows of the challenged stakes of the *modern and the traditional*.<sup>28</sup>

Measures against anti-war protests grew as the protests themselves grew, in the

form of the soldiers’ moods, but also as concrete acts of resistance against military orders, starting from the spring of 1913; these measures consisted of isolated practices (similar to the measures against cholera) – e.g., prohibiting purchase of newspapers and communication with soldiers from other units, increased censorship of letters and packages; yet they remained ineffective. Unlike these, the measures against cholera, observing a new order of hygiene and strict military health rules (disciplining the physical needs of the body), became increasingly efficient<sup>29</sup> and, therefore, the threat of cholera was used as a pretext to successfully introduce previously unsuccessful preventive measures against anti-war unrest, thus revealing the power of another infection, another ‘invisible virus’ – the *soldiers’ affect* (anger, rage, hatred and resentment); and through the ability of this affect to spread, apparently by mutual affect of soldiers (as evident from the nature of the prohibitions and restrictions), the other essence of war became apparent – *war as a mood*. Persistently present behind this other essence of war is that *other* which came invisibly and unconsciously, building critical relationships between the soldier and his surroundings (as evidenced by the case of G. Ivanov). Thus, in the soldiers’ moods (and their testimonies – letters, diaries, postcards and photos)

were left (by the affect) traces of the other, impenetrable reality of the war experience – the painful and dramatic reality – namely: ‘what the war is taking away from *me*, the soldier.’

‘29.11.1912. In the mud. [...] The day was pleasant. The Jewish volunteer arrived – Malamet, the orderly who has gone to see his mates in the regiment, as he will be returning to Bulgaria shortly. I greatly envied him that happiness. He is very nice and speaks in a pleasant manner. I took this opportunity and gave him *a letter to smuggle home for me*. We spent another merry evening, singing songs. Soon we forgot about *the mud*.<sup>30</sup> This is what the 32-year-old soldier Peter Kurdomanov wrote in his diary, thereby leaving a trace of something (excitement and pleasure) that on this day allowed this soldier to invisibly reconcile himself to his surroundings – the mud and the mess sergeant of the 15<sup>th</sup> Regiment of the 31<sup>st</sup> Silistra Regiment of the Third Bulgarian Army, where the regiment of the village teacher Gancho Ivanov was stationed.

Serving in the same third company of the Silistra Regiment was 30-year-old reserve second lieutenant Spiridon Bakardziev, single. Born and raised in a middle-class family of craftsmen in a small town (Sevlievo), he was to become the first Bulgarian military psychologist,

known as Spiridon Kazandziev. He had graduated in philosophy and before the war had studied in Germany under Wilhelm Wundt, and had become a scholar with a doctorate from Zurich; after the war<sup>31</sup> he would continue to teach at Sofia Men’s High School.

In a cheerful letter addressed to his ‘Dear parents’, dated 10.01.1913 (from Tarfa), he wrote that he had discovered himself to be a ‘man of iron’ and assured them that ‘no matter how bad it all is for the soldiers, it still is not too bad [...] for me; mud is the worst burden.’<sup>32</sup> However, in his diary entry for 10.01.1913, he wrote different thing, and left traces of another time, that of the philosopher and psychologist, of those *other* (invisible) events of his day, related to experiences of another order, those of the transcendental ego: ‘[...] I always feel unhappy when *reality* has me chained to it for long’, ‘and I am increasingly tormented by the thought that something fatal might happen to me.’<sup>33</sup>

From here, from the front line, he departed with the conviction that ‘I am 2-3 days away from my death’, with only two images in his mind (his mother and his friend), with the desire ‘to be in Munich and enjoy this nice weather’, rejecting the thought that, ‘I will soon be going into battle’, noting as they



approach the border, ‘anxiety overwhelms our camp’ and ‘the tighter we march, the less we think’<sup>34</sup>; he would return from the war a different person. He fought in battles, got to know life in the trenches – the other reality, mud, physical suffering, but also the greyness and boredom – but not the disease; he grew closer to others – to ordinary soldiers, in their joy<sup>35</sup> and suffering;<sup>36</sup> enjoying meeting Turkish officers on the war frontier (‘with whom we often chat in German and drink coffee’);<sup>37</sup> he corresponded with his family and relatives, his friends and his future wife. He wrote to those dearest to him, ‘we became very different people and, providing we return alive, everyday life will seem like a joke’.<sup>38</sup> He became another person, living intensively in another dimension of everyday life at the front – the reflective, philosophical, transcendent dimension, which fills over four hundred pages of his soldier’s notebook (containing ‘philosophical reflections and psychological observations’)<sup>39</sup> with things that seem unsharable by this fragile and sensitive man (in communicating with his other self) who remained an idealist philosopher, a scholar with a professorship from Sofia University.

P. Kurdomanov – a violin teacher and certified elementary school teacher, born and employed in the village of Kalipetrovo, Silistra, who came from a

wealthy farming family, married quite late in life, and became a father while at the front – did not have a philosophical mind like that of Wundt’s student, did not share the socialist ideas of G. Ivanov, and had gone to war with other attitudes, as evidenced by another active relation to the war expressed in his diary. He kept it daily, writing from another position – that of the mess sergeant – which kept him at a seemingly safe distance from the firing line, but in unsafe constant contact with the latter’s effects (the consequences of the battle); this position spared him the concerns over his physical survival (food, sleep and clothing),<sup>40</sup> providing objective conditions for psychological comfort (leisure and ‘first hand’ information from home) during the war. Apparently this service, judging by the daily notes of another mess sergeant – a certified teacher, 33-year-old Kovalenko Petkov from the 13<sup>th</sup> Company of the 47<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment of the First Bulgarian Army, born in the village Golintsi, Lom<sup>41</sup> – was a privileged military service that soldiers fought to obtain through other network rules: ‘connections, friendship and intrigue’; this fact reveals another predisposition – different from that of the teacher from Daskot, i.e., the other *locus* from which they went to war, namely that of capital (rural bourgeois heritage and a better education),<sup>42</sup> different one’s own value

webs, and starting from this *locus*, they find themselves at different places at the front – as if beyond the daily threat of *my death*, even though witnessing the pictures of everyday suffering of others (but not like *mine*). And it is here – from that other locus, that, writing daily in their notebooks, they bear different witness about the *other nature of war* (as a milieu), namely: that other thing (*affect*), which persistently appears behind this urgency (to report a problem) and breaks through the apparent obviousness of the communication.

It is P. Kurdomanov, the other village teacher, who followed in the footsteps of G. Ivanov, reaching Tarfa and staying there until the resumption of hostilities in January 1913. Tarfa was where Ivanov was stationed at a ‘forward position’, and where the soldiers were attacked by the worst of all, the invisible enemy, the cholera bacillus, as he wrote in his letter. In his diary Kurdomanov wrote: ‘03.12.1912. ON THE WAY TO TARFA. [...] Tarfa is a purely Bulgarian village with 270 houses, a church with a priest, a school with one male teacher and two female teachers. Cobbled streets and water in great abundance, but polluted, so not drinkable.’<sup>43</sup> In fact, it is here that he invisibly filled in the gaps in the soldier’s letter of the other village teacher – writing the unsaid (why exactly we have come to *this*), behind which flutter

shadows of another hidden reality of the war experience – the unprocessed affects (anger, pain, anguish and bitterness), a shadowy reality in which Tarfa became a symbol, engulfing the place in another dimension (physical, historical and political). Reality from which interrelated images emerge – an undisciplined soldier (who had apparently disobeyed the prohibition on drinking water), another direct military commander (who had not built a good relationship with the soldiers in the required order of obedience and trust), other military health procurement (‘cookware that has not been polished perhaps since its purchase and the use of puddle water’, the mess sergeant wrote), another political and military order (‘the causes of illness in the regiment were attributed to poor food, water, and soldiers’ clothing being constantly wet from the rain and sweat, hence colds being easy to catch and very common’).<sup>44</sup> The shadows of that *other past of the war* are at play here – usually identified as ‘a deficit of modernisation’ – a past which is revealed in the perspective of a high political order: the report in 1909 by the Chief Military Physician Dr. Kiranov to the Minister of War, outlining the conditions that cause relatively high morbidity and mortality among the soldiers;<sup>45</sup> such a shadowed past emerges within the medical practice itself: reports by the Board of Directors of the

Bulgarian Red Cross (revealing lagging policies regarding sanitary services for soldiers and field hospital equipment)<sup>46</sup> and records by nurses (often punished for failing to meet antiseptic standards in hospitals).<sup>47</sup> Flickering through these deficits are shortages of another moral order, as well as what compensated for them (among other things, an ontology concerning the nature of what is ‘fair and unfair’), thus outlining the values at stake in a contradictory *war legacy* – paternalism.

The unpublished notebooks of the Bulgarian general Zhostov, written on the front line at the Thracian battlefields, bear witness to the critical experience of the Bulgarian positional trench warfare – weakness of military hospitals’ logistics, soldiers unprepared for a positional war, lack of substantial supplies for the fighting army, and the intrigues and political games within the military establishment, all the things that jeopardised the war effort.<sup>48</sup> Moreover, as evidenced from the archival documents, the notes and impressions left by an ordinary soldier or a priest do not differ from this register of perceptions, assessments and dispositions regarding the war. (Both the priest Ivan Dochev<sup>49</sup> and the general Zhostov never failed to make an entry for each day of the war, as did a rural sergeant major<sup>50</sup> and an urban medical orderly;<sup>51</sup> this particular note

starts with a description of the weather).

## The Stakes of Another Heritage – Domesticated War

Behind this urgency to *communicate* (producing, beyond the conventional artistic and literary genres, ‘authors’ of other genres: soldiers’ diaries, notebooks, naive sketches<sup>52</sup> and soldier plays and novels),<sup>53</sup> emerge relentless traumatic images of *physical suffering* on the front, images related as much to military destruction (evacuated villages, refugees, soldiers ‘punished with beatings on naked flesh’, outbursts of cruelty and violence on the part of ‘our people and the foreign ones’ towards ‘people and animals’) as to the devastation of disease (typhoid, cholera, frost bite, etc.); but yet another drama of the soldier’s life emerges: the encounter with the human condition, the slow but certain comprehension of the tragedy of human life, of the dark side of human nature. Perhaps this *drama* – another invisible war on the front line that shaped the processes which were recorded in the letter of the Bulgarian military psychologist and of the soldier who had begun to appreciate life, but what life? – was another *legacy of this war*. It became increasingly visible in the other economy of relating to the world – the work of ‘bitter war

memory', which, by articulating soldiers' songbooks (and soldiers' literature), revealed *what* affected the soldier as injustice, and thus made possible the revelation of what pretends to be fair, and the self-disclosure, in that other event (war-experience), of the stakes of another battle (between the modern and the traditional).<sup>54</sup>

Through this other active attitude to surroundings – reaching for a pencil and paper, which is in fact a mark of another affect (from the *encounter with the injustice of history*) – the soldier at the front bears witness to another invisibility (of a war whose battlefields are places inhabited by people who 'remind me of my own folk'),<sup>55</sup> another unconscious battle of the individual to understand himself as a subject. The acknowledged abandonment there of the village teacher, thrown there – as if 'unprepared, laid bare and alone against', his actual subjective experience of objective reality (the shortage of efficient modern power in key institutions – the army, hospital, communication means and roads – power against which he seemed to instinctively rebel, always using intermediate structures that alienated him from 'himself')<sup>56</sup> was the place in which the dramatic *conflict* took place between the stakes of the modern and the traditional, the conflict that

gave value to the positive and negative economy of paternalism.

The pre-war capital (education and inheritance) of the village teacher was engendered through manly enterprise, shaped through cultural mediation between two worlds (the traditional and the modern) – for instance, he ordered a cinema projector from France for the village school; his communication with his children was based on understanding and respect for their uniqueness (as evidenced by his will); power hierarchy is based on 'knowledge and knowing' (the other order of the Patriarch): the library in his rural home was filled with classics of European and ancient literature; he felt alienated from his wife, who failed to recognise the modern horizon of a man's expectations (for intellectual communion in 'knowledge about the world and ourselves'); his activeness, which challenged the traditional rural patriarchal order, sought to transform the world of the village (of the apathetic uneducated man, subservient *to* and alienated from). The professions the father chose for his children in the name of 'a better life than his own, than his teacher's life' – a *good* prospect apparently perceived in liberal professions, such as those of a doctor, pharmacist, lawyer, in the arts, in craftsmanship, not excluding farming or emigration to America (for the son who

did not want to study, if he did not make it as a clerk)<sup>57</sup> – reveal the father’s ideal for the new (*deep knowledge and social freedom*). But upon bequeathing to his children the responsibility of pursuing a different future (from his own), he turned to his two brothers, asking them to take his place – supplying the power of the Patriarch, in order to ensure a higher moral order and law (linked with the name of the father, and with the power of the family) in the process of their socialisation (through higher education).<sup>58</sup> Conversely, the financial provision of the *desired* other future for his heirs is linked to life insurance, and ‘all the work related to this’ is left to a close friend, wise in the new ways (financial transactions), i.e., communication of another order (banking institutions), is entrusted to a friend from the city, which shows what the village person is alien to. He gave and took interest-free loans only to and from friends and comrades, loans free of that other guarantee – life, revealing the relationship of *trust and faith* of another order – patriarchal morality, in which one’s given word has the force of law. Soldiers’ notebooks were often filled with noted loans to villagers (relatives, friends and acquaintances), and examples of other military commanders who lent soldiers money at interest, is ridiculed in soldiers’ jokes (another sign of domestication of wartime relations

in the blurring of boundaries, which is the condition for invalidating the symbolic efficacy of military power). The village teacher himself values that positive economy of *law and order* that ensures the soldier will be ‘preserved in battle and healthy at the front’, hence he values the modern disciplinary practice of the army, aimed at forming soldiers ‘trained and well equipped’ to face those two enemies – the military enemy and contagious diseases – a goal clearly argued in the report of the chief military physician, Dr Kiranov. The fact that he did not become a victim of cholera also reveals a positive economy of trust in the ‘knowledgeable’ and of obedience to the ‘fair military commander’, as well as to the other power (knowledge of modern sanitary prophylaxis), while his non-participation in the soldiers’ unrest about certain military orders and his distancing from the acts of cruelty committed by soldiers and officers on both sides of the front prove that he could control his aggressiveness against the *other* and had rationalised the parasitic feelings of envy and malice;<sup>59</sup> and thus had formed another relationship with the environment, referring to *another order* embodied in modern disciplinary practices (including hygiene, which was at stake in the battle against cholera). But what the soldier G. Ivanov did not obey was the rules of military censorship:

he based his pre-war relationship with his children (when they were far from home) on posted letters but 'now', not trusting the military mail, he 'smuggled' letters through friends; he was late from home leave, but not punished under military law (another domesticated war locus); had he been sent to prison (the due penalty for his offence), perhaps he would have lived to see the end of the war.

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Since soldiers from village and city alike turned to letter-writing in order to deal with their overwhelming *mood* at the front line (in a very varied affective register at that) – it is evident that in their letters they connected with themselves through their relation to others (relatives), in order to return (get close to) where they had alienated themselves from (home or the front).

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Actually, amidst what is *slowly happening* – the imposition of another practical order (higher medical knowledge: virology, military hygiene that requires discipline, administration, and rules),<sup>60</sup> which could help overcome the human in the doctor (fear and

hatred)<sup>61</sup> so as to enable him to deal with the unimaginable (with the power of the 'virus, the bacillus', and then with what is invisible 'to the naked eye'), and help overcome the human in the soldiers (the fear, shame and hatred),<sup>62</sup> and overcome the unbearable (foreign and hostile: disciplinary practices and bureaucratic attitudes)<sup>63</sup> – amidst all this the other aspect of war transpires (a war claimed to be modern) – namely, what is in fact a patriarchal domesticated military order, involving value relationships characteristic of the pre-modern traditional society. And the things in which this other aspect is evident – the soldier's resistance to military orders, discipline, rules, his disobedience of officers' orders (for example, orders 'not to drink water from ponds and rivers', not to 'rummage through dead soldiers' and 'to use toilets'), medical neglect of patients, but also the obviously 'self-inflicted wounds', disorder in sanitary logistics, a limited number of death penalties imposed by court-martials for what obviously must have been very severe disciplinary violations, and the treatment of soldiers as 'my people'<sup>64</sup> – reveal the internal causes of the rule of cholera (the shortage of embodied modern practices). But this very fact (the lack of accelerated modernisation) actually reveals something else as well: the *magic*, the conditions, along with

his patriotism, that make possible the Bulgarian victories (which are not denied by the village teacher), despite the seemingly isolated soldier (in his other war: against ‘lice, disease, cold, hunger and poor clothing’); this other magic (in addition to the *soldier’s patriotism*, which was not lacking in the first months of war) is related to the connection of the ordinary soldier with the surrounding world in ways typical of the traditional patriarchal society; ways that bring worth to the soldier’s values when his relations to the surroundings are in crisis (be they relations to the ‘higher order’ of policy, or to the ‘lower order’ of everyday life).

Since soldiers from village and city alike turned to letter-writing in order to deal with their overwhelming *mood* at the front line (in a very varied affective register at that) – it is evident that in their letters they connected with themselves through their relation to others (relatives), in order to return (get close to) where they had alienated themselves from (home or the front).<sup>65</sup> The letters are often addressed to the soldiers’ mothers and older family members (but in some cases to the whole family) and were made available to the whole street (as in the case of S. Bakardzhiev); they are also often private – to a friend, a relative, a spouse,<sup>66</sup> but always seeking for the most ‘needed things’ related to those other needs – understanding,

acceptance, warmth, which are in fact the *other* attitude to the soldier (other than the modern disciplinary power and its practices); that is why even the most ordinary letter would be entrusted to someone ‘close’, and not because letters often contained money for, or from, the relatives, nor because they violated the rules of censorship (professional officers would send letters in the same way). The letter by G. Ivanov is in response to the ‘generous gift’ – a parcel with ‘newspapers, letters and things’, ‘things’ that were clearly important in addition to the news from family and relatives, had become an urgent need for the soldiers daily lives. These included things like ‘home food’, warm clothes, soap, writing paper, books and tobacco, as evidenced by what soldiers on the Thracian front requested in letters to their families or what they noted as events in their diaries – the arrival of these coveted items from ‘home’ or from the Red Cross, or their obtainment through purchase or ‘forceful acquisition’. In other words the actual fulfilment of the desire (which often grew into a dream to fulfil it, apparently associated with unconscious nostalgia) became *the event* marking the everyday life of the soldier, an event that adjusted relations with the surrounding world, as evidenced in the case of the village teacher G. Ivanov. ‘With parents like you, with friends like Boyan and the Gabe family

– how could one remain dissatisfied with the world?’ This was written by S. Bakardzhiev in a letter of gratitude for the ‘generous packages’ from home. Persistently evident throughout the cheer engendered by the ‘generous gift’ is that *other thing*, which raised the spirit of the soldier on the front, namely a sense of closeness (to my world – mine alone – of reciprocity and understanding) that, when mirrored in what is *other* than it (estranged *from*), reveals deficits which in themselves outline worlds (intertwined with values of the order of the modern and the traditional); evident too is the fact that they are compensated for in the search for another concern (coming from home) in order to satisfy the urgent need for care (obtaining recognition of what they were practically deprived of there). Hence from this disposition towards the world emerges the image of what was *endured*, suffered on the front: the horrors of war; in this way the other legacy of war reveals itself: ‘suffering humanity’, *the other historical subject*.

*P.S.* G. Ivanov died on the battlefield, *killed by* the ‘unfrightful death – a bullet’; his notebook was handed over to his family by his comrades in arms,

and he became a hero at the village school in Daskot – contrary to what he had predicted would be the political future of his military legacy – ‘orphans who will be made fun of because their fathers were fools to die for their native land’. As for the preparations related to this political act – composing a biographical text, finding photographs suitable for an ‘enlarged portrait of the hero’ – in a letter of condolence to the family of the perished teacher, the school principal assigned these tasks to Elisaveta

Gancheva, his well-educated daughter.<sup>67</sup>

And by this very act of ‘assigning and accepting the honour’, they became *heirs* of the other past – the official historical political past, and

hence of the other war – that of generals and politicians, those who will be ‘called Great, Liberators, and other glorious mighty names’,<sup>68</sup> the war from which the village teacher had become alienated at the front, but which seems to be the only perspective in which *his* death acquired meaning – a small photo from the family album was enlarged into the portrait of a hero and filled the space of the classroom with other messages, related to images of a patriotic war and heroic death. But it is

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The war as actually experienced by people was bound to produce conflicting standpoints within the nation, standpoints that were silenced by political regimes and ideologies of the times.

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hard to know to what extent these other messages (*other* with respect to the legacy referring to what had been endured in the name of, suffered for), this symbolic capital, had annulled and repressed that *other* truth about the front – the horrors of war, a truth through which G. Ivanov had sought to bind up the war front with the rear by sending uncensored letters to his family and turning to his diary. When and how did this other truth about his war, this other legacy of the killed father, visit the world of the living heirs, and did this truth have a part in the daily struggle for carrying out the father's bequest regarding the education of his children, provided for by the village teacher's life insurance policy? – answers to these questions would add more nuances to the context in which

the historical drama of Bulgarian society in the interwar period developed; one of the acts of this history was the trial of the government officials responsible for two national catastrophes, a trial in which the indictments included responsibility for the badly organised sanitary supply during the Balkan Wars. The war as actually experienced by people was bound to produce conflicting standpoints within the nation, standpoints that were silenced by political regimes and ideologies of the times. But the common aspect of experienced war – the suffering and the economy of empathy – was to pose yet another question: about the impact of the Balkan Wars on the process, structures and social agents of the Balkan modernisation.

## Endnotes

- 1 This article owes much to the research of Michel Foucault, Carlo Ginzburg, Giovanni Levi, John Beverley, Giorgio Agamben, and John Flatley – as evidenced by the title.
- 2 State Archive, Veliko Tarnovo (SA-V.Tarnovo), F. 844к, inv. 1, a.u. 16. [My italics, S. D.].
- 3 Ibid., F. 1040к, оп.1, a.e. 6, 25; Ibid., F. 1032к, inv. 1, a.u. 29, 30; SA-Montana, F. 1157к, inv. 2, a.u. 66; Ibid., Occasional Proceeds (OP)-38; Ibid OP-37; Ibid., F. 1370к, inv. 2, a.u. 601; Ibid., F. 592к, inv. 1, a.u. 1; Kitanov, Sotir P. (1914) *Spomeni ot Balkanskata vojna 1912-1913. Dnevnik*. [Reminiscence of the Balkan War – Diary], Plovdiv: Centralna pechatnitsa.
- 4 SA-Silistra, F. 127к, inv. 1, a.u. 2, 1.45; Archive of Science, Bulgarian Academy of Science (AS, BAS), F. 40к, inv. 1, a.u. 444; Central State Archive (CSA), F. 1965к, inv. 1, a.u. 14; SA-Silistra, F. 127к, inv. 1, a.u. 2.
- 5 I will quote only two (out of seven) examples: G. Stoynov, (1914) *Krav i salzi. Napevi ot Balkanskata vojna i zhivota* [Blood and Tears: Refrains from the Balkan War and Life], Plovdiv: Trud; (1913) *Nova pesnopoljka za Balkanskia Sajuz: Spomen ot vojnata. Naredil Zapryan M. Terziev, vojniki ot 30-ti Sheinovski polk, 5-ta rota* [Remembrance of War: New Army Songbook of Balkan Alliance; Completed by the soldier Zapryan M. Terziev of 30<sup>th</sup> Sheinovo Regiment, 5<sup>th</sup> company], second edition, Chirpan: Village Sransko.
- 6 ‘*Why don’t you weep for us – we’ll never return! Tell the wives never to marry again!*’ This verse from a soldier’s song is copied in the war notebook of second lieutenant Spiridon Bakardzhiev, who was to become the first Bulgarian military psychologist; he commented: ‘Very prosaic and, under normal circumstance, banal, a cabman’s song, *but which is now endowed with special meaning and expressiveness*’ [My italics, S. D.]; AS, BAS, F. 40к, inv. 1, a.u. 16, p. 16.
- 7 Let me simply quote: Vasil Kolarov, the second lieutenant from the 13<sup>th</sup> Rila Regiment of 7<sup>th</sup> Rila Division, author of a war diary, who in 1946 was the Bulgarian representative at the Paris Peace Conference in his capacity as the Chairman of the National Assembly. In his presentation regarding the return of Western Thrace to Bulgaria (within the borders defined by the 1913 Treaty of Bucharest), Kolarov insists on ‘correcting a historical injustice’: ‘*All know that in the War of Liberation against the Ottoman Empire in 1912, of all allies, Bulgaria suffered the heaviest casualties: Bulgarians had 84,000 killed and wounded [...] Owing above all to the blood of the Bulgarian people, a large part of the present-day territory of Greece was liberated from the yoke of the Sultan*’; (1946) *Balgaria pred Konferentsiata za mir. Iskaneto na Balgaria za Zapadna Trakia*, Sofia: Voен. izd. fond. [Bulgaria at the Peace Conference: Bulgaria’s Demand for Western Thrace], Sofia: Military Editing Funds, p. 8. Cf. The letter sent from the front by second lieutenant S. Bakardzhiev (an idealist philosopher who did not sympathise with socialism): ‘Only one thing worries the people from our regiment, that Silistra, as it seems, will be given to Rumania. Bulgaria will badly repay the men who fought

- so bravely for this land, to free their brothers, and themselves will remain under foreign yoke'; AS, BAS, F. 40κ, inv. 1, a.u. 444, s. 26. [My italics, S. D.]
- 8 As evidenced by the timing and the way in which the diaries (daily notebooks and letters from the front) were donated to the Montana Archives by the heirs of these soldiers, and from the personal archives in which they were kept (a topic for a separate study). Just one quote: 'As I see it, I believe that history is necessary for the family as much as it is for the state...', wrote Mladen Kadzhelianski of Lilen village, when bequeathing his diaries to his sons. His sons, in turn, donated them to the archive, where they are specially classified as 'occasional proceeds'; SA-Montana, OP-38. The soldiers' archive collections in Veliko Tarnovo came from families with leftist convictions or connected to the agrarian movement. Cf. SA-V. Tarnovo, F. 1023κ, inv. 1, a.u. 12; Ibid., F. 1040κ, inv. 1, a.u. 6; Ibid. F. 1032κ, inv. 1, a.u. 29, 30.
- 9 SA-Montana, F. 36κ, inv. 1, a.e. 18, p. 173-4.
- 10 Cf. How another soldier bears witness to this other war reality, in his daily notes: '28.11. [...] Every single day, literary every single day is raining with chilly wind. Trenches are filled with water. Such pain soldiers endured in their positions, worse than the infer. I learnt about one or two suicides in the 15<sup>th</sup> Regiment.'; Ibid., F. 1157κ, inv. 2, a.u. 66, p. 46.
- 11 AS, BAS, F. 40κ, inv. 1, a.u. 444. [My italics, S. D.]
- 12 SA-V. Tarnovo, F. 844κ, inv. 1, a.u. 12.
- 13 Ibid., a.u. 29.
- 14 Ibid., a.u. 21.
- 15 Ibid., p. 16.
- 16 Ibid., p. 17. [My italics, S. D.]
- 17 *Vojnishki dnevnik na Petar Zhechev Kurdomanov za Balkanskata vojna*. Predg., sastav. Stanka Georgieva. [*Soldier's Diary of Petar Zhechev Kurdomanov from the Balkan War*], Silistra, 'RITT', 2001, p. 62; it is kept in the SA-Silistra.
- 18 SA, V. Tarnovo, F. 844κ, inv. 1, a.u. 16.
- 19 Ibid. Cf. The daily note written by R. Kurdomanov: '*I couldn't sleep because of the scratching and moaning of a man sick with cholera, who had gone to relieve himself. Despite all his pleas, not one person in the whole regiment would come to his aid. Everyone looks to save himself. Only at sunrise did they go to lift him up. Artillery fire could be heard from the direction of Silivria.*' [My italics, S. D.]. *Vojnishki dnevnik na Petar Zhechev Kurdomanov*, p. 64, 76.
- 20 As statistics testify, this 'sad story' must have affected more than 600 mobilised doctors. In order to respond to the need for military sanitarian services, of war units ambulances and hospitals, the state required 2,000 doctors as a medical military staff. At that time Bulgaria had '640 doctors – 118 military, 85 municipal, 10 working within permanent medical

- commissions and 186 occupied either in private practice or retired'; St Kutinchev, (1914) *Sanitarnata Sluzhba. Cherveniat Krast i Balkanskata vojna. Belezhki i vpechatlenia* [Sanitarian Services. Red Cross and Balkan War. Notes and Impressions], Sofia, p. 15.
- 21 The mark of this crisis is another outburst of his rage against the war: 'orphans, who will be made fun of because their fathers were fools to die for their native land', as he writes in the same letter cited here, with rage he negates all political future for killed soldiers; this negation, however, reveals his alienation from his surroundings. Three days earlier from the same spot, Sp. Bakardzhiev addressed his letter to his 'dearest parents' in which he reports the same war drama, but from another reflective perspective: '16.01.1913. [...] But we bore it all patiently. Of course – for the sake of the Fatherland! Since so many people were killed, so many were left widows and orphans in Bulgaria, there is so much hunger and need there – why shouldn't we, who are still alive, put up with these hardships? For instance, just now, this evening, is the first time in 15 days that we are back in the village, where it's warm and well-lit, so I am able to write to you.' – Ibid., pp. 15-16.
- 22 Evident solely from soldiers' testimonies, but also from the high morbidity and death rates from cholera at the front. Vasil Uzunov, *Nie. Istoricheski roman* [We. The Balkan War. A Historical Novel, Sofia, 1933, p. 193; Kitanov, P. *Spomeni ot Balkanskata vojna 1912-1913. Dnevnik*, p. 40; Ludmil Stoyanov, *Holera: vojnishki dnevnik*. [Cholera. A Soldier's Diary], Sofia, 1935: *Zemia i hora; Vojnishki dnevnik na Petar Zhechev Kurdomanov; Dnevnik na Petko Chorbadzhiev za tragediata na vojnata. 17 oktombri 1912* [Diary of Petko Chorbadzhiev (Rosen) about the Tragedy of the War. October 17, 1912], Po IDA, 47, [Cited from State Archive Bulletin, 47], 1984.
- 23 SA-V. Tarnovo, F. 844к, inv. 1, a.u. 16.
- 24 Ibid.
- 25 I quote: '11.12.1912. [...] Tarfa. I picked a whole bunch of snowdrops. We read newspapers all day long and made all sorts of conjectures about the future. The mail arrives regularly and brings newspapers, which we read and reread regularly.' – AS, BAS, F. 40к, inv. 1, a.u. 444. 'We spent the whole time at Chataldzha, life was satisfactory, our correspondence came and went regularly. Here I received a parcel from home, containing: garlic, 20 packs of cigarettes, small peppers...' Diary of K. Petkov, SA, Montana, F. 1157к, inv. 2, a.u. 66, p. 66. '15.12.1912. TARFA. Today I received three letters. The postal service was set up here and all the letters come regularly'. *Vojnishki dnevnik na Petar Zhechev Kurdomanov za Balkanskata vojna*, p. 87. '28.03.1913. Kabachkyoy. [...] Things got very merry here. Four commissariats in one place. We get news and newspapers regularly. Kolyo got to like it and is willing to remain on duty without being relieved'. SA, V. Tarnovo. F. 1023к, a.u. 30, p. 5 ; Cf. also Ibid., a.u. 29.
- 26 Lefterov, Christo. *Balkanskata vojna: Spomeni i dok.: Po dnevnika na Cenzurnata komisija pri shtaba na dejstvashтата armia*, Voен. izd. fond. [Balkan War: Remembrance and Documents

according to the *Journal of Censorships' Department within General Quarter of Operating Army*], Sofia, Military Editing Funds, 1938.

- 27 Cf.: '30.03.1913. The newspapers dating from the 28<sup>th</sup> and the 29<sup>th</sup> of this month *put us in an ugly mood* about the conclusion of peace and the cession of Silistra by 3 km. Terrible despair and terrible curses. [...] 04.04.1913. BIVOUC KABAČHA [...] *I got letters from Anka, Vasila and Rusi, my only consolation now. Everybody discussed this matter late into the night and aimed terrible curses at those responsible*'; *Vojnishki dnevnik na Petar Zhechev Kurdomanov...*, p. 147; '27.11.1912. I hear that the prices of all goods have gone up and many are going hungry since war was declared. This depresses me terribly, especially knowing that you are alone.' NA, BAS, F. 40κ, inv. 1, a.u. 444; Cf. The reports on the mood of discontent among soldiers sent to the commanding officer of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Balkan Division; CSA, F. 1965κ, inv. 1, a.u. 4. Cf. Maj. Gen. Nikola Ribarov, *Voennite dejstva na 2-a brigade na 3-a peh. Balkanska divizion na Trakijskia voenen teatar: Chast I. [Military operations of 2<sup>d</sup> brigade of 3<sup>rd</sup> Balkan infantry division on the Thracian military theatre. Part I]*, Pleven, Sp. Ignatov i Tz. Angelov, 1915.
- 28 Cfs. *Saga za Balkanskata vojna. Dnevnik na sveshtenika Ivan Dochev [Saga of Balkan War: Diary of priest Ivan Dochev]*, Sofia, Iztok – Zapad, 2012.
- 29 It is noted in all the soldiers' diaries, that observance of hygienic and sanitation regulations, together with the efforts of the Red Cross, led to a decrease in infections, so that the fight against cholera was eventually successful: the statistics confirm the soldiers' remarks.
- 30 *Vojnishki dnevnik na Petar Zhechev Kurdomanov*, p. 78. Cf. Also the letter written by Sp. Bakardzhiev from Tarfa: '16.01.1913. [...] And in the *village we visit each other often* and you might say we spend all the time talking, in merry conversations, singing, playing music, never despairing – *but what's coming will come*. We make false guesses fifteen times a day, sometimes about peace coming, sometimes about war, and we keep on waiting. *My only joy is when I receive a letter from you or from Boyan, even though your folks are not very courageous*'; AS, BAS, F. 40κ, inv. 1, a.u. 444, p. 13. [My italics, S. D.]
- 31 He learns about his 'appointment as regular teacher at the Gabrovo High School' at the front, from the newspaper *Mir*, and shares the good news with his parents, seeing in this a promise for a better social future; S, BAS, F. 40κ, inv. 1, a.u. 444, p. 12.
- 32 *Ibid.*, p. 11.
- 33 S, BAS, F. 40κ, inv. 1, a.u. 444, a.u. 16, pp. 12-3.
- 34 *Ibid.*, a.u. 444, pp. 2 – 15.
- 35 '03.03.1913. Kabachka. It's quite pleasant at the front line. The soldiers hold wrestling matches. From all corners of the Bivouac comes the sound of bagpipes and rebecs playing, and in the evening there are big horo dances. [...] These are such really fine men's horo

- dances, and soldiers' horo at that... that you feel like dancing too.'; *Ibid.*, s. 26. '16.01.1913. Tarfa. [...] The soldiers who go out to clean the roads or do some other work come back with big bunches of crocuses or snowdrops.' There is a dried crocus flower and a four-leaf clover still preserved in these letters; *Ibid.*, p. 14.
- 36 *Ibid.*, a.u. 444, a.u. 16, 17.
- 37 *Ibid.*, a.u. 444, p. 13.
- 38 *Ibid.*, p. 14.
- 39 *Ibid.*, a.u. 16, 17.
- 40 It is evident from these diaries that all parcels to the front line – including coffee, dry milk, biscuits, raki, underwear – which, according to the protocols of the Bulgarian Red Cross were ordered and sent to the front, arrived regularly; CSA, F. 156к, a.u. 14.
- 41 SA-Montana, F. 1157к, inv. 2, a.e. 66.
- 42 'If you're sharp, wealthy, and have a recommendation from some officer, you can get whatever job you like in the army'; *Ibid.*, p. 5.
- 43 *Vojnishki dnevnik na Petar Zhechev Kurdomanov*, p. 82-83. Cf. S. Bakardzhiev's first long letter he wrote to his parents: '11.12.1912. Village of Tarfa. Dear parents, This evening I received two postcards from Mama, dated November 26 and 27 [...] I am now lodged at the home of a Bulgarian (this is a Bulgarian village), who has been the village mayor for many years and is a relative of my company commander, married to a girl from here. The room I'm put up at is very nicely furnished. It predisposes me to write to you.' – NA, BAS, F. 40к, a.u. 444, pp. 6-7.
- 44 *Vojnishki dnevnik na Petar Zhechev Kurdomanov*, p.63-4.Cf SA-Montana, F. 1157к, inv. 2, a.e. 66, pp. 50-51.
- 45 State Military Historical Archive (SMHA), V. Turnovo, F. 11к, inv. 5, a.u. 81, s. 1-77. Besides infectious diseases, scarlet fever and abdominal typhus, also frequently appearing on soldiers' hospital charts at the hospital in Montana were pleurisy, rheumatism, tuberculosis – SA, Montana. F. 36к, inv. 1, a.u.18. The same hospital's charts of women admitted with syphilis show that they became infected after their husbands returned from the front line (*Ibid*, F. 36к, inv. 1, a.u. 18); in fact this was the infection against which the least effort was made to fight, unlike during World War I.
- 46 CSA, F. 156к, inv. 1, a.u. 14. Cf. also the notes of St Chilingirov, a writer, on the sanitarian work during the Balkan Wars; CSA, F. 108к, inv. 2, a.u. 1145.
- 47 *Ibid.*, F. 156к, inv. 1, a.u. 65. Cf. also: The sanitary staff of the Bulgarian Red Cross numbered 228 males and 418 females – schoolteachers, schoolgirls, housewives, one midwife (from Bitola) and hat makers. Out of '660 sanitary staff members, only 379 have undergone

training – have taken a course, and these include old sanitary staff workers with experience dating from before 1912; CSA, F. 156к, a.u. 104. Cf. also Dr Stefan Vatev, *Ubilejna kniga: Kratak pregled varhu istoriata, zadachite I dejnosta na balg. d-vo na Chervenian Krast*, balg. d-vo na Chervenian Krast. [*Jubilee Book: Short Review of History, Goals, and Activities of the Alliance of Bulgarian Red Cross*], Sofia, Bulgarian Alliance of Red Cross, 1936. Cf. In 1914 St Kutinchev – secretary of the Inspector General of the Bulgarian Sanitarian Services, bears witness, in his notes on sanitarian work, to the banal everydayness of the sanitarian services (critical deficit of responsibility, flexibility and initiative during war). His urgent need to communicate a problem – bureaucratic indifferences to the pain of others, rude machismo of recruited doctors and the way they treat the nurses and the Samaritan's institutions, is bound with another moral question; question about the ideological context of the Bulgarian Patriarchal Modernity, and thus he poses yet another troubling question about the nature of 'just and unjust' by telling the other – hidden – story of the sanitarian work in a way to avoid 'the moral ambiguity in today's term of good and evil'; St Kutinchev, *Sanitarnata Sluzhba*, 1914, p. 12.

- 48 Regional Historical Museum Blagoevgrad (RHM), inv.3.08.L.F.Zhostov / 12. Cf. Dimov, Dimo. *Dnevnik na kapitan Marin Kutzarov* (za uchastieto mu v Balkanskata I mezhdusauznicheskata vojna 1912-1913) [*Diary of Captain Marin Kutzarov* (about his participation in the Balkan Wars 1912-1913)], Sofia, Voенno izdatelstvo, 2004; Lefterov, Christo. *Balkanskata vojna: Spomeni i dok.*; Dodov, Nikola. *Dnevnik po Balkanskata vojna* [*Diary on the Balkan War*], Sofia, Voенno izdatelstvo; Vasil Kolarov. *Pobedi i porazhenia: Dnevnik* [Victories and Defeats: Diary], Sofia, IK 'Christo Botev', 2001; SA-Montana, F. 1157к, inv. 2, a.e. 66.
- 49 *Saga za Balkanskata vojna. Dnevnik na sveshtenika.*
- 50 SA-Montana, F. 1370к, inv. 2, a.u. 601, pp. 1-60.
- 51 SA-V. Tarnovo, F. 1023к, inv. 1, a.u. 12, pp. 1-23.
- 52 Cf. For example drawings of Sp. Bakardziev – AS, BAS, F. 40к, inv. 1, a.u. 29, and those done by G. Ivanov – SA, V. Tarnovo, F. 844к, op. 1, a.u. 21.
- 53 I quote only some plays that bear witness to the *other* common traumatic places of war – 'poor soldier, weak body', in a search to seek justice for those who experienced the war, its sufferings, and became victims of poor medical supply and bureaucratic attitudes to human life; their scene is the military hospital and its plot develops around the mutilation of the human body; their titles are highly suggestive: 'Walking corpse', 'Wretched', 'I do not believe'. They are signed by the author's pseudonym Arising Mine-layer, all published in 1914, and are bound to reveal the far-left's vision and its ideological context, as well as a new expressionism in the theatre arts.

- 54 This register which they share reveals the war as a social world, as a process of surviving the unbearable – cholera, the mud, the cold, thirst, hunger, the lack of news from the rear, the depressing life in the trenches; i.e. as an everydayness in which the scenes of patriotism, of dignity, of joy, of solidarity, of compassion, were quickly replaced by acts of cruelty, indiscipline, egoism, rebellion against the military hierarchy, the military's lack of respect for the soldiers, intrigues and envy..., and thereby the nature of their worlds is revealed.
- 55 Cf. The surge of compassion towards the Bulgarian wounded and sick soldiers, the Greek refugees, the poor Kurds, the Turkish prisoners of war – all these merge in a single image: of suffering people; this shows how affect can blur the established representation of the ethnic or cultural *other* and, instead, picture the political *other* – the inhumane and hypocritical Europe that was blamed for the continuation of the war (in soldiers' outburst of anger at the sight of inhuman scenes: human beings humiliated by disease and by history). In times of affect (the outburst of anger and compassion), conditions are created for something new – for that other sensitivity to the world, with which the soldier will return home from the front. It is commonplace in rural teachers' war notebooks and diaries.
- 56 Although the official reports say that half of the required 81 field hospitals went to war without being prepared for it; logistics were very bad. 'The Bulgarian army fought in the forest and in arid regions; after every battle the military units advanced while the ambulances were left behind; sanitarian services did not take the initiative to be near to fighting corpses; this lagging behind made more and more difficult the medical service in the battlefield'. St Kutinchev, *Sanitarnata Sluzhba*, 1914, p.12.
- 57 SA-V. Tarnovo, F. 844к, inv. 1, a.u. 16, a.u. 21, p. 12-16.
- 58 Ibid., a.u. 12, p. 3.
- 59 About such affective realities of the negative economy of hatred, see, for example: the diary of the Mess Sergeant, K. Petrov – SA-Montana, F. 1157к, inv. 2, a.e. 66; *Vojnishki dnevnik na Petar Zhechev Kurdomanov*.
- 60 Bulgarian virologists had acquired experience (not only scientific and theoretical knowledge) in fighting infectious diseases; for instance they were able to contain the cholera infection in 1910-1911, and then dealt successfully with it again in the summer of 1913, when the disease spread in the rear after the Rumanian army entered the country; in both cases there were few casualties. What happened at the front – the fact that most casualties there were due to diseases, not to combat, showed the practical shortcomings of the modern order – a shortage of medical staff, insufficiently trained sanitary staff (doctors, paramedics and nurses) – and hence the ineffective medical prophylactics carried out among the population at large (urban and rural). Cf. The newssheet distributed by the Bulgarian Red Cross on 'How to distil water for drinking', kept in the archive of General Zhostov – Regional Historical Museum Blagoevgrad (RHM), inv.3.08.L.F.Zhostov/12. Cf. Dimov, Dimo. *Dnevnik na kapitan Marin Kutzarov*; CSA, F. 108к, inv. 2, a.u. 1145. Cf. Dr Stefan Vatev, *Merki, vzeti*



*v tzarstvo Bgaria protiv chumata I holerata prez 1908-1910 ot Direktsiata za obshtestvenoto zdrave* [Taken Measures in Bulgarian Kingdom against Cholera and Plague during 1908-1910 by the Department of Social Health], Sofia, Committee of Public Health, 1911; Dr Stefan Vatev, (1908) *About Typhus*, Sofia: Contemporary Hygiene; Dr Stefan Vatev, *Holera: zaraziavane, predpazvane, dezinfektzia*. Sofia: sp. K-t za borba s holerata [*Cholera: Contagious, Prophylaxis, and Disinfection*], Sofia: Committee of fight against cholera, 1913; Dr Stefan Vatev, *Upatvane za davane na parva pomosht i otglezhdane raneni I bolni*. Sofia: balg. d-vo Cherven krast [Guidenes for Securing and Caring the Wounded and Sick. Sofia, Bulgarian Alliance of Red Cross, 1912].

61 Cf. *Saga za Balkanskata vojna. Dnevnik na sveshtenika*.

62 SA-Montana, F. 1157к, inv. 2, a.e. 66, p. 50.

63 *Saga za Balkanskata vojna. Dnevnik na sveshtenika*, p. 49.

64 Dimov, Dimo. *Dnevnik na kapitan Marin Kutzarov*.

65 'That was when I was best off, so I couldn't think of anything to write you about', writes Sp. Bakardzhiev in response to his relatives' worrying for him since he did not send a word from the front line; nevertheless his diaries from that time are filled with his reflections and observations; AS, BAS, F.40к, inv. 1, a.u. 444, s. 11. Cf. Also Ibid., a.u. 311, 339, 175, 176. Cf. Dodov, Nikola. *Dnevnik po Balkanskata*.

66 Gencho Stainov, *Pisma ot Odrin* [Letters from Odrin], Sofia, DVI, 1964.

67 SA-V. Tarnovo, F. 844к, inv. 1, a.u. 18.

68 Ibid., a.u. 12.



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# Trajectories of Post-Communist Transformation: Myths and Rival Theories about Change in Central and Southeastern Europe<sup>1</sup>

Sabrina P. RAMET\*

## Abstract

*The collapse of communism in Central and Southeastern Europe has given rise to various myths and debates. This article undertakes to examine and debunk two myths and to summarise and assess four debates. The two myths are, first, that no one foresaw the collapse of communism or offered any clear prediction of that eventuality in the decade preceding 1989, and, second, that what occurred in the region between 1989 and 1991 could not be described as a revolution since, allegedly, it was masterminded by the communist authorities themselves; this article refutes these two myths. The four debates concern whether to describe the processes of change since 1989 as a transition or a transformation, what to count as democratic consolidation, and what to understand as the reasons for differences in paths of transition (or transformation), and as reasons for differences in the level of success with democratisation. The article includes some comparative measures of regional progress since 1989.*

## Key Words

Transformation, transition, democratisation, communism, post-communism, myths.

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## Introduction

The collapse of communism in Central and Southeastern Europe and the dissolution of the Soviet Union were a long time coming, but once these processes were underway, they were completed relatively quickly. If one counts the most visible period of collapse as starting with the round-table talks in Poland, which began in February 1989 and ending with the peaceful dissolution of the Soviet Union in December 1991, this period may be said to have been contained within 35 months. Taking a longer view, however, the collapse of communism in the region may be said to have begun with the formation of the Independent Trade Union ‘Solidarity’ in Poland in the summer of 1980 or with the establishment of Charter 77 in Czechoslovakia in January 1977 or, pushing the inception of the collapse further back in time, with the Hungarian Revolution of 1956, with the revolt in the German Democratic Republic in

June 1953, or perhaps with the very establishment of the communist regimes in Central and Southeastern Europe at the end of World War II and in the Soviet Union in 1917, if one believes that the communists never solved the problem of legitimation. The problem which lay at the root of the long collapse, indeed, was the failure of legitimation, since, as I have argued elsewhere, '[t]he fundamental problem of politics is the creation and maintenance of a legitimate political order'.<sup>2</sup> Political legitimacy in the twentieth and twenty-first century hinges, among other things, on the public feeling that it can play a meaningful role in the political system (typically through free and fair elections, in the first place) and the given regime's respect for the rule of law and human rights, as well as its observance of a general policy of tolerance.<sup>3</sup>

From the very beginning, however, there have been several myths and debates surrounding the collapse of communism and the region's post-communist political course. The first myth is the claim that *no one* foresaw the collapse of communism or offered any indicative predictions in the decade preceding 1989.<sup>4</sup> This claim, however, involves the implicit further claim to have read and remembered everything relevant written in any language during that decade – surely an achievement

beyond the capability of even the most energetic of scholars. The second myth is that what happened in Central and Southeastern Europe was not a revolution at all, but rather a case of 'self-destruction by the apparatus – the cadres and the bureaucrats' who collaborated in 'destroying the [communist] political system' with the intention of subverting subsequent privatisation for 'personal gain'.<sup>5</sup> Promoted by a small group of self-described 'dissenters', this myth holds that the post-communist transition in Central and Southeastern Europe 'is actually a backward- regressive- process pushing the region back to its pre-modern institutions'.<sup>6</sup>

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**The fundamental problem of politics is the creation and maintenance of a legitimate political order.**

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In addition to these two myths, there are four debates in which scholars have engaged concerning political change in the region. The first is a curiously overheated debate about vocabulary, focusing on whether the processes of change might best be described as *transition* or *transformation*. The second debate highlighted here addresses the questions of what counts as democratic consolidation, when is consolidation

over, and when is transition- if that is what it is- over? The third and fourth debates, closely related but distinct, revolve around accounting for differences in the political paths taken by the states in the region since 1989, and for differences in the level of success with democratisation.

In the rest of this article, I shall examine these assorted myths and debates, and endeavour to suggest that at least some of them have been answered by more recent developments in the region, focusing on the following states: Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Albania, and the Yugoslav successor states. Russia is included in Table 2 [figured later in the article] by way of comparison, but is otherwise mentioned only in passing. I shall also advance the argument that democratic consolidation depends on a combination of factors, including a favourable international environment, economic stabilisation, and marginalisation and de-legitimation of extremist political views. In the final part of this article, I shall discuss the myth and a related debate concerning the collapse of socialist Yugoslavia. At the outset, it is perhaps worth emphasising that the all-encompassing transformation that has occurred in the Central and Southeast European region did not occur independently of developments in the Soviet Union. As is well known, Mikhail

Gorbachev, the General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union from 1985 to 1991 and the President of the Soviet Union from March 1990 to December 1991, advised Soviet bloc states to make their own decisions about their futures in what came to be known as ‘the Sinatra Doctrine’ (inspired by Frank Sinatra’s song, *My Way*). At the same time, it is clear that the roots of the ‘great transformation’ were primarily indigenous, which is why ‘strong societies’, such as Slovenia, Croatia, Poland and Hungary, moved more quickly than ‘weak societies’, such as Bulgaria and Romania (or, for that matter, Macedonia and Kosovo)-especially at the beginning of the transformation.

## The First Myth

The persistence of the myth that ‘nobody knew’ that communism was in danger is puzzling, given the records of rather concrete predictions by various scholars. As early as March 1980, Ernst Kux had suggested that, if Poland and other countries in the region failed to deal effectively with their economic problems, the result could be social unrest and ‘upheavals [...] in a number or all of the East European countries more or less simultaneously’.<sup>7</sup> Bringing a somewhat different emphasis to bear, but with

the same ultimate conclusion, George Schöpflin argued, in a 1985 publication, that the communist systems were in an advanced state of decay.<sup>8</sup> Again, J. F. Brown speculated in 1984 that ‘the Polish experience may have begun a gradual shift in power relationships within the communist system’.<sup>9</sup> Looking at the Hungarian context in 1987, Ivan Volgyes understood that that country was already moving into a political ‘storm’.<sup>10</sup> Where Romania is concerned, Anneli Gabanyi assessed in a September 1988 publication that Nicolae Ceaușescu’s days at the helm of power were numbered.<sup>11</sup> Again, Zbigniew Brzezinski declared confidently in early 1989, ‘It is almost a certainty that at some point in the relatively near future, given some major economic or political upheaval, politics as the expression of authentic social aspiration for multiparty democracy will return to the life of Eastern Europe’.<sup>12</sup> Other observers, such as Vladimir Tismăneanu,<sup>13</sup> also sensed that the end was near; but the most famous publication on the subject was probably Francis Fukuyama’s often misunderstood essay, ‘The End of History?’. The whole point of Fukuyama’s essay was to forecast ‘the ultimate triumph of Western liberal democracy’, indeed ‘the universalisation of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government’.<sup>14</sup> Whether or not Fukuyama will be proven right

about liberal democracy, it is clear enough that he foresaw the imminent collapse of communism in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. It is indicative that in the summer of 1990 Robert Conquest published an article about the work of certain scholars, focusing on political change in Eastern Europe, entitled ‘Who was right, who was wrong, and why?’<sup>15</sup>

In tracing the origins of this myth, one may note that it was not merely a question of scholars not keeping up with the field that produced this myth. Another root was selective perception originating in the ‘realist’ perspective which held, in the words of its most formidable champion, that ‘Communist totalitarian states and Western liberal states both belong generally in the category of effective rather than debile political systems’<sup>16</sup> and, further, that communist states had ‘demonstrate[d] high levels of political stability and institutionalisation’.<sup>17</sup>

This suggests, in turn, that the reason that these repeated warnings and predictions of eventual collapse were ignored was twofold: firstly, it conflicted with the dominant but erroneous paradigm which emphasised political order rather than legitimacy as the principal factor making for system stability; and secondly, predictions of dramatic change always come up against

the reluctance of people in general (not just scholars) to imagine anything but a continuation of the *status quo*. (This is also why only a very few people have paid any attention to those who have been warning against a looming water crisis, an exhaustion of oil supplies, the imminent collapse of the U.S. economy, and the ways in which the continued destruction of the environment and of other species will also affect the human species. People find it difficult to imagine dramatic change, and therefore are naturally disposed not to believe it possible.)

## The Second Myth

The second myth, which holds that nothing revolutionary happened in 1989 or thereafter, is inextricably linked with debates about how best to define the word *revolution*. Some scholars, such as Huntington,<sup>18</sup> Roper,<sup>19</sup> and Poznanski,<sup>20</sup> have emphasised the centrality of violence, making violence part of the definition of revolution. For Roper, this means that only the Romanian events may qualify as a revolution, while Poznanski specifically rules out that anything revolutionary occurred in Romania on the grounds that the violence there did not last long enough to qualify; Poznanski further excludes Yugoslavia on the grounds that, in his view, Yugoslavia dissolved because

Slovenes, Croats, and others were yearning for ‘national independence’.<sup>21</sup> But, in fact, Poznanski extends his argument to further deny that there was any revolutionary transformation either, insisting, as already noted, that it was the communist managers who orchestrated the collapse of the communist system in order to profit from it. Communism was, he thought in 1993, ‘a viable system’ which, with the changes that took place after 1989, had evolved into ‘a more advanced’ form.<sup>22</sup> But eight years later, Poznanski was not so confident that this ‘effort by the cadres to convert political power into economic strength’<sup>23</sup> had succeeded, since he wrote in 2001, that ‘only dysfunctional markets’ had emerged in the region.<sup>24</sup> Instead of the smooth evolution to a ‘more advanced’ stage of communism, what Poznanski saw in the region in 2001 was that the collapse of the communist organisational monopoly had ‘unleashed everywhere mostly forces that have destroyed what already existed, but are seemingly unable to replace it with anything functional’.<sup>25</sup>

The alternative view is to construe revolution not so much as a Big Bang, but rather as a process of transformation associated, as Alexis de Tocqueville understood it, with ‘a period of intense social, political, and economic change’.<sup>26</sup> Along similar lines, Michael McFaul defined revolution as ‘a sweeping,

fundamental change in political organisation, social structure, economic property control and the predominant myth of social order'.<sup>27</sup> Again, Howard Kaminsky defined revolution as 'the sudden substitution of one social and intellectual world for another'.<sup>28</sup> Further, if one considers social order to be based on identifiable moral, political, and economic principles (such as secular theocracy, one-party rule, and a planned economy vs. consequentialism, democratic governance, and economic free market), then, according to this way of thinking, change in any of these principles would qualify as revolutionary, whether or not accompanied by violence, while change in all three dimensions would qualify as a *comprehensive* revolution.<sup>29</sup> Here, Poznanski's observation that comprehensive change may be advanced over years (or, I would add, over decades) is germane, and is buttressed by the argument developed by Bertram Wolfe in his classic history of revolutionary processes in Soviet Russia.<sup>30</sup>

Poznanski was, of course, correct in noting that the events of 1989-91 did not mean the death of communist parties. One may note, for example, the electoral success of post-communist parties in Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary, Macedonia, Poland and Romania in the 1990s, and of the

post-communist parties in Macedonia, Bulgaria and Slovenia in elections held in 2002, 2005, and 2008, respectively. But these transformed parties involved new people and new programs and, in any event, do not seem to be driven by the desire to make economic profit from electoral success. In the Czech Republic, the Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia (KSČM) remains electorally relevant, winning 12.8% of the vote in 2006.<sup>31</sup> Serbia stands out as an exceptional case in that the League of Socialists of Serbia (as its communist party was called) transformed itself into a nationalist party with an expansionist program. Serbia, thus, is the clearest example of the kind of hijacking which Poznanski had in mind and, although the party president, Slobodan Milošević, seems not to have derived any particular wealth from this hijacking, many of his cronies benefitted.<sup>32</sup>

## The First Debate

The first debate, which was probably driven in part by confusion or disagreement about the meanings of the terms at hand, concerned whether it makes more sense to describe the change in the region as *transition* or as *transformation*. This debate was well underway by the mid-1990s.<sup>33</sup> As summarised by Petr Pavlínek, the



argument was between those who believed that the region was undergoing a *transition* towards a definite goal, such as modern capitalism- a view which Pavlínek considered 'teleological', which is to say, apparently something bad- and those who believed, on the contrary, that the countries of the region were not heading towards any clear goal or in any definite direction, so that the *transformation* should be considered (to have been) complex.<sup>34</sup> Writing at the end of the 1990s, Ben Fowkes stated the case in this way: 'A transition implies both a starting point and an objective, an ultimate goal. The starting point can be defined with a fair degree of clarity. It is the communist regimes and systems in what turned out to be their dying days - the late 1980s. The final goal, however, is extremely hazy'.<sup>35</sup> Like Pavlínek, Fowkes considered that those who believed that the elites in the region had a clear goal were guilty of teleological thinking.<sup>36</sup>

For the purposes of this article, I will define *transition* as a 'passage or change from one place, state, or action to another', as per *Cassell's Dictionary*.<sup>37</sup> Thus in my understanding and in my use of the word 'transition', there is no hint of anything teleological, let alone any assumption that the change designated thereby is necessarily in a desirable direction (whether to the observer or to those affected). The literal meaning

of the word 'transition' is that things end up different from what they were before. I do not believe that there are any observers of the post-communist region who would assert, at this point in time, that nothing substantial has changed.

The word *transformation* has a different meaning. As given in *Cassell's*, a transformation is 'the act of transforming; [...] a metamorphosis; a transmutation'.<sup>38</sup> It is, thus, the process of change itself, and clearly any transition will involve transformation, even though one can imagine transformations which would merely be a perpetuation of chaos, without leading to any definite or even partially stable equilibrium. Transition, thus, entails transformation, while transformation does not necessarily entail transition.

Thomas Carothers, in an article published in *Journal of Democracy*, attributed five assumptions to what he called the transition paradigm; I would join him in rejecting all five assumptions, even while I continue to believe that, among other things, those post-communist states which left the Warsaw Pact and joined NATO and the EU have effected a 'passage or change from one place, state, or action to another', as *Cassell's* puts it. The five assumptions Carothers lists are: (1) that every country where a dictator is

overthrown should be assumed to be moving towards democracy; (2) that democratisation must always follow the same formula in the identical sequence; (3) that elections are a guarantee of stable, liberal democracy; (4) that such things as level of economic development, political history, and legacies of various kinds are irrelevant to the course or prospects of democratisation; and (5) that the so-called 'third wave' democratic transitions have been taking place in coherent, functional states.<sup>39</sup> These assumptions, if indeed anyone actually made them, strike me as ridiculous. Unfortunately, whether for reasons of delicacy or for some other reasons, Carothers did not name the guilty parties. What I would emphasise, however, is that there is *no reason* why anyone who believes that politics in Central and Southeastern Europe has ended up different from the way it was before 1989 should make *any* of these assumptions.

Anyone who had any knowledge of what followed the overthrow of the Shah of Iran (in 1979) or the collapse of the Soviet Union (in 1991) could hardly give any credence to the first assumption, while students of democratisation have noted variations in the building of democracy, involving, among other things, the choice between a presidential and a parliamentary system, the choice between proportional representation and first-past-the-post elections, and

the sequencing of reform legislations. Moreover, concerning elections, I am not alone in having pointed out that elections are no guarantee of liberal democracy and that rushing forward with elections, before inter-ethnic hatreds have been tamed and the rule of law established, is a recipe for dysfunctionality, not for liberal democracy.<sup>40</sup> Where variables such as the legacies of the past are concerned, there is a rich literature pointing out how they may impact on political evolution.<sup>41</sup> And finally, it is unlikely that any specialist in Central and Southeast European affairs has failed to notice the emergence of new states which resulted from the dissolution of the USSR, Czechoslovakia, and socialist Yugoslavia, or the troubles which some of the Soviet and Yugoslav successor states have experienced; this makes it rather unlikely that anyone has *really* viewed the post-communist transitions as involving 'coherent, functional states', although admission to the European Union clearly signifies that, within the council of the EU, those admitted have been judged to have reached a sufficient level of functionality to qualify for membership.

In a brilliant article for *Post-Soviet Affairs*, Jordan Gans-Morse reviewed the arguments about post-communist evolution in 131 articles published in 10 leading area studies journals and journals of comparative politics. He found that,

while many scholars have attacked a supposedly hegemonic model of 'transitology' (a term of abuse), 'analysts of post-communism have rarely expressed the opinion that liberal democracy (or any other regime type) is the singular, natural, inevitable, or even probable outcome of transitions'.<sup>42</sup> Kopstein confirms this analysis, noting that students of post-communism have 'never claimed that democracy was inevitable'.<sup>43</sup> Moreover, while unnamed scholars stand indicted for having imagined that developments in Central and Southeastern Europe would necessarily mirror what had happened previously in Latin America, Gans-Morse found that scholars focusing on Central and Southeastern Europe based their analyses not on reading about Latin America but on studying the region of their speciality and, accordingly, identified various factors which distinguished the region from Latin America.<sup>44</sup>

Gans-Morse also looked at repeated claims (citing those making such claims) that there was a significant contingent of scholars guilty of naïve forms of teleological thinking.<sup>45</sup> He quoted Katherine Verdery's warning that 'to assume that we are witnessing a transition from socialism to capitalism, democracy, or market economies is mistaken'.<sup>46</sup> One wonders whether, in viewing the evolution of politics in Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia,

Slovenia and Croatia, Verdery would be prepared to reiterate that warning today.

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The willingness of local elites to commit to fulfilling the challenging conditions entailed in the EU's *acquis communautaire* demonstrates convincingly that entry into the EU has figured as a clear goal for the post-communist states.

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But where teleology is concerned, one may well ask, are there any analysts who subscribe to the contrary notion that, after 1989, the people of Central and Southeastern Europe had no particular hopes, or that the elites of the countries that comprise the region had no idea - if that is the point - about what they wanted to achieve? Moreover, while teleology sounds as though it must be a mortal sin, one should stand back and ask: what is wrong with believing that political elites might have certain objectives in mind? And, in fact, as Milada Vachudova points out, '[e]ven before the street demonstrators had gone home in Prague in November 1989, incoming democratic leaders of Czechoslovakia, Poland and Hungary had singled out joining the EU as their most important foreign policy goal'.<sup>47</sup> Casting our eyes further back in time, we may note that,

already in the early 1980s, opposition activists in Poland were consciously building a parallel society in which, as Wiktor Kulerski put it, ‘the authorities will control empty stores but not the market; the employment of workers but not their livelihood; the official media, but not the circulation of information; printing plants, but not the publishing movement; the mail and telephones, but not communications; and the school system, but not education’<sup>48</sup> and their ultimate goal was nothing less than the reestablishment of a pluralist political system.<sup>49</sup>

In Czechoslovakia, the independent activists associated with Charter 77, the Committee for the Unjustly Persecuted, the Jazz Section, and the Catholic Church were struggling, among other things, to achieve the rule of law (in which the authorities would respect their own constitution and laws), freedom of information and culture, an end to repression, and a restoration of religious freedom, including the self-governance of the Catholic Church.<sup>50</sup> One may also point to currents of independent activism in the 1980s in the German Democratic Republic, Hungary and Slovenia, as well as, to a lesser extent, in Bulgaria, Croatia, and Serbia.

Once the communist organisational monopoly had collapsed, the new elites set about to dismantle the old political structures and, consulting the Central and East European Legal Initiative (of the American Bar Association) and setting up committees to study the constitutions of various states both in Western Europe and elsewhere, they passed new constitutions and laws, set up new institutions, and promoted change in the direction of pluralism. The elites also sought to privatise the economy and revive production. While the process of deconstruction and reconstruction

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Environmental crisis and economic crisis should be expected to have political consequences.

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opened up possibilities for corruption, which assumed serious dimensions in some societies of the region, the changes were complex not because they lacked clear purpose, but rather because at least two rather different purposes were being pursued by some local elites: on the one hand to build pluralist systems, to revive the economy, and to gain entry into the European Union; and on the other hand, as Poznanski noted, to line their own pockets and pass control of lucrative properties into the hands of relatives and cronies. This latter motivation was especially serious in the Yugoslav successor states in the war zone, as well as in Albania, Bulgaria, Macedonia and

Romania. Furthermore, the willingness of local elites to commit to fulfilling the challenging conditions entailed in the EU's *acquis communautaire* (the total body of EU law passed to date) demonstrates convincingly that entry into the EU has figured as a clear goal for the post-communist states.<sup>51</sup> To my mind, thus, what the countries of Eastern Europe undertook at the end of 1989 was a transition, which inevitably involved the transformation of the political, legal, economic and media systems.

I have dwelled on this first debate at some length because of the fury with which it was argued, especially in the first decade following the collapse in 1989. This suggests that the participants in the debate felt that something important was at stake; I have tried my best to clarify what was at stake and what was not at stake. Nonetheless, I offer one final observation here, *viz.*, that the *status quo* in the region is a fragile one and not a final endpoint, not merely because of political pressures, but also because of the environmental crisis, which includes global warming and its ramifications, as well as of the potential future corrosion of the U.S. economy traceable, above all though not exclusively, to the fiscally irresponsible policies of the George W. Bush administration. Environmental crisis and economic crisis should be expected to have political consequences. This brings us to the second debate.

## The Second Debate: When is Transition Over and When may Democracy be Considered to have been Consolidated?

While acknowledging the wisdom of Berger and Luckmann's observation about the precariousness of all social reality,<sup>52</sup> I find myself in sympathy with Kornai's suggestion that transition is over when the communist party no longer enjoys an organisational monopoly and power monopoly, when the largest part of the economy is in private hands, and when the market is the dominant determinant in the economy;<sup>53</sup> still, rather than claiming that the transition is over with the achievement of those tasks, I prefer to think that these represent (only) an important milestone along the road to stable liberal democracy (and membership in the European Union). Along similar lines, Alan Gelb wrote (in 1999) that '[t]ransition is over when the problems and the policy issues confronted by today's "transition countries" resemble those faced by other countries at similar levels of development'.<sup>54</sup> In this connection, it is of some interest that Ermelinda Meksi, the then deputy prime minister of Albania and the minister of state for European integration, and Auron Pasha, the executive director of

the Institute for Development Research and Alternatives, came to the conclusion in 2003 that, while a country could be considered to have completed its transition and yet not be a member of the European Union, membership in the EU served as a clear signifier that economic, if not also political, transition had been completed.<sup>55</sup> For political transition to be considered over, it is also important that the government exercise effective sovereignty over its entire territory.

The corollary question- when may we say that democracy has been consolidated? - is a question about criteria. Here I suggest the following criteria, offering that a democracy may be considered to have been consolidated when:

- corruption is down to a level where the country obtains a score of 4.0 or better on Transparency International's corruption perception index,

- the number of major political parties has stabilised at two or three, and the number of parties able to elect deputies to the parliament has stabilised at eight or fewer,
- the education system promotes liberal values,
- and the electoral laws are stabilised.

In this respect, the fact that each of the first six parliamentary elections held in Croatia after 1989 (1990, 1992, 1993, 1995, 2000 and 2003) was conducted according to a different electoral law<sup>56</sup> suggests, at a minimum, that a stable democratic system had not been consolidated in Croatia prior to 2003.

Table 1 (below) shows which countries have been admitted to the EU, how press freedom in the countries of the region have been ranked by Reporters Without Borders, and corruption perception index scores as reported by Transparency International:

**Table 1: International measures of regional progress since 1989**

<b>EU membership</b>	<b>Press Freedom (2011/12)</b>	<b>Transparency International (2009)*</b>
<i>Members since 2004:</i>	<i>States rated in the top forty:</i>	<i>CPI scores better than 4.0:</i>
Czech Republic	Czech Republic (14 <sup>th</sup> )	Czech Republic (4.9)
Hungary	Poland (24 <sup>th</sup> )	Hungary (5.1)
Poland	Slovakia (25 <sup>th</sup> )	Poland (5.0)
Slovakia	Slovenia (36 <sup>th</sup> )	Slovakia (4.5)
Slovenia	Hungary (40 <sup>th</sup> )	Slovenia (6.6)
		Croatia (4.1)
<i>Members since 2007:</i>	<i>States rated between 41<sup>st</sup> ~ 80<sup>th</sup> place:</i>	<i>CPI scores between 3.5-4.0:</i>
Romania	Romania (47 <sup>th</sup> )	Romania (3.8)
Bulgaria	Bosnia-Herz. (58 <sup>th</sup> )	Bulgaria (3.8)
	Croatia (68 <sup>th</sup> )	Macedonia (3.8)
	Serbia (tied for 80 <sup>th</sup> )	Montenegro (3.9)
	Bulgaria (tied for 80 <sup>th</sup> )	
<i>Acceding country:</i>		<i>CPI scores between</i>
Croatia		<i>3.0-3.5:</i>
<i>Anticipated soon:</i>		Serbia (3.5)
Montenegro		Bosnia-Herz. (3.0)
		Albania (3.2)
	<i>States rated lower than 80<sup>th</sup> (for press freedom)</i>	
<i>Others:</i>		<i>Not listed in 2009:</i>
Albania	Kosovo (86 <sup>th</sup> )	Kosovo
Kosovo	Macedonia (94 <sup>th</sup> )	
Bosnia-Herzegovina	Albania (96 <sup>th</sup> )	
Macedonia	Montenegro (107 <sup>th</sup> )	
Serbia		

*Sources:* Reporters without Borders (ratings for 2011/2012), at <http://en.rsf.org/press-freedom-index-2011-2012,1043.html> [last visited 9 September 2012]; and \* Transparency International, Corruption Perceptions Index 2009, at [http://www.transparency.org/policy\\_research/surveys\\_indices/cpi/2009/cpi\\_2009\\_table](http://www.transparency.org/policy_research/surveys_indices/cpi/2009/cpi_2009_table) [last visited 23 August 2010]. CPI = Corruption Perceptions Index.

What this table shows is that the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia (listed alphabetically) were ranked in the highest category across each of these three measures, with Bulgaria, Croatia and Romania close behind. Among the remaining states, Montenegro may be best situated to join Croatia in accession to the European Union, in spite of its extremely low rating for press freedom; meanwhile Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo are saddled with serious economic problems, problems of corruption, and, in the case of Bosnia-Herzegovina, the failure of the local elites to overcome the division of the country into two entities, as determined in the Dayton Peace Accords of 1995.

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**The current Serbian political team subscribes to a revanchist agenda and has, at best, an ambivalent attitude towards the West.**

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Serbia looked favourably poised to be admitted to EU candidate status as long as Boris Tadić was president and Mirko Cvetković was prime minister<sup>57</sup>- provided only that Belgrade recognise the independence of Kosovo. However, in the course of 2012, Tomislav Nikolić (Serbian Progressive Party) displaced

Tadić as president (in May) and Ivica Dačić (Socialist Party), in coalition with the Progressive Party, succeeded Cvetković in the prime minister's office (in June). Nikolić's party has 73 deputies in the Serbian parliament, against the 45 seats held by Dačić's party.<sup>58</sup> (Nikolić conceded the prime minister's office to Dačić in order to outbid Tadić, whose party had come second, with 68 deputies in the parliament.)

The newly elected Serbian president and the new Serbian governmental team have already signalled a new direction by signing an EU association agreement on 28 June 2013<sup>59</sup> even while trying to delay any recognition of Kosovo's independence.<sup>60</sup> In fact, Nikolić has stoked fears of genocide of Serbs in Kosovo, even while denying that what took place in Srebrenica in July 1995 can be characterised as genocide. As for NATO, with Nikolić and Dačić at the helm, Serbia has been strengthening its military ties with Russia.<sup>61</sup> The current Serbian political team thus subscribes to a revanchist agenda and has, at best, an ambivalent attitude towards the West.

To this list of problems one may add that both Serbia and Macedonia recently adopted controversial legislation in the area of media and communications- in both cases being challenged in the respective Constitutional Court<sup>62</sup>- while



private security companies have been a problem in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Macedonia and Serbia, having been linked to espionage (in the RS), fraud and murder (in Macedonia), and organised crime in Bosnia and Serbia.<sup>63</sup> Nor should one omit organised crime from the list of problems with which the region is confronted. While organised crime is the most serious in Southeastern Europe, no country in the region is entirely free of its effects.

Indeed, even Serbia and Bosnia-Herzegovina aside,<sup>64</sup> there have been disquieting developments in several other countries of the region. In this context, some discussion of the deterioration of democracy in Hungary is warranted. Elections held in April 2010 in Hungary gave Fidesz, a right-wing party, 52.76% of the vote.<sup>65</sup> Under the election law valid at the time, this entitled Fidesz to 227 seats in the parliament (68% of the total); Fidesz's coalition party, the Christian Democratic People's Party (KDNP) won 36 seats, giving the coalition a bloc of 263 seats in the 386-seat parliament. With the support of the neo-Nazi Jobbik Party, which elected 47 deputies to the Hungarian parliament,<sup>66</sup> Fidesz's leader Viktor Orbán- now enthroned as prime minister- proceeded to scrap the constitution which, in taking office, he had pledged to uphold. By the end of the year, the Fidesz-dominated parliament had replaced the constitution

and passed 213 laws- a record in Hungarian history- and, of that number, 63 were modified subsequently. Under the new constitutional-legal order, both the independence and the jurisdiction of the country's highest court have been reduced, the legal supervision of elections has been changed (placing five Fidesz members in charge), and the independence of the media has been seriously compromised. In addition, the previous agencies entrusted with the protection, respectively, of human rights, data, and minority affairs have been consolidated into a single agency with lesser competence. The constitution itself has taken on the role of a *dictionary*, defining marriage as a union between a woman and a man- by way of terminating the previously liberal law on same-sex registered partnerships. The constitution also initially deregistered 348 religious associations, leaving only 14 with legal status. Under international pressure, the number was subsequently increased to 32. Moreover, even as the country's economic troubles have increased the number of the homeless, the Hungarian parliament addressed this problem in November 2011 by criminalising homelessness, exposing an estimated 30,000 to 35,000 homeless persons to the risk of incarceration on charges of poverty!<sup>67</sup>

As if that were not damaging enough, the far-right Jobbik Party has pledged to

fight for the retrieval of the lands lost as a result of Czechoslovak, Romanian and Serbian military annexations in 1919 – annexations sanctioned by the Treaty of Trianon in 1920<sup>68</sup> – has demanded that Hungary exit the European Union,<sup>69</sup> and has staged anti-Roma marches in Roma-inhabited areas, in which participants have shouted murderous slogans.<sup>70</sup> Remarkably, the Fidesz government, which has been engaged in the posthumous rehabilitation of Hitler's collaborator, Miklós Horthy,<sup>71</sup> did not see fit to ban Jobbik's anti-Roma march in Devecser village on 5 August 2012, even though it had banned a gay pride parade the previous April. As it stands, it is impossible to characterise Hungary as pluralist, much less as democratic in the usual sense of that word; at the time of this writing, the Hungarian government, supported by a large proportion of the population, is clearly on an authoritarian track, already displaying clearly illiberal tendencies.

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The newly elected Serbian president and the new Serbian governmental team have already signalled a new direction by signing an EU association agreement on 28 June 2013 even while trying to delay any recognition of Kosovo's independence.

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## The Third Debate: What Accounts for Differences in the Transition?

In some ways, this third debate is both the most interesting and the most complex. In a survey of available theories which have been presented by various scholars, Paul Lewis lists the following:

- historical-cultural theories (stressing the legacy of the Ottoman rule *versus* the legacy of the Habsburg rule)
- the history of opposition in the Northern Tier countries (symbolised by the outbreaks in 1953 in the GDR and in 1956 in Hungary and Poland, as well as the emergence of Solidarity and associated independent organisations in Poland in 1980) *versus* the more stable authoritarian patterns in the Southern Tier countries
- the relative strength of civil society and independent activism in each country
- the modes of exit from communist rule (e.g., round-table negotiations, as in Poland and Czechoslovakia, *versus* palace coups, as in Serbia and Bulgaria)
- the level of socio-economic development<sup>72</sup>

For Munck and Leff, the emphasis is on the mode of transition, and they contrast: the Polish model (transaction), the Hungarian model (extrication), the Czechoslovak model (rupture), the Bulgarian model (revolution from above).<sup>73</sup> Helga Welsh, by contrast, wants to de-emphasise modes of transition, preferring to place the emphasis instead on how practices of conflict resolution changed during the transition.<sup>74</sup> Yet another approach is offered by Elena Prohnițchi who, after a close comparison of Hungary and Poland's transition modes, concludes that differences in paths and outcomes were affected largely by two factors: 'the initial conditions of transition (level of communist legitimacy, level of social mobilisation, relationship of opposition and incumbents) and the strategic behaviour of elites involved in the transformation process'.<sup>75</sup> Looking to cultural factors, Darden and Grzymala-Busse investigated variations in the timing and content of mass literacy in the region and concluded that 'mass literacy explains more of the patterns of the communist exit than do structural, modernisation, or communist legacy

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A variety of factors have played a role in determining the relative success achieved through the democratisation and development of a liberal culture in the region.

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accounts, and it provides a clear and sustained causal chain'.<sup>76</sup> Again, Vachudova, in a brilliant analysis of the transition paths of Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria, argues that the two factors which proved to be the most conducive to the establishment of a stable democracy in the region were the strength (in terms of both organisation and participation) of the anti-communist opposition in the 1980s, and the presence of a reformed communist party.<sup>77</sup> The latter contributed to the development of a healthy competitive political environment and, Vachudova continues, 'the quality of political competition determined whether states embarked on [...] a liberal or an illiberal pattern of change after 1989'.<sup>78</sup> Ten years before the publication of Vachudova's book, Ishiyama pointed to 'the promotion of political moderation within the principal political parties' as a key determinant of the success of democratisation.<sup>79</sup> Finally, Bohle and Greskovits trace differences in transitional pathways to alternative models of capitalist transformation adopted in the region. They distinguish

between: the 'state-crafted neoliberalism' of the Baltic states; the 'embedded liberalism', which they believe has been practised since 1989 in Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia; Hungary and Slovenia's neo-corporatism; and the later privatisation and delayed economic recovery characteristic of Southeastern Europe.<sup>80</sup>

### The Fourth Debate: What Accounts for Differences in the Level of Success with Democratisation?

The activity of the PHARE program (Poland and Hungary: Assistance for Restructuring their Economies), which pumped € 582.8 million into Hungary alone between 1990 and 1995<sup>81</sup> and additional funds for Poland, certainly has given an advantage to its beneficiaries (later expanded to 10 EU accession countries), while the entire process of EU accession is clearly of deliberate design. However, beyond these factors, there are a host of other factors which have been offered as having had an impact on the post-communist transition in Eastern Europe, including: the choices and strategies of the elites in power;<sup>82</sup> levels of modernisation and economic development and historical experience with democracy;<sup>83</sup> the choice

of executive structure (presidential, semi-presidential, or parliamentary system), legislative structure (unicameral or bicameral) and electoral system (majoritarian, proportional, or mixed);<sup>84</sup> whether nationalist mobilisation occurred early or late in the transition process;<sup>85</sup> and the survival of forms of totalitarian consciousness, manifesting itself in a nostalgia for communist authoritarianism, a phenomenon which is less pronounced in Eastern Europe than in Russia.<sup>86</sup> Where this last factor is concerned, Petr Macek and Ivana Marková warned (in 2004) that patterns of thinking formed during communist times, including levels of distrust, uncertainty and scepticism, continue in varying levels from one society to another.<sup>87</sup> Bunce, by contrast, has suggested that 'the most successful democracies in the post-Socialist world- Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovenia and the Baltic states- share one commonality: a comprehensive political rejection of the socialist past and socialist elites in the founding years of democratic governance.'<sup>88</sup>

For my own part, I am inclined to stress that a variety of factors have played a role in determining the relative success achieved in democratisation and development of a liberal culture in the region. Among these factors, I would include not only the exit strategies and

conditions noted by Vachudova and Bunce, as well as the relevance of literacy and educational levels, as noted by Darden and Grzymala-Busse, but also the crucial role played by the European Union with its *acquis communautaire*, and the contents of and political messages communicated in history textbooks used in schools.<sup>89</sup> To these factors one may add also the impact of corruption, organised crime, elite-stoked nationalist hatred,<sup>90</sup> and whether the country in question was able to avoid war or not.

After reviewing the track records of 10 post-socialist European countries, Fink-Hafner and Hafner-Fink concluded that the four key political determinants

of success with democratisation in the region have been the absence of war, the absence of foreign peacekeeping forces, the presence of a parliamentary system operating with a proportional electoral system, and the active engagement of civil society in the early phase of transition.<sup>91</sup> Their argument is convincing.

But could demographic and cultural factors also play a role? Table 2 shows the percentage of urbanisation in the region's countries for 2008, the average years of schooling for 2006 (with 2004 data for Albania and 2005 data for Macedonia), and expenditures on education as a percentage of GDP (with majority of data from 2002-2005).

**Table 2: Cultural and demographic factors**

<b>% urban* (2008)</b>	<b>Average No. of years of schooling (2006)</b>	<b>Expenditures on education as a % of GDP (2005)</b>
Czech 73	<i>15-17 years</i>	5.5-7.1%
Russia 73	Slovenia	Montenegro
Bulgaria 71	Hungary	Slovenia
Hungary 68	Poland	Hungary
Macedonia 67	Czech	Poland
Poland 61	Slovakia	
Montenegro 60		4.4-4-5%
Croatia 57	<i>14 years</i>	Croatia
Slovakia 56	Croatia	Bulgaria
Romania 54	Romania	Czech
Serbia 52	Bulgaria	
Slovenia 48	Russia	3.5-3.9%
Bosnia-H. 47		Slovakia
Albania 47	<i>11-12 years</i>	Serbia
Kosovo 10	Macedonia	Russia
	Albania	Romania
		Macedonia
	<i>No data</i>	
	Serbia	<i>Below 3.0%</i>
	Kosovo	Albania
	Bosnia-Herzegovina	
	Montenegro	

*Sources:* For 'percentage urban' (except Kosovo) and average numbers of years of schooling, see, Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), *The World Factbook*, at [www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/](http://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/) [last visited 24 January 2013]; for percentage urban in Kosovo, [www.citypopulation.de/Kosovo.html](http://www.citypopulation.de/Kosovo.html) [last visited 24 January 2013]; for expenditures on education for Hungary, Poland, Romania, Bulgaria, Russia, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Macedonia, Albania, Croatia, and Slovenia, CIA, *The World Factbook*; for expenditures on education in Serbia (1998) and Montenegro (2000), 'Serbia- Administration, Finance, & Educational Research', at [education.stateuniversity.com/pages/1326/Serbia-ADMINISTRATION-FINANCE-EDUCATIONAL-RESEARCH.html](http://education.stateuniversity.com/pages/1326/Serbia-ADMINISTRATION-FINANCE-EDUCATIONAL-RESEARCH.html) and 'Montenegro – Administration, Finance, & Educational Research', at [education.stateuniversity.com/pages/1010/Montenegro-ADMINISTRATION-FINANCE-EDUCATIONAL-RESEARCH.html](http://education.stateuniversity.com/pages/1010/Montenegro-ADMINISTRATION-FINANCE-EDUCATIONAL-RESEARCH.html) [both last visited 24 January 2013]. Due to heavy international subsidies, educational expenditures in Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1998 accounted for 10.8% of the GDP, while educational expenditures in Kosovo in 2001 accounted for 14% of the GDP. More recent figures for Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo are not available. See 'Bosnia- Administration, Finance, & Educational Research', at [education.stateuniversity.com/pages/180/Bosnia-Herzegovina-ADMINISTRATION-FINANCE-EDUCATIONAL-RESEARCH.html](http://education.stateuniversity.com/pages/180/Bosnia-Herzegovina-ADMINISTRATION-FINANCE-EDUCATIONAL-RESEARCH.html) [last visited 24 January 2013]; OECD, *Reviews of National Policies for Education: South Eastern Europe, Vol. 1: Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Kosovo* Paris, 2003; reprinted 2004, p. 330.

Two things are immediately apparent from the data in Table 2. Firstly, that there is no correlation between the raw data on urbanisation presented in the table and any of the measures of regional progress towards stable democracy, as reflected in Table 1. Secondly, that Hungary, Poland and Slovenia, which ranked in the highest categories in Table 1, are also ranked highest on the two measures of education, while Albania and Macedonia, which have performed less well in terms of democratic consolidation and combating corruption, also rank at the bottom of the scale of measures of educational investment and attainment. Unfortunately, at the time of this writing, data for the average number of years spent in school are not available for Serbia, Kosovo, Bosnia-Herzegovina or Montenegro; nor are recent data for expenditures on education in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo. Yet even the incomplete data shown in Table 2 serve to reinforce the suggestion by Fink-Hafner and Hafner-Fink that ‘no single factor is sufficient for [a full explanation of] a successful transition and the consolidation of democracy’.<sup>92</sup>

Other factors may also enter into the equation, such as the extent to which liberal intellectuals are able to play a meaningful role in public dialogue about issues of the day or, conversely, are estranged from important public

forums and even subjected to occasional attacks in the mainstream media. Or, to take a more readily quantifiable factor, the extent to which journalists who investigate governmental corruption or write reports critical of the government are silenced. In Slovenia, to take as an example a country generally regarded as doing about as well in terms of building democracy as any in the region, there have been ongoing controversies about the media ever since the communists were voted out of power in 1990, focusing on government manipulation and ownership issues, among other things.<sup>93</sup>

And finally, it is worth keeping in mind that corruption, to which this article has repeatedly alluded, not only entails giving private gain priority over public interest in the decision-making of corrupt office-holders, but also creates an organic bond between corrupt office-holders and organised crime – a bond which severely compromises efforts to consolidate the rule of law.<sup>94</sup> Not even Slovenia has been immune to organised crime.<sup>95</sup>

When it comes to the Yugoslav meltdown, the most notorious myth was the claim, registered by Robert Kaplan,<sup>96</sup> that the fighting which erupted in the early 1990s had – in Kaplan’s view – nothing to do with any contemporary

problems. Promoting the illusion of ‘ancient hatreds’, Kaplan traced the conflict in the 1990s, improbably, to problems pre-dating the Fall of Rome in 476 (which is the standard date demarcating the end of the ancient era)- to a time when the ancestors of the South Slavs had not yet arrived in Southeastern Europe and were still polytheists. One wonders what Kaplan was thinking about. That Kaplan’s thorough misunderstanding and misconstrual of both past and present was profoundly misleading was completely obvious to all serious students of the region. Henry R. Cooper, Jr., spoke for most, if not all, in the field of Slavic studies when he described Kaplan’s book as ‘a dreadful mix of unfounded generalizations, misinformation, outdated sources, personal prejudices and bad writing’.<sup>97</sup>

The myth of ‘ancient hatreds’ nonetheless exerted an unhealthy influence over public thinking when sales of *Balkan Ghosts* put the book on the *New York Times* bestseller list. British Prime Minister John Major was, for a while, taken in by the myth,<sup>98</sup> and, to the extent that policymakers were inclined to attribute contemporary conflicts to ancient sources, that, *ipso facto*, rendered them intractable and made any diplomatic or military response appear irrelevant. The myth thus provided an excuse for Western inaction in the face

of a war that eventually claimed at least 100,000 lives.<sup>99</sup>

But if ‘ancient hatreds’ were not the reason for the Yugoslav meltdown and Wars of Yugoslav Succession (1991-1995), then what *were* the sources of that ‘Time of Troubles’? The Serbian regime itself promoted two mutually reinforcing myths on this score, sometimes blaming Slovenia for the outbreak of the war – a myth which seems to have influenced Warren Zimmermann’s thinking on the subject, even if he did not blame the Slovenes for more than self-absorption, accusing them of “‘Garbo nationalism’- they just wanted to be left alone”<sup>100</sup>- and sometimes casting the blame on Germany for its allegedly ‘premature’ recognition of Slovenia and Croatia. This improbable myth, that the diplomatic recognition of these two countries somehow made war in Bosnia-Herzegovina vastly more likely, ignores the fact that the Serbian political elite had already developed ‘plans and projects’ involving annexation of as much as 60% of Bosnia-Herzegovina, long before Slovenia or Croatia achieved diplomatic recognition<sup>101</sup> - as has been documented by intercepts of telephone conversations among Slobodan Milošević, Dobrica Ćosić and Radovan Karadžić.<sup>102</sup> In spite of the fanciful nature of this myth, it was picked up by Beverly Crawford<sup>103</sup> and may have influenced the thinking of other observers as well.<sup>104</sup>



In fact, Germany's recognition was not at all 'unilateral' as Crawford has alleged, but was closely coordinated within the European Union<sup>105</sup> and was followed, immediately, by a truce in Croatia.

Although one can also find some tendencies in certain quarters to try to equate Croatian and Serbian culpability for the war, increasingly there is recognition that, in terms of the players, Milošević and his coterie (among whom, Čosić, Karadžić and Borisav Jović stand out as leading figures) were clearly the prime movers in the meltdown, insofar as they planned the war, armed and trained Serbian militias in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina during the 1990s, confiscated most of the weaponry entrusted to the Slovenian Territorial Defence Force and all of the weaponry entrusted to its Croatian and Bosnian counterparts, and even moved arms factories out of Bosnia-Herzegovina and into Serbia.<sup>106</sup> And yet, although Milošević and his associates were the prime movers, they were able to take the country to war because of the presence of certain preconditions. This is why I wrote in 2005 that 'the central systemic factors in the decay of socialist Yugoslavia were (1) problems associated with system illegitimacy, (2) economic deterioration, and (3) the ethnic-based federal system, while (4) human agency (Milošević especially, but not solely) played a central

role in taking the country down a violent path'.<sup>107</sup> The notion that Slovenia bore any particular responsibility for a war in which it was barely involved is too absurd to bear scrutiny.

Other theories have also been put forward in the endeavour to explain the Yugoslav meltdown. These have included efforts to trace the War of Yugoslav Succession to Serbs' national character formed during the 'Ottoman occupation',<sup>108</sup> to emphasise unemployment as the key factor which generated discontent and the willingness to take up arms,<sup>109</sup> and to highlight long-term political decay as having pushed the Yugoslav state towards crisis.<sup>110</sup> But when all is said and done, the catastrophe which befell Yugoslavia was, as Dennison Rusinow has argued, avoidable- at least until 1989 or 1990.<sup>111</sup> By 1990, however, the sorcerer and his apprentice were making active preparations for what they envisaged as a war of conquest to expand the borders of the Serbian state.<sup>112</sup>

## Conclusion

In the preceding pages, I have endeavoured to show that there is sufficient evidence to refute the myth that supposedly 'no one' foresaw that the illnesses afflicting the communist systems were to prove fatal, as well as a second myth alleging that the communists

supposedly collaborated in bringing down the socialist system, thereby, according to this myth, initiating ‘a backward- regressive- process pushing the region back to its pre-modern institutions’.<sup>113</sup> I have also undertaken to engage in the discussion of four interrelated debates. Where the debate over terminology is concerned, we may have surpassed this, since few, if any, scholars really doubt that the systems of the region have been transformed, one way or another, and few, if any, scholars doubt that membership in the EU and/ or NATO has been or become the goal of political elites in all the countries discussed here (though not for Russia). Even in Serbia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, where some elites oppose membership in these international organisations, there are also Western-oriented elites who favour joining the EU and NATO.

The second debate- when is transition over, and when is democracy consolidated- turns, in part, on self-perception, at least where ‘transition’ is concerned. For those elites that have viewed EU/NATO membership as the paramount goal, said membership represents the symbolic completion of transition from socialist/post-socialist economy to inclusion in the Western global market, and from a place in the Soviet sphere of influence to inclusion

under the Western collective security umbrella.

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The states of Central and Southeastern Europe must still cope, with the consequences of the global recession which began in autumn 2008, while confronting challenges posed by global warming, the destruction of natural habitats, and the extinction of species.

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The third debate revolves around the roots of differences in transition, while the fourth debate focuses more specifically on reasons for the different levels of success with democratisation. The two debates are interrelated but distinct. The scholars whose work I have cited have drawn attention to a variety of factors affecting trajectories of transition, including the relative strength of civil society and independent activism, the mode of exit from communist rule, practices of conflict resolution during the immediate years of transition, the presence of a reformed communist party, and the choice among alternative models of capitalist transformation. While I would discount theories which attempt to trace present trajectories back several centuries, I believe that all of the aforementioned factors relating to the

situation and practices and activities since 1980 should be seen as relevant, to one extent or another.

Where the fourth debate is concerned, I am struck by the fact, noted by Fink-Hafner and Hafner-Fink, that a complex of variables should be seen as operative, and agree with their prioritisation of factors. It is worth mentioning too that the countries which rank lowest on most of the measures in tables 1 and 2- in alphabetical order: Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Macedonia and Serbia- were all affected, directly or indirectly, by the fighting in the region during the years 1991-1999.

Now, even while still struggling with corruption and, in most cases, consolidating still-young democratic systems, the states of Central and Southeastern Europe must still cope, as I have already noted, with the consequences of the global recession

which began in autumn 2008, while confronting challenges posed by global warming, the destruction of natural habitats, and the extinction of species- challenges with consequences which even now cannot be fully anticipated.

And finally, turning to the Yugoslav meltdown, I have revisited the threadbare myth of 'ancient hatreds', noting its poisonous consequences, and reviewed, in brief, some of the competing theories offered as explanation.<sup>114</sup> Today, a decade and a half since the Dayton Peace Accords brought the War of Yugoslav Succession to a close- I consider the War for Kosovo a separate war- many in the region have at least begun to move beyond absorption with 'the apocalyptic beasts of hate and anger'<sup>115</sup> and to undertake processes of reconciliation. And a part of reconciliation is a serious effort to appraise, or reappraise, the recent past objectively and fairly, and to accept the consequences of that (re)appraisal.

## Endnotes

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# Post-1989 Political Change in the Balkan States: The Legacy of the Early Illiberal Transition Years

Othon ANASTASAKIS\*

## Abstract

*The Balkans remain one of Europe's more unstable and varied political landscapes, with mixed and diverse national trajectories. What we see today in the Balkan political space is largely the outcome of the type of transition that these countries experienced during the 1990s, the early years of political change from one party rule to multi-party political pluralism. This paper argues that the Balkan states developed some common traits in their first decade of transition: firstly, they maintained continuity with their communist past; secondly, they pursued an illiberal start dominated by domestic elites and top-down politics; and, finally, they underwent a collapse of their early illiberal competitive order before moving into more mainstream politics. Since then, democratic politics in the Balkans have experienced many improvements as a reaction to this illiberal start, but they have also sustained some democratic deficits which have a direct link to the initial illiberal years of the transition.*

## Key Words

Balkans, post-communist transition, democratisation, political elites, illiberal politics.

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## Introduction

In the third decade following the fall of communism, the Balkans remain one of Europe's more unstable and varied political landscapes, with mixed and diverse national trajectories. Some countries are more politically stable than others, some still face legitimacy problems, and some are still struggling with divisive ethnic politics. What we see today in the Balkan political space is largely the outcome of the type of transition that these countries experienced during the 1990s, the early foundation years of political change from one party rule to multi-party political pluralism, when the first 'political pacts' were made and the first political, economic and social conflicts developed. Looking at the Balkan countries' early experience from communist totalitarianism to Western-inspired democracy, when the first foundations were laid, we are able to better appreciate both the current democratic progress and the consolidation of some democratic deficits.

The remainder of this paper argues that, despite significant national variations, the Balkan states shared some common traits in their first years of political transition during the early 1990s: firstly, they all maintained continuity with their communist past; secondly, they all pursued an illiberal start dominated by domestic elites and top-down politics; and, finally, they all underwent some kind of collapse of their early illiberal competitive order before ‘recharging’ with reformed ideas and more ‘mainstream’ discourses. Many of the features of these early years are still evident today in the way domestic elites conduct their political ‘deals’, in the way citizens react through elections or protests, and in the way the international community exercises its authority from abroad.

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It is crucial to understand the early stages of transition to post-communist politics after a long period of totalitarianism and one-party rule, because it is at this stage that the foundations are laid for

the sustainability, longevity and quality of the democratic process. As with the previous democratising waves of the 1970s in Southern Europe and the 1980s in Latin America, continuity or rupture with the recent past, the elite’s choices, their calculations and miscalculations, and the institutional designs were central to how new democracies were born and subsequently developed.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, the early years of transition in Eastern Europe from communism to democracy entailed a remarkable variety of post-communist developments along regional or national lines, which helps explain why some countries developed a more stable democratic process, while others were more fragile and turned to new forms of authoritarianism. There is, for instance, a linkage between Poland’s ensuing democratic and economic consolidation and the initial rupture with its communist past and the policies that were adopted successfully in this particular economy. Similarly, democratic advances and losses in other parts of Central Europe and the Baltics are related to the type of choices that were adopted during the initial years of their political and economic transition. Some transitions were more successful than others; some were more dramatic and contested.

Comparing the various post-communist cases, one sees enough

‘drama’- to use Laurence Whitehead’s term<sup>2</sup>- in the Balkan countries, where the transitions have been described as a deviation from the expected norm, or from the usual type of democratic ‘transition and consolidation’; these have been defined often in derogatory ways as ‘defective’,<sup>3</sup> ‘delayed’,<sup>4</sup> ‘incomplete’,<sup>5</sup> ‘double’ (post-communist and post-conflict)<sup>6</sup> transitions, or as the ‘laggards’<sup>7</sup> of transition. Transition from authoritarianism can have different meanings and symbolism, and has been the object of much discussion and criticism since Rustow’s analysis, when it became a central concept for understanding political change and democratisation.<sup>8</sup> From a simple chronological perspective, transition is a historical sequence of political events usually associated with the last stages of authoritarian/totalitarian regimes through to the introduction of a more liberal pluralist system. From a more deterministic and teleological perspective, transition is seen as a process that leads to the consolidation of democracy, when the latter becomes the only game in town. Transition can also be seen as a Western hegemonic discourse of parliamentary democracy and (neo-) liberal reform propagated and imposed on the new democracies, and which in most cases legitimises some degree of external control and interference.<sup>9</sup> With

all this in mind, this paper adopts a more parsimonious approach to transition as an uncertain process that takes place during the formative years of change from one party rule to a pluralist competitive context. This is a time when the elites, as government and opposition, have the political space and the opportunity to shape the new environment, when societies hold high expectations for the future, and when the international community is testing the waters for its engagement and commitment.

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**The Balkan communist history was far from a homogeneous regional experience, and entailed various types of national communisms.**

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The following discusses three particular themes of the early transition experience in the Balkans and their national variations: firstly, the moment of breakdown; secondly, elite politics and the early illiberal years; and thirdly, opposition, mobilisation and crisis of post-communist illiberalism. This is a common pattern, which was expressed differently in the various Balkan states during the first years of transition, leaving a long-lasting imprint on how new democracies developed thereafter and what they are now. The subsequent

consolidation of electoral politics, advances in many areas of freedom and democracy, and the discrediting of authoritarian practices have their roots in this first period of change. Moreover, the resilience of personal politics, the ephemeral nature of party ideologies, the consolidation of ethnic politics, the impact of external dependency and the lack of trust from below are largely due to these crucial illiberal formative years of transition and post-communist change.

## 1989: The Moment of Breakdown and Regional Diversity

Looking back at the initial stages of post-communist transition, we note that while the moment of communist breakdown coincided chronologically in all the Balkan states, the communist regimes did not collapse uniformly, but were instead affected by their prior national communist experience, including the degree of communist ideological orthodoxy, the extent of the party control on the society, the intensity of dissident politics or the control of the Soviet Union over internal matters. The Balkan communist history was far from a homogeneous regional experience, and entailed various types of national communisms. As a matter of fact, the Balkan countries became not only the

political and ideological battleground between the capitalist West and the communist East but, most significantly, within the communist East itself. Each Balkan state developed its own national brand of communism, where the control of the communist party and ideology varied, from the totalitarian all-encompassing cases of Albania to the nationalistic Romania, to the “orthodox” communist Bulgaria, and to the more liberal, open to the West, Yugoslavia. The 1989 revolutionary moment was therefore a different experience in each national environment, violent or anarchic in some, less dramatic and more peaceful in others.

Romania’s national communist experience is best remembered for the harshness of Ceausescu’s regime, which sought to distance itself from the control of the Soviet Union and refused to integrate fully in the East European, Soviet-dominated economic union. Ceausescu’s harsh policy at home, resembling a type of ‘national Stalinism’, developed a blend of centrally planned economy with the idea of national uniqueness and the cult of the leader. His ‘cultural revolution’ and his unique social-engineering experiment in Bucharest and the countryside eventually alienated the Romanian people, who were forced to submit to a nationalist/totalitarian philosophy. By 1989



Romania had 4 million party members, more than double the average percentage of members per capita in the region. In effect Romania had no organised opposition, but simply widespread hatred for the regime,<sup>10</sup> which became all too obvious during the Romanian revolutionary moment, with a violent uprising in Timișoara which spread elsewhere and to Bucharest, ending with the trial and immediate execution of Ceausescu and his wife.

Bulgaria's post-war communism replicated the Soviet prototype and under Soviet supervision suppressed any cultural, ideological or ethnic expressions, adopting a highly centralised system of state control over the economy, and agricultural collectivisation. The Bulgarian communist leadership developed its own brand of Bulgarian patriotism and xenophobia, and through a 'regenerative process' pursued a policy of harsh exclusion of the Turkish minority, when the latter were ordered in the mid-1980s to change their names into Christian-Slavic names and those who refused to do so were demoted. In 1989 the Bulgarian government expelled 370,000 Turks, half of the total Turkish population of Bulgaria. Partly as a result of this oppressive behaviour, Bulgaria saw the emergence of some opposition and the first dissident movements during the 1980s in the form of public

discontent with the socio-economic crisis and environmental degradation, the most famous of these movements being 'Ecoglasnost'.<sup>11</sup> The Bulgarian communist regime followed the fall of its Soviet prototype, and the revolutionary moment was relatively peaceful and orderly compared to its Romanian neighbour. It included an internal coup and a change of leadership from within, but no violent overthrow from below.

Yugoslavia was an original experimental mix of the Cold War ideological competition: a country that was socialist but non-Soviet; that abandoned central planning and adopted 'self-management'; that introduced decentralisation and some form of confederalisation of the political system under the guidance of Yugoslav 'unity and brotherhood'; that experimented with liberalisation of its foreign trade, closer links with the capitalist West and opening its borders for Yugoslav citizens to go to the West.<sup>12</sup> Within the communist party itself, there was increasingly a division between 'liberals' and 'conservatives', and the question of reform and democratisation was often explicitly or implicitly part of the Yugoslav political debate. Yugoslav dissident politics and ideologies were mostly filtered through national concerns and priorities of different nationalities and ethnic minorities within Yugoslavia, while any attempts at decentralisation

under communism failed to satisfy different national interests. Yugoslavia's socialist experiment allowed for the application of innovative economic projects, yet its political system wavered between unitarism and decentralised federalism. The leadership after the death of Tito in 1980 pushed for more economic liberalisation and ideological pluralism, but the widening differences among the republics and provinces of Yugoslavia could not contribute to the success of this policy, and the country suffered a severe economic decline. The economic decay of the 1980s and the policy failures contributed to the gradual elimination of unity and solidarity.<sup>13</sup> The 1989 change towards political pluralism and electoral competitions in all the Yugoslav republics led to a speedy and violent disintegration of the country.

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The region entailed different types of communist breakdown, varying from Romania's popular revolutionary uprising to Bulgaria's internal coup, Yugoslavia's disintegration and Albania's anarchic and disorderly change.

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At the south-eastern corner of the communist Balkans, Albania kept itself completely isolated from all its

neighbours, fearful of Yugoslav or Greek foreign policy intentions, and initially depended on Moscow's patronage until the death of Stalin, when the leadership developed an alliance with Chinese communism. Hoxha's brand of Albanian communism had a strong element of xenophobia and a perception of threat from the two world powers and the regional neighbours, and as a result developed an ideology of fear, totalitarian control of the state, and kept the country in a constant state of defence. Contrary to the liberalisation movements in other parts of Eastern Europe, Albania pursued its own totalitarian cultural revolution and proclaimed itself as the world's first 'atheist state' (closing churches and mosques and persecuting Catholics) with a strong anti-Western philosophy. Albania had no dissidents, and Hoxha's fear of domestic enemies made his regime ruthless in suppressing any potentially opposing view.<sup>14</sup> After his death, the party leadership was divided between 'hardliners', guided by Hoxha's wife, and 'pragmatists' guided by Ramiz Alia in the context of the isolationism of the previous leadership.<sup>15</sup> Albanian communist politics were the most anti-democratic in Eastern Europe, suppressing the people for a sustained period of 45 years. The moment of breakdown involved protests and growing dissent and was more anarchic

than in any other Balkan country. For a brief initial period of radical change, Albania lacked any law and order, marked by the unruly massive exodus of exasperated Albanians to Italy and Greece.

The region, therefore, entailed different types of communist breakdown, varying from Romania's popular revolutionary uprising to Bulgaria's internal coup, Yugoslavia's disintegration and Albania's anarchic and disorderly change. The type of revolutionary change that occurred in each state affected the course of illiberalism which dominated the initial transition years, the degree of continuity with the past, and the role and impact of the domestic elites during this crucial period.

## Transition to Political Pluralism

The most prominent political change in all these countries after the breakdown of communist party monopoly was the emergence of political parties and movements ready to compete in the electoral arena. All post-communist Balkan states abolished the primacy of the communist parties and provided constitutional guarantees for the introduction of new parties within the political process. For the most part,

former communists in the Balkans were not purged, but were allowed to find their way into the new system. The political formations which emerged in the years following the collapse of communism were unreformed or slightly reformed communist parties, along with anti-communist electoral alliances, resurrected parties from the past and new political groups.<sup>16</sup>

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The adoption of presidential or semi-presidential systems allowed personal politics to develop and strong leaders to emerge with formidable power to control and often abuse the system.

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In the Central European countries the rupture with the past was clear-cut, communist politicians were discredited and new opposition elites came to power, but in all Balkan countries parts of the past political elites, who were better organised and more efficient in manipulating and dominating the transition from authoritarian to competitive politics, continued to dominate party politics and state apparatuses. Alongside reformed or not-so-reformed communist parties, a new generation of parties grew in the early years of transition,

challenging the established elites in the context of an increasingly polarised and confrontational political environment between the former communists and the united or not-so-united anti-communist opposition.<sup>17</sup> The latter would eventually become governmental alternatives.

The adoption of presidential or semi-presidential systems allowed personal politics to develop and strong leaders to emerge with formidable power to control and often abuse the system. The foundation years of post-communist Balkan politics are primarily remembered as the years of Milošević in Serbia, Tuđman in Croatia, Iliescu in Romania, Berisha in Albania, Đukanović in Montenegro, Karadžić and Izetbegović in Bosnia, all of whom left their personal marks on the illiberal and often informal practices that were pursued in the exercise of political power. All these states would be stigmatised by the excesses and abuses of their leaders for years to come.

Romania was the most hard-pressed case of ridding itself of its communist past, because of the endogenous and idiosyncratic nature and the harshness of the Ceausescu regime. In Romania, the National Salvation Front under the leadership of Iliescu, first as a provisional government and then as the winner of the elections, dominated the first part of the 1990s. The first government

of Romania was composed of former members of the party *nomenklatura* who had at one point or another fallen out of Ceaușescu's favour.<sup>18</sup> Continuity with the previous regime was also evident in the adoption of nationalism, whereby the new constitution defined the state as a nation-state based on the unity of an ethnically defined Romanian nation.<sup>19</sup> The regime formed governments in alliance with smaller ultranationalist parties and pursued restrictive and exclusionary policies towards the minorities, for which it was harshly criticised from abroad. Well into the mid-1990s the image of the regime was one of populism, corruption and continuity with the previous communist establishment. In the opposition the main contender was the Democratic Convention of Romania, united by its anti-Iliescu stance, which gradually grew in power and influence under the leadership of Emil Constantinescu. For its part, the Hungarian minority was organised around party politics and sought political alliances with other opposition parties, an alliance which defeated the Iliescu government in 1996.

The first period of post-communist politics in Bulgaria was marked by a fight between the new socialists and the united democratic opposition, and saw a number of short-lived and unsuccessful governments. The Bulgarian Socialist

Party (BSP) was an ex-communist party of unreformed socialists who initially chose to resist westernisation and neo-liberalism and to cultivate the historical links with Russia. By the mid-1990s the BSP elites were bragging that they had defied the imperialism of the IMF, the 'Washington consensus', and were the champions of social reform.<sup>20</sup> The opposition of the Union of Democratic Forces (UDF), which formed just before the demonstrations helped topple the communist dictator Todor Zhivkov, proved unable to unite on a positive agenda against the BSP. Founded by Zhelyu Zhelev, the UDF was a collection of upstart environmentalists, human rights activists, and trade unionists, many of who were uneasy with political power. The first years of post-communist political life in Bulgaria seemed stuck in an electoral choice between still-powerful former communists on the one hand, who were liberalising nominally, and weak and ineffective opposition contenders on the other;<sup>21</sup> it was a time of ineffective government rule, oligarchic capitalism and corrupt economic practices. On the issue of minority, contrary to Romania's exclusionary policy, Bulgaria reversed its prior policies of ethnic assimilation and allowed Muslims to choose their names, practice their religion and speak their language.<sup>22</sup>

In Albania, following the initial failed attempts of some former communists to convince the public that they were different from previous totalitarian rulers, the Democratic Party (DPA), under the leadership of Sali Berisha, was elected for the first time in March 1992. Yet Berisha's style of politics, despite his anti-communist urge, entailed illiberal policies, attacking and recriminating non-DPA politicians, controlling non-government media and the opposition press, and carrying out strict surveillance and control of the Greek minority in the south of the country. In addition, Berisha tried to manipulate the constitution to strengthen the (his) position of the President even further, infuriating the opposition and the public at large – a referendum which he eventually lost. Under the pretext of a break with the communist past, Berisha's first period of rule proceeded with exclusionary politics and imprisonments of political opponents.<sup>23</sup> International observers of the Albanian elections pointed out one irregularity after another, and Albania was criticised for fraudulent electoral practices and double-voting. Electoral malpractices and polarising politics would continue to affect Albanian politics well after the initial transition years and all subsequent elections would be closely monitored by international observers.

In the former Yugoslavia, Croatian and Serbian semi-authoritarian politics surpassed and outlasted all other Balkan illiberal transitions; their leaders pursued extreme nationalist agendas in pursuit of their expansionist visions for a Greater Croatia or a Greater Serbia. Both regimes survived for a full decade through manipulation of political and economic resources, control of the media and alleged defence of the national interest; they both received international criticism and the freezing of association or assistance from the European Union; but they largely survived due to a fragmented opposition.

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Milošević dominated politics through the manipulation of the media, effective nationalist propaganda and control of security forces and of economic resources.

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In Croatia, the new party *Hrvatska Demokratska Zajednica* (HDZ) dominated the 1990s, in the context of the Yugoslav Wars, the involvement in the Bosnian War, and through successful manipulation of the nationalist sentiment. The leader of the party, Franjo Tuđman, a previously communist atheist politician, was

transformed into a nationalist Catholic leader. He initially won power on the basis of an anti-communist expression of Croatia's identity, and even made some open references to Croatia's fascist *Ustaša* past. The Church, after years of suppression and persecution by the communists, embraced Tuđman with relative ease.<sup>24</sup> A significant part of the HDZ support rested on the Croatian diaspora, but also on Croats living in Bosnia – the latter benefiting from financial help.<sup>25</sup> The HDZ's role in Bosnia and its support for the extremist Bosnian Croats confirmed the Croatian elites' nationalistic and conflict-prone choices beyond the country's borders. While the HDZ was the party that led Croatia to independence, it also led the country to international isolation for its human rights violations, authoritarian nationalism and xenophobia. The regime survived through the manipulation of nationalism, and the constant reminder that it was defending Croatia from Serb aggression, as well as through the manipulation of the media and economic cronyism. Under Tuđman, the bulk of the communist political, military, economic and judicial *nomenklatura* had joined the HDZ. The opposition to HDZ, the Croatian Social Liberal Party (HSL) and the Social Democratic Party remained fragmented and disorientated

until 2000, when the death of Tuđman led to the end of his personal rule.

The 1990s' politics in Serbia was dominated by Milošević's Socialist Party of Serbia (SPS), which formed coalition governments for the most part with the assistance of other smaller parties (except for the first 1990 elections in which it won the overall majority). His party appealed to socialist conformists and Serbian nationalists and was stronger outside Belgrade in the Serbian heartland.<sup>26</sup> Milošević dominated politics through the manipulation of the media, effective nationalist propaganda and control of security forces and of economic resources. His regime survived for a decade throughout regional wars, international isolation over the harsh treatment of Kosovo Albanians, economic sanctions and internal opposition, yet at a high price of delayed economic development, external military intervention and the loss of Kosovo. Like Croatia, the opposition to the government remained for the most part fragmented throughout the 1990s, despite some attempts to unite under single umbrella coalitions (DEPOS in 1992, Zajedno in 1996, DOS and Otpor in 2000). The government responded with electoral frauds and a refusal to accept the victory of the opposition, as was seen in the local elections of 1997 and in the 2000 national elections. The

transition period in Serbia was managed by an authoritarian government, which preserved elements of the previous communist *status quo*, infiltrated society with a fanatical nationalist discourse and pursued its market reform in a context of favouritism and nepotism.<sup>27</sup>

Another illiberal stream of the 1990s' Balkan politics was that of divided countries, where ethnic politics and parallel structures dominated the broken territories. In Bosnia, after the communist party was discredited, new parties were formed on the basis of ethnic criteria, and included the Party of Democratic Action (PDA, a Muslim Party), the Serbian Democratic Party (SDS) and the Croatian-inspired HDZ. The Party of Democratic Action represented the majority Muslim population of Bosnia and became the advocate of a unitary state. The Serbian Democratic Party advocated a separate state for the Bosnian Serbs, creating its own parallel politics in the forms of a separate Serbian National Council and a Serbian National Assembly, and gained popular support from Serbia. The Croatian Democratic Union allied with the Muslims against the Serbs, but only for a short tactical period, given that they too claimed authority over the Croat-populated areas, while the most extreme nationalists went on to create a parallel state of Croats, the Republic of

Herzeg-Bosnia, hoping for an eventual unification with Croatia, and enjoyed the support of the Croatian government of Tuđman (Herzeg-Bosnia was formally dismissed in 1996). Early transitional Bosnian politics were conducted in the context of war, ethnic cleansing and genocidal politics.

FYR Macedonia,<sup>28</sup> following independence from Yugoslavia, adopted a multi-party parliamentary political system and a constitution focusing explicitly on the formation of an independent national identity for its majority Macedonian Slav population.<sup>29</sup> The first split was between reformed communists and nationalists,<sup>30</sup> with the former winning the electoral battle and guiding the post-Yugoslav republic through the initial liberalisation phase. The Social Democratic Union of Macedonia (SDU) dominated politics between 1991 and 1998, and during its tenure fostered clientelistic patronage, cronyism and insider privatisation.<sup>31</sup> The same pattern continued under the nationalist party government IMRO-DPMNE, which succeeded the SDU and formed an unlikely alliance with the Democratic Party of Albania. While all governments were coalitions and multi-ethnic in character, majority (Macedonian Slav) excesses and minority (Albanian) exclusions were a central feature of the country's domestic politics. From the

beginning and throughout the 1990s, the Albanian political parties mounted growing campaigns for the establishment of equal rights to all inhabitants of the state. They also complained that they were excluded from the public sector and from the privatisation process and had to rely on their own internal dynamic and remittances from abroad.

The early transition in the Balkans entailed three streams of illiberal politics, including competitive illiberalism in Romania, Bulgaria and Albania, semi-authoritarian nationalist illiberalism in Serbia and Croatia, and exclusionary ethnic illiberalism in Bosnia and FYR Macedonia. They all shared common features with respect to the polarisation between government and opposition, popular mobilisation and external pressure. All of them generated international concerns over the misconduct of public affairs, the politics of economic liberalisation and privatisation, and ethnic and minority issues.

## The Crisis of the Illiberal Order

All Balkan countries underwent major crises of their initial post-communist illiberal, nationalist/semi-authoritarian or ethnically divided orders. In the cases



of illiberal competitive politics, it led to dramatic downfall of the governments and the electoral victory of the oppositions; in the cases of nationalist/semi-authoritarian competitive politics it led to the breakdown of the regimes through 'electoral revolutions'; in the cases of ethnically divided politics, through external intervention and the imposition of power-sharing arrangements supervised by international administrations.

An approximate pattern developed in Romania, Bulgaria and Albania, all three having experienced the excesses of illiberalism and abuses of political power, leading to severe political and economic crises and upsurges in mass discontent and electoral mobilisation of the political oppositions. Romania's electoral breakthrough took place in 1996, with the victory of the Democratic Convention in the parliamentary elections and Constantinescu winning the Presidency over Iliescu.<sup>32</sup> This change was an internal reaction to the bad economic record of the Iliescu regime, as well as to external outcry from the European Union about problematic political concerns, and to increasing complaints from the Hungarian minority. The Convention was an umbrella of 18 organisations under the leadership of the Christian-Democratic National Peasants' Party. One of the most important moves

of the new government was to put an end to the official national communist discourse and to enrol the Hungarian party into the coalition government.

Bulgaria went about its electoral breakthrough in the winter of 1996-7. It started as a protest against the collapse of banks, hyperinflation and disappointing standards of living. During 1996 Bulgaria had faced a major financial crisis including the collapse of its currency, soaring prices and food shortages. The demonstrators, angry at this economic decline, besieged the parliament and trapped the socialist deputies inside, compelling them to dissolve the legislature and vote for early elections. In the next election, the UDF won a clear majority against the discredited socialists. For the next four years, the UDF followed a consistent neo-liberal policy, a clear pro-Western foreign policy agenda and a pro-reform path designated by the IMF, the World Bank and the European Union (currency board, privatisation and austerity). The economic collapse had affected Bulgarian minds so deeply that people were ready to embrace the Western inspired tough measures pursued by the new government.<sup>33</sup>

Albania went through its first post-communist mobilisation in 1997, following the collapse of the financial

‘pyramid’ scheme,<sup>34</sup> when many Albanians lost their life savings, leading to widespread unrest, especially in Tirana and the south. There was also a reaction to the abuses and political excesses and the manipulation of the electoral process by the Berisha regime. The state of emergency imposed by Berisha provoked such widespread disorder that the country became ungovernable for a brief time. The situation was normalised with external political interference and OSCE presence in the next elections, which led to the victory of the socialist party. The socialist party which succeeded, winning an overwhelming electoral victory, pursued some progress but remained a hostage to clientelism, corrupt politics and scandals, and itself suffered from internal fighting.

The semi-authoritarian and nationalist regimes experienced more dynamic and dramatic political and popular reactions. In Serbia, the 2000 uprising was a genuine popular outburst against the excesses of the Milošević era, and had the ingredients of a revolution aiming at a radical break with the past. It was the outcome of ten years of Serbia’s democratic political opposition and civil society,<sup>35</sup> which kept its contact with the West and in the final stages of the regime received significant support from the international community. The opposing electoral coalition consisted of 18 parties

that came under the leadership of the moderate nationalist Vojislav Koštunica. The Serbian case was by far the most widespread electoral uprising, in that it reacted to a particularly harsh regime that had refused to recognise the outcome of the national elections. External military intervention, international isolation and the defeat over Kosovo contributed to the delegitimisation of the Milošević regime. In Serbia, the collapse of Milošević’s rule was the result of a widespread democratic coalition of parties, which was short-lived and split over national issues and personal feuds. The loss of Kosovo dominated internal politics and the country’s relationship with the West thereafter.

In Croatia, the death of Tuđman significantly weakened the governing party and provided an electoral opportunity for the opposition to win power. Within weeks of Tuđman’s death, in the parliamentary elections of 3 January 2000, voters fed up with the corrupt practices and extreme nationalism of the HDZ and with high unemployment voted out a party that had ruled in an authoritarian manner for a decade. Ivica Račan, the leader of the non-nationalist coalition of the Social Liberals and the Social Democrats, won the parliamentary election and Stipe Mesić won over the presidential candidate of the HDZ. After the death of Franjo

Tuđman, Croatia's party politics moved away from extreme political positions, and its nationalist politics of territorial-ethnic cleavages shifted to more conventional national politics of centre-right vs. centre-left parties. The Social Democratic Party (SDP), a successor of the reformed communist party, became the party in the government with a pro-EU orientation until 2003, when, due to infighting in the SDP, the HDZ regained power under a new, more enlightened and pro-European, leadership, which projected itself as a conservative party that had broken with its nationalist past, that signed agreements with national minorities, cooperated with the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) in the Hague and adopted judicial reform. The HDZ was transformed from a nationalist party to a European Christian Democratic party of the European Right. It gradually distanced itself from its recent extreme nationalist and more distant fascist past.

The third stream of the 1990s' Balkan politics was that of the divided countries, where ethnic issues and parallel structures dominated the political space. In Bosnia-Herzegovina and FYR Macedonia, direct external intervention put an end to war and ethnic fighting, forcing the domestic elites to adopt power-sharing arrangements. External interventions brought about the Dayton and Ohrid

peace agreements, both of which became 'constitutional' points of reference for the post-conflict era, and allowed for the direct or indirect presence of international administrations.<sup>36</sup> The main aim of the Dayton accord was to end the fighting and establish a constitutional framework that would guarantee peaceful coexistence of the territorially divided three nationalities of Bosnia. Carl Bildt, the first High Representative, increased the authority of the international administrator and succeeded in assigning himself the 'Bonn powers' of imposing laws and ordering summary dismissals of local politicians, a prerogative which was repeatedly used by succeeding High Representatives.<sup>37</sup> Yet electoral politics have since hardened the ethnic identification of the main political parties. Bosnia remains deeply divided between its two entities, the Bosnian Serb Republic and the Muslim-Croat Federation, with the latter being divided between its two constituent nationalities. Despite efforts to build up the powers of the central state, both entities are still highly autonomous, with separate political, police and financial structures, while the Muslim and Croat officials who run the Federation tend to look to their own ethnic agendas.

In FYR Macedonia, the international community (EU and NATO) intervened to end the crisis in 2001, and from

then on it has consistently been asking the central government to be more responsive to the demands of the Albanian minorities. The constitutional amendments of the Ohrid Agreement provided greater democratisation of politics at the local level and increased participation of minority parties in the political process. The Ohrid Agreement succeeded in offering Albanians a stake in the political system and more rights in the fields of language and education. Unlike in Bulgaria or Romania, where there is a single minority party of Turks and Hungarians, in FYR Macedonia the Albanian parties themselves are politically divided and participating in different government coalitions.

## The Legacy of the Transition Period

The impact of the formative transition years on the current political landscape of the Balkan post-communist states is still evident. From a positive perspective, competitive politics have been normalised and institutionalised and they constitute the indisputable rules of the game. Elections and political parties are at the centre of political competition and, with a few exceptions, governmental changes are happening without disruptions or challenges to the outcomes. Ethnic politics are ‘fought’

and managed in the electoral arena and not through wars, destruction and mass expulsions. One important legacy of the transition period is the rejection of illiberalism, authoritarianism and bloody ethnic wars. The post-2000 period of the Balkan politics can be described as a period of ‘normalisation’ of political pluralism, peaceful alternation of governments, reformed nationalist parties, emergence of new political elites, a wide array of political parties across the political spectrum, pro-European consensus, and more moderation in politics. Some political elites of a nationalist or communist orientation had to reform themselves and their parties’ discourses; Iliescu and the social democratic party in Romania, Sanader and the HDZ in Croatia, Nikolić and the Radical Party in Serbia, are indicative examples. The European Union, as the most influential external actor engaged constructively, pursued membership for Bulgaria and Romania, and the Stabilisation and Association Process for the Western Balkans. Valerie Bunce defines this period as a ‘second transition’ from the political extremism of the 1990s to a political moderation, with the electoral victory of more liberal parties in power and the reformation of previously nationalistic parties.<sup>38</sup> This second phase of the normalisation of competitive politics has also been a

period of democratic engagement with the media, human rights, minority issues, political checks and balances, and some form of transitional justice and cooperation, though limited, with the ICTY.

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Yet there is also a contested legacy of the transition period, whereby normalisation of competitive politics has been accompanied by a consolidation of democratic deficits, dysfunctional practices and attitudes, some of which have their origins in these formative years of transition. Today most states carry the legacies of the 1990s in five main areas:

### *Personal feuds*

Due to the failure to establish strong and indisputable institutions from the beginning, politics in all Balkan countries continued to be personal, with many feuds and competitions among prominent leaders with personal ambitions and undefined ideological

agendas. Resorting to populist discourses, irrespective of ideological background, has been a constant feature since the early years of transition. The establishment of presidential or semi-presidential political systems and the limited impact of checks and balances allowed personal politics to develop and root themselves firmly in the political process of most countries, with the result that power-sharing arrangements and cohabitation became a struggle for personal power and political survival. Politics in the Balkans have been haunted by personal disputes; in Romania, President Băsescu is at odds with Prime Minister Victor Ponta; in Serbia, Nikolić of the Radical Party is at odds with Tadić of the Democratic Party; in Albania, Prime Minister Sali Berisha is at odds with the leader of the opposition Edi Rama.

### *Nationalist and ethnic agendas*

Nationalist sentiments have not subsided in Croatia or Serbia, and ethnic politics have consolidated in Bosnia and FYR Macedonia. The former countries are still coming to terms with a nationalist and authoritarian past, and the dominant parties, such as HDZ in Croatia and the Socialist and Radical parties in Serbia, although changing and reforming, are always remnants of the 1990s conflictual context. In Bosnia-

Herzegovina and FYR Macedonia ethnic parties continue to dominate the electoral platform, and the two peace agreements continue to provide constitutional rules of forced power-sharing as well as division. Ideologies along the left-right continuum come second in the preferences of the voters, who continue to vote according to nationalistic and ethnic agendas.

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The early years of transition in the Balkans are remembered as a period of distorted democratisation, of gains and deficits that are still affecting current political practices and discourses.

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### *High-level corruption*

The political and economic transformation undertaken since the early years of transition provided incentives for those holding power to engage in rent-seeking behaviour outside legality. One common scenario was that Balkan political leaders seized the opportunity to fill the vacuum created by the fall of communist regimes by rewriting the rules of the economy and the state to benefit their own interests.<sup>39</sup> The early transition years set the bases for a climate of corruption that has

continued to dominate politics at the highest level. In Croatia, the reformist Sanader was sentenced to imprisonment on charges of financial misappropriation and bribes from a Hungarian energy company and an Austrian bank; in Romania, former prime ministers and ministers have been charged for corruption, including Adrian Năstase, who is jailed, and the Justice Minister Tudor Chiuariu; in Montenegro, Đukanović has been associated with cigarette smuggling. Corruption, informal politics and inefficient public administration continued to be closely associated with formal politics in all the countries of the region. And while the issue of corruption is constantly on the agenda of electoral discourses, politicians win elections by accusing each other of corrupt practices.

### *Popular discontent*

All of the above have generated a level of popular mistrust and discontent concerning the existing democratic deficits, the informal practices, the incompetent elites, dysfunctional institutions and even the anti-democratic practices and excesses of external actors. Voter turnout for parliamentary elections has dropped dramatically compared to the initial 1990s elections. Governmental changes at every election are a constant

feature in all Balkan politics, and it is extremely rare that any government can win a second term in office. Public disaffection has been at the centre of political change since the early transition years. It was initially expressed as revolution against the communist order and led to the collapse of totalitarianism in the Balkans and the disintegration of communist Yugoslavia. It continued as political and electoral mobilisation

against a deformed transition which had betrayed the initial hope and optimism. It then developed into voter apathy when it was realised that the consolidation of competitive politics entailed abuses and corruptions by all political actors. The early years of transition in the Balkans are remembered as a period of distorted democratisation, of gains and deficits that are still affecting current political practices and discourses.

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# Balkans and Balkanisation: Western Perceptions of the Balkans in the Carnegie Commission's Reports on the Balkan Wars from 1914 to 1996

Predrag SIMIĆ\*

## Abstract

*The Yugoslav Wars broke out at a time when the fall of the Berlin Wall, the Velvet Revolutions in Czechoslovakia and other countries in Eastern Europe and the collapse of the Eastern Bloc had instilled a sense of hope that Europe would become 'whole and free', and that the end of the European wars heralded a millennia of peace and democracy. The crisis and the collapse of the former Yugoslavia 're-balkanised' Southeast Europe and revived old Western stereotypes about the Balkans and 'Balkanisation'. The author attempts to determine the origin of the ideas and values that influenced Western policy towards this crisis, through a comparative analysis of two reports on the Balkan Wars by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace from 1914 and 1996, respectively. In the author's opinion, the cause of the Balkan Wars in the 1990s was not 'old hatreds' between the Balkan nations, but the remnants of the old communist regimes, which in an effort to retain power had embraced nationalism as their policies, and thus came into conflict with the new values that brought an end to the Cold War. The author concludes that the conflict between conservative ('Balkan') and liberal ('European') values was the reason for the slogan "the flight from the Balkans", and the political disputes that evolved into bitter armed conflict in the former Yugoslavia.*

## Key Words

Balkans, Balkanisation, war, ethnic conflict, the European Union, the Cold War, NATO.

## Introduction

The Yugoslav Wars broke out at a time when the fall of the Berlin Wall, the revolutions in Eastern Europe and the dissolution of the Eastern Bloc had instilled a sense of hope that Europe would be whole and free, and that the history of European wars was coming to a close, heralding a millennium of peace and democracy.<sup>1</sup> The crisis and the breakup of the former Yugoslavia in the 1990s 're-balkanised' Southeast Europe and revived old Western stereotypes about the Balkans and Balkanisation. According to Western observers, the crisis in the Balkans had brought wars back to Europe<sup>2</sup> and, instead of Europeanising the Balkans, threatened to 'balkanise' Europe. This gave rise to a proliferation of studies in the West about the Balkans. Some, by reinterpreting or rewriting

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history, proposed or justified political and military solutions for the Balkan crisis, while others sought to elucidate the history of the Balkans and to explain the 'balkanisation' phenomenon. Among the first group, the studies by Samuel Huntington, Robert Kaplan, Noel Malcolm and Morton Abramowitz<sup>3</sup> stand out for the influence they had on U.S. and EU policies; the most noteworthy authors of the latter group include Maria Todorova, Vesna Goldsworthy and Mark Mazower, among others.<sup>4</sup>

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Despite the differences in the motives and the content of their works, these authors largely agree that the Balkans at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century resembled the Balkans at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, that it was and still is the 'powder keg' that threatened and still threatens Europe, and that the Western perception of the Balkans at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century resembled that at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The first group of authors considers the Balkans as a European periphery (sometimes called

as 'Savage Europe')<sup>5</sup> which threatens the entire continent with its endless mutual conflicts. Therefore, according to them, the task of the great powers is to impose on the Balkans, by force if necessary, the rules of civilised behaviour, or else risk seeing the Balkan conflicts spill over into the entire continent, as was the case with World War I.<sup>6</sup> Robert Kaplan, in his book *Balkan Ghosts* (1993), George Kennan, in the foreword to the book *The Other Balkan Wars* (1993), and the authors of the book *Unfinished Peace* (1996), have gone furthest in that direction. The conflicts between the Serbs and the ethnic Albanians in Kosovo gave rise to historical revisionism by the British author Noel Malcolm in his book *Kosovo: A Short History*.<sup>7</sup> These books influenced strategic thinking in the United States and Europe, and the decision by NATO countries to intervene in the former Yugoslavia in 1995 and 1999. In contrast, the second group of authors considers the interests and disputes of the great powers over this area, situated on the fringe of Europe, as the very causes of the conflicts in the Balkans.

The stereotypes about the Balkans formed at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century remain fundamentally unchanged even in the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. For many westerners the Balkans remain

a mysterious region on the southeast border of Europe. It is the successor of the Byzantine Empire (“opposed to the tradition of western civilisation”), the only part of the continent that had long been “a colony of an oriental power”, from which they received a set of characteristics incompatible with modern European societies (oriental despotism, violence, corruption, and so on), and which, therefore, does not belong in Europe”.<sup>8</sup> In her book *Imagining the Balkans*, Maria Todorova addresses these stereotypes, taking as a starting point the works of Edward Said about the myth of Orientalism in Western culture, which establishes the ‘Orient’ as antithetical to European civilisation.<sup>9</sup> Thus, for example, the EU’s reluctance to admit Turkey as a member is often explained by incompatibility of the Islamic tradition with the EU’s Christian foundations. However, some see the reasons for the EU’s rejection of Turkey in the fear that this country, a rising economic power with a growing population, may shortly become one of the EU’s leading members and shift the EU’s centre of gravity to the East.<sup>10</sup> The financial crisis that started in the autumn of 2008 in the United States and which spread to Europe in 2009 most severely affected the southern EU countries – Greece, Spain and Portugal

– sparing Turkey, because of which there are opinions nowadays that the EU development model is not appropriate for the Euro-Mediterranean region.

## The Balkans: Europe and its Other

The name Balkan<sup>11</sup> did not come into widespread use until the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when it became necessary to create a specific designation for this region: “The choice was at least partly due to the fact that in the first half of the nineteenth century the mountain range became famous as the theatre of the Russo-Turkish Wars and, until 1877, this natural bulwark formed the second and most important line for Istanbul”.<sup>12</sup> Until that time the region known today as the Balkans had been divided between the Habsburg and Ottoman Empires and referred to as a part of a broader area of the ‘Orient’, or the ‘European part of Turkey’ or ‘Turkey in Europe’, along with the use of the ancient term ‘Haemus’. The European region of the Ottoman Empire was generally referred to as Rumelia or the Roman or Christian part of the Empire.<sup>13</sup>

The Eastern Crisis, the conquests of the Habsburgs and the Russians in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and national revolutions

that broke out in the Balkans in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, made the Balkans politically visible in Europe. The Age of Enlightenment and the rise of Europe made it politically incorrect to associate this part of the continent with a declining oriental power. For European travel writers in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, its land and its people “merely served as a kind of mirror in which they saw themselves and noticed, first and foremost, how advanced and civilised they were. In this respect, we can argue that there can be no Europe without the Balkans.”<sup>14</sup> The earliest mention of the word ‘Balkan’ in Western Europe dates back to 1490, in a memorandum the Italian humanist and diplomat Philippus Callimachus sent to Pope Innocent VIII. It was Frederick Calvert who introduced the name ‘Balkans’ into the English language.<sup>15</sup> This name occasionally appeared in the notes of John Moritt<sup>16</sup> and other Europeans who travelled to the European part of the Ottoman Empire in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries.

The German geographer Johan August Zeune put the term ‘Balkan Peninsula’ (*Balkanhalbinsel*) in official use in his book *Gea: Versuch Einer Wissenschaftlichen Erdbeschreibung* in 1808 where he wrote: “In the north this Balkan Peninsula is divided from the rest of Europe by the long mountain chain of the Balkans, or

the former Albanus, Schards, Haemus, which to the northwest joins the Alps in the small Istrian Peninsula, and to the east fades away into the Black Sea in two branches”.<sup>17</sup> The reason why Zeune defined the Balkan Peninsula as such was probably the belief, present in Europe since the Renaissance time, in the *catena mundi*, the chain of the world, a mountain range stretching from the Pyrenees in the west all the way to the Balkans in the east, with Mount Balkan (*Stara Planina* – Old Mountain in Bulgarian and Serbian) as its northeastern border of the peninsula. Two decades later in 1830, the French geographer Ami Boué offered an accurate description of this mountain. The German author Theobald Fischer in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century proposed *Südosteuropa* (Southeast Europe) as the name for this region, but this name also acquired a political connotation during World War II. This explains why geographical boundaries of this region have not been clearly defined to date, but may include, depending on the source, the entire region of Southeast Europe, or only the region between the Danube River and the Aegean Sea, sometimes without Greece.

The European attitude towards the Orient and the oriental empires in Europe underwent a rather curious evolution during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>

centuries, which had a significant impact on the way European authors of that period perceived the Balkans. Supremacy of absolute monarchies in Europe and the power of oriental empires- the Ottoman and the Chinese in particular – in the 18<sup>th</sup> century were reasons for the enthusiasm for oriental societies found among a number of European thinkers (Maréchal de Vauban, Quesnay, Voltaire, Leibnitz and others).<sup>18</sup> Later on the decline of oriental societies and the rise of European colonialism led to disdain towards ‘oriental despotism’<sup>19</sup> and their ‘non-historic development’ (Fénelon, Montesquieu, Rousseau, Hegel), which have persisted up to this day in the form of the ‘Orientalism’ that Edward Said elaborates upon. The classicism in European culture, the uprisings in Serbia, and the Greek War of Independence in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century attracted the attention of Lord Byron, Eugène Delacroix and other European public figures of that time. Similar motives inspired romantic philhellenism in Europe and induced British and French governments to provide the support to Greek insurgents that led to the independence of Greece.<sup>20</sup>

In the mid- 19<sup>th</sup> century, however, Balkanophilia was gradually replaced by Balkanophobia, and the whole region received the label of ‘European powder keg’. National revolutions resulted

in the creation of new states, whose ambitions gave rise to numerous ethnic and territorial disputes. The influence of the European ‘Belle Époque’ was felt in the Balkans as well, where cities and industry began to develop and newly liberated societies embarked on the process of Europeanisation. At the same time there appeared opinions in Europe that Europeanisation had severed the links of the Balkan nations with their history, and that the Balkans was coming to signify the ‘European other’. The exacerbation of the Eastern Crisis since 1875, the interests of the then great powers and frictions between the newly emerged Balkan states made Chancellor Bismarck say, at the time of the Congress of Berlin (1878), that “The whole of the Balkans is not worth the bones of a single Pomeranian grenadier” [*Der ganze Balkan ist nicht die gesunden Knochen eines einzigen pommerschen Grenadiers wert*], and that ‘if there is ever another war in Europe, it will come out of some damned silly thing in the Balkans’.<sup>21</sup> The popular European fiction of that time began depicting the Balkans as a mystical region ruled by dark forces<sup>22</sup> and melodramatic despots,<sup>23</sup> whose adventures entertained the readers of Paris and London’s ‘boulevard press’.<sup>24</sup>

The Balkan Wars of 1912-1913 were the culmination of this process. They were met with contradictory reactions

by the Western public (first report of the Carnegie Endowment on the Balkans, the report by Leon Trotsky,<sup>25</sup> etc.). As Bismarck had anticipated, the 'Balkan powder keg' indeed exploded in June 1914 in Sarajevo with the assassination of Franz Ferdinand, heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne. The assassination set in motion a chain of events that resulted in the outbreak of World War I. The fall of the Austro-Hungarian Empire at the end of the war, followed by the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire and subsequent emergence of new states in the Balkans, were the events that gave rise to the term 'balkanisation',<sup>26</sup> coined to denote the fragmentation of multi-ethnic states into smaller, ethnically homogeneous and mutually hostile states, but also the conflicts that are pejoratively called *Kleinstaaterei* in the German language, and 'beggar-thy-neighbour' politics' or 'Libanisation' in English. The creation of the multi-ethnic Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes in the aftermath of World War I (and the Kingdom of Yugoslavia since 1929) brought about certain changes in the Western perception of the Balkans, as testified by Rebecca West in her book *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon: A Journey Through Yugoslavia*.<sup>27</sup>

Maria Todorova therefore assigns a positive connotation to the terms

'Balkan' and 'balkanisation', related to the processes of Europeanisation of Balkan societies in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. A more careful reading of the history of Balkan societies of this period points to the fact that, despite the history of mutual conflicts, there existed brief periods (1911-1912, 1934, 1953-1954) when Balkan nations fostered mutual cooperation under the influence of great powers, whose interests called for strengthening of political and military relations among the Balkan nations. Seen from a longer historical perspective, the slogan 'Balkans for the Balkan people' has a tradition in almost all of the Balkan countries (Rigas Feraios in Greece, Prince Mihailo Obrenović in Serbia, Aleksandar Stamboliyski in Bulgaria, Nicolae Titulesku in Romania, etc.). However, influential sections of the Western public even today tend to define Europe by contrasting it with the East (including the Balkans), perpetuating the myth of the Balkans as being 'non-European'.<sup>28</sup>

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Liberal ideas and strained relations between the European powers at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century gave rise to the birth and spread of the peace movement in Europe and the United States.

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## The First Carnegie Commission Report on the Balkans (1914)

Liberal ideas and strained relations between the European powers at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century gave rise to the birth and spread of the peace movement in Europe and the United States, which, according to Maria Todorova, “sought to create new legal codes of international behaviour”. When the Russian Tsar Nicholas II Romanov announced his initiative for the convocation of an international conference on disarmament, the West embraced it with enthusiasm. As a result, two such conferences were held, in 1899 and 1907, both in The Hague. They spurred further codification of international law, especially international humanitarian law, as well as endeavours aimed at settling international disputes through arbitration<sup>29</sup> and conciliation.<sup>30</sup> Many of the American intellectuals and industrialists of that period endorsed these efforts. Among them was Andrew Carnegie, at whose initiative the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace was founded in 1910 in the United States.<sup>31</sup> Paradoxically enough, the peace movement coincided with a growing crisis and polarisation of great powers within two rival blocks- Central Powers

and Entente Countries- which led to the outbreak of World War I in 1914.

The international public attention that the Balkan Wars of 1912 and 1913 attracted, and the reports on crimes committed by the belligerents, prompted the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace to convene a group of American and European experts to investigate the causes and conducts of the Balkan Wars. Nicholas Murray Butler, one of the leaders of the Endowment and the president of Columbia University, sent a cable to the president of the Endowment, Elihu Root, on 13 June 1913 in which he wrote: “Amazing charges of Bulgarian outrages attributed to the King of Greece give us a great opportunity for prompt action. If you approve I will send notable commission at once to the Balkans to ascertain facts and to fix responsibility for prolonging hostilities and coming outrages. Please reply [...] today”.<sup>32</sup> The response was favourable, and within less than a month a commission, comprising Josef Redlich from Austria, Justin Godart from France, Walter Schücking from Germany, Francis W. Hirst and H. N. Brailsford from Great Britain, Pavel Milyukov from Russia, and T. Dutton from the USA, and presided over by the French senator d’Estournelles de Constant, was sent to Belgrade.<sup>33</sup> The Second Balkan War did not last long, and immediately

after its end the commission completed its work. Their report was published in 1914 by the Endowment.

The report is divided into seven chapters, which discuss the historical causes of the Balkan Wars, civilian casualties in war operations, relations among the Bulgarians, Turks and Serbs, national issues in the Balkans, the Balkan Wars and international law, economic consequences of the Wars, moral and social consequences of the Wars, and the position of Macedonia. The President of the commission, Baron d'Estournelles de Constant, was quite clear in his introduction about the objectives of the report: "Let us repeat, for the benefit of those who accuse us of 'bleating for peace at any price', what we always maintained: war rather than slavery, arbitration rather than war, conciliation rather than arbitration. I hoped that this collective victory, heretofore considered impossible, of the allies over Turkey—which had just concluded peace with Italy and which we still believed formidable—would free Europe from the nightmare of the Eastern Question, and give her the unhopèd-for example of union and coordination which she lacks. We know how this war, after having exhausted, as it seemed, all that the belligerents could lavish, in one way or another, of heroism and blood, was only the prelude to a second fratricidal war between the allies

of the previous day, and how this second war was the more atrocious of the two".<sup>34</sup>

De Constant and other commission members made a distinction between the First and the Second Balkan Wars. While the First was fought for freedom and thus was considered to be a "supreme protest against violence and generally the protest of the weak against the strong", and "glorious and popular throughout the world", the Second was a predatory war in which "both the victor and the vanquished lose materially and morally". Owing to their liberal ideas, the authors of the report were convinced, despite the heroism and casualties of the belligerent parties, that they should raise their voices against the human and material toll of these wars and the threat they posed to the future: "The real culprits in this long list of executions, assassinations, drownings, burnings, massacres and atrocities furnished by our report, are not, we repeat, the Balkan peoples. Here pity must conquer indignation. Do not let us condemn the victims [...] The real culprits are those who, by interest or inclination, declare that war is inevitable, and by making it so, assert that they are powerless to prevent it".<sup>35</sup>

The logical conclusion that stemmed from the perspective of liberal internationalism was of 'humanitarian interventionism' that the 'civilised world' must resort to in order to stop

the ‘barbarism’ of the Balkan peoples. The authors of the Carnegie report therefore emphasise: “What is the duty of the civilised world in the Balkans? [...] It is clear in the first place that they should cease to exploit these nations for gain. They should encourage them to make arbitration treaties and insist upon keeping them. They should set a good example by seeking a judicial settlement of all international disputes”. The report by the Carnegie Commission was soon to be overshadowed by upcoming events; only several months after the report’s publication, World War I broke out, as the first war of the industrial era in which the use of modern weapons (tanks, submarines, aircrafts and weapons of mass destruction) changed the rules of war, with the result of approximately 15 million deaths. The ‘civilised world’ sank into the barbarism of a total war, in which Old Europe ceased to exist, and which opened the ‘short twentieth century’ (Eric Hobsbawm),<sup>36</sup> marked by numerous wars and unprecedented deaths and suffering of civilians.

## The Second Carnegie Commission Report on the Balkans (1996)

The war in Bosnia and Herzegovina (1992-1995) was the subject of numerous studies at the time, two of which stand

out in particular for their influence on U.S. and EU policies.

The first is a travelogue by the American journalist Robert Kaplan- *Balkan Ghosts: A Journey Through History*<sup>37</sup>-published in 1993. Kaplan’s intent was, half a century after Rebecca West, to explore Balkan history, art and politics “in the liveliest fashion possible”. Completed in 1990, the book was rejected by several American editors who believed that American readers had already lost interest in the events in Eastern Europe. Thus the book was published only after the Yugoslav Wars had broken out, and soon became, according to *The New York Times*, “the best-known book associated with the Clinton administration”. The reasons for this were provided by the author himself in the foreword to the second edition: “In 1993, just as President Clinton was contemplating forceful action to halt the War in Bosnia and Herzegovina, he and Mrs. Clinton were said to have read *Balkan Ghosts*. The history of the ethnic rivalry I had detailed reportedly encouraged the President’s pessimism about the region, and – so it is said – was a factor in his decision not to launch an overt military response in support of the Bosnian Muslims, who were besieged by the Bosnian Serbs”.<sup>38</sup>

While the bulk of the text in this book depicts the author’s personal

experience of the Balkans, the foreword to the second edition, written after the outbreak of the Yugoslav Wars, contains some of the most dramatic expressions of Western stereotypes of this region:

“The Balkans produced the century’s first terrorists. IMRO (the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organisation) was the Palestine Liberation Organisation of the 1920s and the 1930s, with Bulgarian paymasters, dedicated to recovering the parts of Macedonia taken by Greece and Yugoslavia after the Second Balkan War. Like the present day Shiites of Beirut’s southern suburbs, the IMRO’s killers, who swore allegiance over a gun and an Orthodox Bible, came from the rootless, peasant proletariat of the Skopje, Belgrade and Sofia slums. Hostage-taking and wholesale slaughter of innocents were common. Even the fanaticism of the Iranian clergy has a Balkan precedent. During the Balkan Wars of 1912 and 1913, a Greek bishop in Macedonia ordered the assassination of a Bulgarian politician and then had the severed head brought back to the church and photographed it. Twentieth-century history came from the Balkans. Here men have been isolated by poverty and ethnic rivalry, dooming them to hate. Here politics has been reduced to a level of near anarchy that from time to time in history has flowed up the Danube into Central Europe. Nazism, for instance, can claim Balkan origins. Among the flophouses of Vienna, a breeding ground of ethnic resentments close to the southern Slavic world, Hitler learned how to hate so infectiously.”<sup>39</sup>

The second text is the reprint of the report of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace of 1914, with a new

introduction written by the well-known American diplomat George Kennan, the author of the *Long Telegram* of 1946<sup>40</sup> and the doctrine of containment during the Cold War. The report was reprinted at the initiative of the president of the Carnegie Endowment, Morton Abramowitz, the undersecretary of State for intelligence and planning in the State Department in Jimmy Carter’s administration and the U.S. ambassador to Turkey (1989-1991). In the preface to this edition Abramowitz explained the motives that drove him to have the 1914 report reissued, stating that it is a document “with many stories to tell us in this twilight decade of the century, when yet again a conflict in the Balkans torments Europe and the conscience of the international community, and when our willingness to act has not been matched by our capacity for moral outrage”.<sup>41</sup> The task to establish a link between the 1914 report and the Yugoslav Wars Abramowitz entrusted to the ‘dean of U.S. diplomacy’, George Kennan, the U.S. ambassador to Yugoslavia during 1961-1963.<sup>42</sup>

Kennan’s introductory essay opens with an analysis of the onset of the peace movement in the United States and Europe, from which the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace arose in 1910. The liberal

internationalism of Woodrow Wilson, to which the United States returned during its dominance over the international arena in the decades following the end of the Cold War, also originated from this movement. Since the Balkans was one of the key locations for U.S. interests both at the beginning and the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Kennan asserts that “the importance of this report for the world of 1993 lies primarily on the excruciating situation prevailing today in the same Balkan world with which it dealt. The greatest value of the report is to reveal to the people of this age how much of today’s problem has deep roots and how much does not. It will be easier to think of solutions when such realities are kept in mind”.<sup>43</sup> Despite differences between the Balkan Wars at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and those fought at its end, Kennan finds important similarities between them: none of the wars were conducted by the military alone, but by entire nations; they were all driven by grand national ideas of megalomania, and the participation of irregular armed forces resulted in numerous atrocities against the civilian population. In keeping with the traditional Western perceptions of the Balkans, Kennan sees the reasons for this in ‘ancient hatreds’, which have deep roots not only in the present but also in the past: “Those roots reach back, not only into centuries of

Turkish domination, but also into the Byzantine penetration of the Balkans even before that time”.<sup>44</sup>

Kennan dedicates the final part of his essay to the role of the United States and Europe in the Balkans. He draws three conclusions based on the first Carnegie report. Firstly, while this Balkan situation is one to which the United States cannot be indifferent, it is primarily a problem for the Europeans. Secondly, no country or group of countries could be expected to occupy the Balkans, to subdue its agitated peoples and to hold them in order, until they are able calm down and begin to look at their problems in a more orderly way. Thirdly, there is a problem for a more distant future, once the conflicts are over, but the question will remain as to what kind of mutual relations the Balkan nations will have. His answer is that a new and clearly accepted territorial *status quo* has to be implemented, and that effective restrictions must be imposed on the states in this region, including the restrictions on their sovereignty. The West, consequently, must be ready to use force, i.e., to resort to ‘humanitarian intervention’, where diplomacy fails to produce results.

The NATO intervention of 1995 stopped the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina; the Peace Conference for

Bosnia opened in the autumn of the same year in Dayton (USA). While the conference was still underway, Morton Abramowitz visited the Balkans to get acquainted with the situation, and announced that the Carnegie Endowment would establish a new commission with the task of defining a framework of future arrangements for the Balkans.<sup>45</sup> The former Belgian prime minister Leo Tindemans was appointed the president of the commission, which consisted of respectable figures from the United States and Europe, such as Lloyd Cutler and David Anderson from the United States, Bronislaw Geremek from Poland, John Roper from Great Britain, Theo Sommer from Germany and Simone Veil from France. The first version of the commission's report had been written by Jacques Rupnik (France), Dana H. Allin and Mark Thompson (Great Britain) and James Brown (United States), even before the commission had arrived in the Balkans.<sup>46</sup>

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That only the Western Alliance, embodied by NATO, had the capacity to stop this war, and that the sole reason why this had not been done before 1995 was the reluctance of Western countries to use force in the Balkans.

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In addition to the reasons stated by Abramowitz and Kennan in the reprint of the first Carnegie Endowment report, the authors of the second report spoke about the international outrage caused by the civil wars in Yugoslavia:

“It was nourished by the inability- some would say unwillingness- of the major Western powers to prevent, mitigate, or terminate the bloodshed and destruction in its initial phases. No state, statesman, or international institution responded with honour to this challenge. The European Community, proclaiming the opportunity to stop the wars of Yugoslav dissolution ‘the hour of Europe’, mediated an endless succession of truces. One by one, these were violated as the ink was still drying on the cease-fire documents. The Americans, under President Bill Clinton, as under his predecessor George Bush, were content to leave the matter to the Europeans. Both the Americans and the Europeans dithered almost to the eve of the Dayton Agreement. In the same vein, the United Nations revealed glaring deficiencies as the war widened. It also brokered one peace plan after another, only to see each torn up by one or all of the warring parties of Bosnia and Herzegovina as soon as it had been agreed upon.”<sup>47</sup>

The structure of the report reflected the views that prevailed in mid-1990s, not only with regard to the Balkans, but also with regard to U.S. and EU policies as a whole. The first chapter, titled *Balkan Predicament*, examines the causes of civil war in Yugoslavia from the perspective of three popular hypotheses: conflicting interests of the great powers, the ‘ancient

hatreds', and the 'clash of civilisations'. The authors of the report see the dual legacy of communism and nationalism, and the failed transition towards democracy, as reasons for the breakup of Yugoslavia. In the second chapter, entitled *The War and the International Response*, the authors' attention turns to the United States and the EU, where the Bosnian War incited the first serious debate on foreign policy since the Cold War.<sup>48</sup> Analysing the steps taken by these two countries during the first three years of the Yugoslav Wars, the authors come to the conclusion that this war caused severe tensions, at first within the EU—especially between Germany and France—and later on between the transatlantic allies ('the deepest crises after the Suez'), and brought to the surface the differences between U.S. interests in preserving NATO and EU ambitions to build its own security system. For the authors of the report there was no doubt that only the Western Alliance, embodied by NATO, had the capacity to stop this war, and that the sole reason why this had not been done before 1995 was the reluctance of Western countries to use force in the Balkans. In support of this point, the report quotes a statement made in August 1991 by Jacques Poos, President of the EC Council of Ministers, about the ambition of the EU Community to take matters into their own hands and settle

the crisis 'in their own backyard': "This is the hour of Europe. It is not the hour of Americans".<sup>49</sup> The failure of the EC (today's EU) to settle this crisis was the reason why the United States resumed a leading role in this matter, which led to the NATO intervention in 1995. While considering that the intervention was driven by essentially humanitarian and moral reasons, the authors admit that a more thorough analysis indicates that there also existed strategic reasons for the American military presence in the Balkans.

The second Balkan report by the Carnegie Endowment, just like the first one, is dedicated to post-conflict development in the Balkans and to the U.S. and European role therein. Its very title—*Unfinished Peace*—points to the conclusion that NATO intervention did stop the war, but did not bring lasting peace to Bosnia and Herzegovina. Moreover, the authors believe that the intervention came too late, and that the peace conference would have brought better results than those achieved in Dayton in 1995 had it been organised sooner. The third chapter of the report, titled *Country Conditions, Trends and Proposals*, contains a series of policy recommendations for the Balkans in the future, many of which were indeed implemented in the years that followed. The same approach was maintained

in the final chapter, titled *The Region: Conclusions and Proposals*, which contains recommendations for U.S. and EU policies towards the entire Balkan region. Thus, for example, it is recommended that the West should encourage regional economic cooperation in the Balkans, including accession of the Balkan states to the Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA), which indeed proved to be one of the biggest achievements of the past decade. The report also suggests that strong support should be given to reconstruction and development, to removal of obstacles to democratisation, and to building a civil society and a free media, but also to the control of arms and armed forces in the region.

As was the case with the first Carnegie Endowment report, the second report was overshadowed by subsequent events. While the Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina was an undoubted success in its military aspects, the logic of disintegration of Yugoslavia shifted the centre of crisis to Kosovo, which for tactical reasons was not included in the Dayton Peace Conference agenda. The Dayton Agreement temporarily reinforced the chief culprits of war in power, and Kosovo Albanians turned to guerrilla-style fighting aimed to trigger another NATO intervention in the Balkans. The first armed conflicts

in Kosovo broke out as early as 1996 and escalated in 1998 to a large-scale guerrilla war. In September 1998 *The New York Times* published a letter by the *International Crisis Group*, titled *Mr President, Milosevic is the Problem*.<sup>50</sup> The letter, signed by 30-odd American experts, called for a new military intervention in the Balkans. NATO again intervened in the Balkans from March to June 1999, with a military action in which about 2,000 civilians lost their lives.

## Conclusion

Were the ethnic and religious conflicts in the Balkans, the balkanisation, the product of the ‘ancient hatreds’ or the cause and/or consequence of the ‘clash of civilisations’ and the great powers in the Balkans? Six wars were fought in the Balkans during the 20<sup>th</sup> century (the First and the Second Balkan Wars, two World Wars, the Greek Civil War and the Civil War in Yugoslavia), while its geographic centre- Belgrade- became the most-often bombarded European capital city (1914, 1915, 1941, 1944 and 1999).<sup>51</sup> Other than that, the Balkans spent the rest of the century for the most part in peace, which was the result of the international order created after the two World Wars. Although horrific in the manner in which they were conducted and the consequences and the crimes



committed, the wars fought in the Balkans do not differ substantially from other civil or religious wars fought in Europe or elsewhere. The authors of the first Carnegie Endowment report had certain moral dilemmas when assessing these wars; the creation of Yugoslavia in 1918 was largely a liberal response to the issue of balkanisation.

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Strong support should be given to reconstruction and development, to removal of obstacles to democratisation, and to building a civil society and a free media, but also to the control of arms and armed forces in the region.

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Peace and stability in the Balkans, a region situated on the fringe of Europe, between Eastern and Western Europe, between Europe and the 'Orient', have always been dependent on the stability of large geographic and political entities adjacent to the Balkans. The Balkans became a borderland and a stage for the 'clash of civilizations' at the time of the division of the Roman Empire, and the region retained such a character that was subsequently reinforced by rifts within the Christian world, the penetration of Islam in the Middle Ages, the conflicts between the Ottoman and

Habsburg Empires, and, in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, the clashes between the Central Powers and the Entente Countries in World War I and the Axis and the Allies in World War II, and finally, the rivalry between NATO and the Warsaw Pact during the Cold War. International arrangements for the Balkans in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries were, as a rule, either the product of agreements between the great powers (the Congress of Berlin, the Treaty of Versailles and the Yalta Conference), or made under their immediate influence (the London Conference of the Ambassadors, the Treaty of Bucharest, the Dayton Accord). It was only when strained relations between the great non-Balkan powers made such arrangements impossible that the Balkans experienced turmoil and armed conflicts.

The breakdown of the bipolar world order in Europe marked the end of the international order upon which the former Yugoslavia had been founded. Such were the circumstances in which the crisis broke out, followed by the dissolution of and the civil wars in Yugoslavia. The dissolution, however, did not begin in the underdeveloped South, but in the developed North, under the slogans "the flight' from the Balkans" to "join Europe". The chain of conflicts they initiated led to the 're-balkanisation of the Balkans' and the revival of the

old western myths about this region. That fact that in both the United States and Europe at that time the prevailing Wilsonian liberalism idea that the right of a nation to self-determination should lead to the breakup of the multinational and multicultural Yugoslav Federation, the country that Woodrow Wilson created in 1918 on the basis of these very principles, seems rather paradoxical. Such a conclusion challenges the thesis, popular in the West at the beginning and the end of 20<sup>th</sup> century, that “Balkan Wars caused the wars in Europe”. The Civil

war in Yugoslavia did not spill over into neighbouring states, World War II did not start in the Balkans, and even World War I was the consequence of

frictions between two military alliances that were created before the Balkan Wars. The assassination in Sarajevo in 1914 did trigger a chain of events leading to the breakout of the World War I, but its actual causes were much deeper, as testified by numerous crises that preceded it (the first Moroccan crisis in 1905-1906, the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina by Austria-Hungary in 1908, the Italo-Turkish War of 1911-1922, the Second Moroccan Crisis of 1911, and so forth).

The very use of the term ‘balkanisation’ to denote numerous conflicts in the 20<sup>th</sup> century Europe and worldwide is therefore self-revealing. It is used, as a rule, to refer to complicated conflicts involving numerous domestic and foreign actors, in which moral outrage and hysteria often serve as a pretext for ‘interventions of the civilised world’ and ‘humanitarian interventions’, which often conceal the true strategic motives, and it thus becomes another name for *proxy wars*. The Balkans have been, since this term was coined in early 19<sup>th</sup>

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The breakdown of the bipolar world order in Europe marked the end of the international order upon which the former Yugoslavia had been founded.

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century, a border area in a geopolitical sense, whose stability has depended less on the relations among the nations and states who inhabit this region, and much

more on the relations between the powers adjacent to it. Thus the disappearance of the USSR and the Eastern Bloc in 1989 disrupted the balance that had existed and enabled the long-standing crisis of the ‘second Yugoslavia’ to become a crisis of the Yugoslav idea itself, and eventually led to the breakup of the Yugoslav Federation. As a result of the intervention of the Euro-Atlantic community, the Balkan Crisis did not spill over into neighbouring states. The two interventions (in 1995 and 1999)

not only did stop the war but also gave the Euro-Atlantic alliance (NATO) a whole new sense of purpose in the post-Cold War era, as a guardian of the “West against the rest”.<sup>52</sup> As was the case in late 19th century, the Balkans and balkanisation at the beginning of 21<sup>st</sup>

century still represent, for a large segment of the Western community, a part of the constitutive myth of the Occident as a separate civilisation, different from the Orient (East) which begins “on the border of Europe with the Balkans”.

## Endnotes

- 1 Francis Fukuyama, *The End of a History and a Last Man*, New York, The Free Press, 1992.
- 2 Hans Stark, *Les Balkans: Retour des Guerres en Europe*, Paris, IFRI, 1993.
- 3 Samuel Huntington, “The Clash of Civilizations?””, *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 72, No. 3 (Summer 1993), pp. 22-49; Robert Kaplan, *Balkan Ghosts: A Journey Through History*, New York, Vintage Press, 1993; Noel Malcolm, *Kosovo: A Short History*, New York, New York University Press, 1998.
- 4 Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1997; Vesna Goldsworthy, *Inventing Ruritania: Imperialism of the Imagination*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1998; Mark Mazower, *The Balkans: A Short History*, New York, The Modern Library, 2002.
- 5 Harry de Windt, *Through Savage Europe*, London, T. Fisher Unwin, 1907.
- 6 Charles Gati, “From Sarajevo to Sarajevo”, *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 71, No. 4 (Autumn 1992).
- 7 British journalist Tim Judah, writing in *The New York Review of Books*, likened Mr Malcolm’s task to “someone claiming that the Mayflower sailed from America to Britain or that Ellis Island had little to do with immigration to the United States”. Quoted in Eric Alterman, “Untangling Balkan Knots of Myth and Aftermath”, *The New York Times*, 31 July 1999.
- 8 Former Belgian Minister and Secretary-General of NATO, Willy Claes, noted in 1992: “The countries of South-Eastern Europe in the cultural sense belong to the Byzantine Empire, which collapsed; they lack democratic tradition and tradition of respect for minorities. Therefore, it would be proper that the enlargement of the (European) Community be restricted to the ‘cultural circle’ of Western countries. The enlargement of the community should be restricted to the Protestant and Catholic cultural circles of European countries”. Quoted in the Greek newspaper *Kathimerini*, 16 October 1993, p. 9.
- 9 Edward W. Said, *Orientalism*, New York, Vintage Books, 1979.
- 10 To the question of why the EU opposes Turkey’s admission, former UN Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim responded to this author in 2003 in the Diplomatic Academy in Vienna: “the Union does not want Iraq and Syria on its borders.”
- 11 A different interpretation may be found in the Balkan studies that derives the word Balkan from the Persian name Bala-Khana (high proud mountain), referring to the two mountain ranges east of the Caspian Sea inhabited by the Turkmens. See, Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, p. 27.
- 12 “Thus, a British surgeon in the Ottoman army in the middle of the nineteenth century understood Balkans to signify ‘mountains of defence’”, Božidar Jezernik, *Europe and Its Other*, at <http://revista-redes.rediris.es/Periferia/catala/numero6/Jezernik.pdf>. [last visited 1 September 2012].

- 13 According to a well-known Turkish historian Halil İnalçık, the word Balkan was initially used in the Ottoman Empire to denote the mountainous areas of Rumelia (Emine-Balkan, Kodja-Balkan, Küçük-Balkan, Ungurus-Balkan, etc.). On this point, see, Halil İnalçık, “*Balkan*” *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Leiden, Brill, 1960, pp. 998-1000.
- 14 Jezernik, *Europe and its Other*.
- 15 Frederick Calvert and Lord of Baltimore, *A Tour to the East, In the Years 1763 and 1764. With Remarks on the City of Constantinople and the Turks*, W. Richardson and S. Clark, London, 1767.
- 16 John Morritt, for instance, remarked in his journal in the 1790s: “We slept at the foot of a mountain (the Shipka Pass), which we crossed the next day, which separates Bulgaria from Romania (the ancient Thrace), and which, though now debased by the name of Bal.kan [sic], is no less a personage than the ancient Haemus”, see, John B. S. Morritt, *The Letters of John B. S. Morritt of Rokeby Descriptive of Journeys in Europe and Asia Minor in the Years 1794-1796*, London, John Murray, 1914, p. 65.
- 17 Johan August Zeune, *Gea: Versuch Einer Wissenschaftlichen Erdbeschreibung*, Berlin, Wittich, 1808, quoted in Vesna Goldsworthy, *The Balkans in Nineteenth-Century British Travel Writing*; in Tim Youngs (ed.), *Travel Writing in the Nineteen Century: Filling the Blank*, London, Anthem Press, 2006. The Serbian anthropologist Jovan Cvijić offered this interpretation in his study *La péninsule balkanique: géographie humaine*, Paris, Armand Colin, 1919. It is today widely accepted in Balkanology.
- 18 On that point, see, Predrag Simić, *Marksizam i Kineska revolucija [Marxism and Chinese Revolution]*, Beograd, IMPP, 1986.
- 19 On that point, see, Karl Wittfogel, *Oriental Despotism: A Comparative Study of Total Power*, Forge Village, Yale University Press, 1957.
- 20 “Under Turkish rule, Constantinople has become the most retrograde capital in Europe. Under such rule, Athens, Bucharest, Belgrade, and Sofia, eighty years ago, were mere collections of mud huts, occupied by dejected and poverty-stricken people. Since their inhabitants got rid of Turkish oppression, these villages have rapidly grown into towns, have adopted the appliances of civilisation, and are all making good progress. The first two, which have enjoyed freedom for a longer time than the others, are now well-built and well-governed cities with bright, intelligent and progressive populations, and Sofia will soon run them close. To pass from any of these towns to Constantinople is to pass from a civilised to a barbarous city”, see, Luigi Villari (ed.), *The Balkan Question*, London, John Murray, 1905.
- 21 Otto Von Bismarck quotes, at [http://thinkexist.com/quotes/otto\\_von\\_bismarck/](http://thinkexist.com/quotes/otto_von_bismarck/) [last visited 31 August 2012].
- 22 On that point, see, Bram Stoker, *Dracula*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1986; Eric Ambler, *The Mask of Dimitrios*, London, Fontana Press 1983.
- 23 Guy Gauthier, *Les aigles et les lions, Histoire des monarchies balkaniques*, Paris, Frances Empires, 1997.

- 24 See, Goldsworthy, *Inventing Ruritania*.
- 25 See, Leon Trotsky, *The War Correspondence of Leon Trotsky: The Balkan Wars 1912-13*, New York, Pathfinder 1993; see also, Maria Todorova, *War and Memory: Trotsky's War Correspondence from the Balkan Wars* in this issue.
- 26 John Lewis Garwin, editor of the London newspaper *The Observer*, is considered to be the first to use this term in 1920, writing about the Baltic states, whereas the historian Arnold Toynbee believed that the term was used by German socialists following the peace treaty between Germany and Soviet Russia in Brest-Litovsk. Maria Todorova, however, claims that the word 'balkanisation' appeared for the first time on 20 December 1918 in the text titled *Rathenau, Head of Great Industry, Predicts the Balkanization of Europe* published in *The New York Times*. The text discussed the consequences of the economic crisis in Germany after World War I., see, Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, pp. 33-34.
- 27 Rebecca West, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon: A Journey Through Yugoslavia*, London, Macmillan, 1942.
- 28 "Travellers on our Balkan tour may in addition notice a curious fact: while the Balkans is now making every effort to be part of Europe as it once was, Europe now defines itself on the basis of its difference from the East, the Balkans included, and claims to be what the Balkans used to be for centuries." Jezernik, *Europe and Its Other*.
- 29 One of the results of the First Hague Conference was the establishment of the International Court of Arbitration, today known as International Court of Justice, based in The Hague.
- 30 On the basis of these ideas and movements, the American president Woodrow Wilson, together with over 150 American leading experts, formulated 'Fourteen Points', a program that defined U.S. objectives in World War I, and was the basis for the Paris Peace Conference and the creation of the League of Nations. This school of thought in international relations is known as liberal internationalism, or Wilsonian liberalism.
- 31 Carnegie also financed the construction of the 'Peace Palace' in The Hague, which today houses the International Court of Justice.
- 32 Morton Abramowitz, *Preface, The Other Balkan Wars: A 1913. Carnegie Endowment Inquiry in Retrospect with a New Introduction and Reflections of the Present Conflict by George Kennan*, Washington, D.C., Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1993. p. 1.
- 33 The doubts expressed by Serbia and Greece regarding the objectivity of Brailsford and Milyukov were the reason why these two commission members did not participate in the entire mission of the Carnegie Commission in the Balkans. Nevertheless, Milyukov and Brailsford were the authors of the bulk of the Commission's report. On reasons why the Greek and Serbian governments distrusted these two Commission members, see the essay by George Kennan and the book by the Russian diplomat Basil Strandman, *Balkanske Uspomene [Balkans Memoirs]*, Beograd, Žagor, 2009.
- 34 *The Other Balkan Wars*, p. 1.
- 35 *Ibid.*, p. 18.

- 36 Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Extremes: A History of the World, 1914-1991*, New York, Pantheon Books, 1994.
- 37 Kaplan, *Balkan Ghosts*.
- 38 Ibid., p. X.
- 39 Ibid., p. XXVII.
- 40 Telegram, *George Kennan to James Byrnes ["Long Telegram"]*, 22 February 1946. Harry S. Truman Administration File, Elsey Papers, at [http://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study\\_collections/coldwar/documents/index.php?documentdate=1946-02-22&documentid=6-6&studycollectionid=&pagenumber=1](http://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study_collections/coldwar/documents/index.php?documentdate=1946-02-22&documentid=6-6&studycollectionid=&pagenumber=1), [last visited 1 September 2012].
- 41 *The Other Balkan Wars*, p. 1.
- 42 On that point, see, Dragan Bisenić, *Mister X; Džordž Kenan u Beogradu [Mister X: George Kennan in Belgrade 1961-1963]*, Klub Plus, Beograd 2011.
- 43 *The Other Balkan Wars*, p. 9.
- 44 Ibid., p. 13.
- 45 At the time I was the director of the Belgrade-based Institute of International Politics and Economics, some colleagues from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs asked me to meet Abramowitz and share with him my views on the Yugoslav Wars. Our conversation opened with a disagreement over his thesis about the 'ancient hatreds' as reasons for the wars. I was of the opinion that the causes of the wars lay in the political opportunism of ex-communists, who revived nationalist passions in an attempt to remain in power after the Cold War. Today this is a widely accepted view, but in the mid-1990s Western perception of the Balkans was still strongly shaped by the stereotypes created at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Abramowitz and I did eventually agree upon some of the ideas that the new Carnegie Commission needed to explore.
- 46 Part of the Commission visited Belgrade in early 1996. At the request of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, I organised a dinner, to which we invited, in addition to the Commission members, some of the leading experts of the Institute of International Politics and Economics, such as Milan Šahović, the former chairman of the Sixth Committee of the UN (international law), Ljubivoje Aćimović (the founder of the group of non-aligned and neutral countries at the Helsinki Conference of 1975), Branislava Alendar (the author of the project for the accession of Yugoslavia to the EC in 1989) among others. Although we expected the conversation to focus on the situation in the Balkans following the Dayton Peace Accord, we only had casual informal conversations, in which the topic of the Balkans was barely touched upon. That is why we were very much surprised to see our names figuring in the annex to the report, which was published later that year by the Carnegie Endowment, under the title *Unfinished Peace*. We subsequently discovered that our colleagues from other Balkan countries had a similar experience with the Commission members they had met.

- 47 Leo Tindemans et al., *Unfinished Peace: Report of the International Commission on the Balkans*, Berlin & Washington, Aspen Institute & Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1993, pp. 2-3.
- 48 “The war in Bosnia has occasioned the first significant debate over foreign policy of the post-Cold War period. It has thereby done what the War against Iraq did not do [...] In the case of Bosnia, the identity of the participants has changed. In Congress the debate over whether to pursue an interventionist course has not followed party lines. The Democrats can no longer be identified with an anti-interventionist position. The same is true of a number of public figures who had once been ‘reliably’ anti-interventionist. Indeed, some of the most insistent criticism of both the Bush and Clinton administrations for failing to give military support to the Bosnian Muslims has come from those whose anti-interventionist disposition had long been taken for granted.” Robert Tucker and David Hendrickson, “America and Bosnia”, *The National Interest*, (Fall 1993), p. 14.
- 49 “The first six months of the Yugoslav crisis coincided with the final stages of the negotiations of the Treaty of Maastricht on the European Union, involving complicated trade-offs on other sovereignty issues, and an ambivalent spirit of rivalry and common interest. There were those who felt that precedents might be created by the way in which Europe acted in Yugoslavia that could affect the future institutional pattern. The problem of foreign policymaking by consensus was illustrated by Greece’s exercise of its *veto* on the question of recognition of Macedonia.” See also, Leo Tindemans et al., *Unfinished Peace*, p. 58.
- 50 Refworld, “Mr President, Milosevic is the Problem”, <http://www.refworld.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/rwmain?page=country&category=&publisher=ICG&type=&coi=SRB&rid=&docid=3ae6a6d70&skip=0>, [last visited 27 April 2013].
- 51 It should be emphasised that the bombardment of Serbia by the Allied Force in the spring of 1944 (so-called Eastern bombardment) left more civilian casualties than the Nazi bombing of 1941.
- 52 On that point, see, *Jasminka Simić, U potrazi za novom misijom: NATO i jugoslovenska kriza 1990-2001 [In Search of the New Mission: NATO and the Yugoslav Crisis 1990-2001]*, Beograd, Službeni glasnik, 2010. Also, see, David Gress, *From Plato to NATO: The Idea of the West and Its Opponents*, New York, The Free Press, 1998.



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# Macedonia and the Ohrid Framework Agreement: Framed Past, Elusive Future

Sasho RIPILOSKI\* & Stevo PENDAROVSKI\*\*

## Abstract

*Macedonia was the only Yugoslavian republic to make a peaceful transition to statehood at the time of the federation's collapse. Yet tensions between ethnic Macedonians and Albanians over the constitutional design of the state meant it remained vulnerable to violence, to which it succumbed in 2001. Civil war was averted with the signing of the Ohrid Framework Agreement, which promised to distribute power more evenly between the two. This settlement is portrayed in opposing extremes: by Macedonians, as a prelude to the demise of the country; by Albanians and the international community, as a guarantor of its existence. This paper eschews such interpretations. While it remains the best solution for preserving*

*Macedonia's inter-ethnic equilibrium and facilitating its integration into Euro-Atlantic institutions, the Framework Agreement is not without flaw. Above all, it has marginalised smaller ethnic communities, embedding a de facto bi-national state in which Macedonians and Albanians predominate politically over all others.*

## Key Words

Macedonia, Ohrid Framework Agreement, Balkan Wars, conflict resolution, decentralisation.

## Introduction

Most ethnic Macedonians-politicians and average citizens alike-acknowledge that, historically, ethnic Albanians have been excluded from the country's decision-making processes. Notwithstanding the talk of equality that greeted the post-Yugoslav transition of the early 1990s, Albanians were the subject of political and economic discrimination during Macedonia's<sup>1</sup> first decade as an independent state, as they had been in communist times. Albanian power was always nominal, certainly at

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the elite level. Instead, Albanian power was limited to control of peripheral ministries, a ploy designed to lend the state a veneer of legitimacy in the eyes of Macedonia's largest ethnic minority community, comprising some 25% of the population.<sup>2</sup> In the framework of this 'nationalised state',<sup>3</sup> Macedonians controlled all major levers of power. In the same vein, Albanians were under-represented in the public administration, and use of the Albanian language in parliament and higher education was prohibited.

For the Albanian community, which, given its size, felt entitled to the same rights and privileges as the titular nation, the lopsided concentration of power established

at independence was a source of great discontent, one which its political representatives proved unable to address through Macedonia's fledgling democratic institutions.

One should not downplay Macedonia's non-violent transition to independence. Poor, multi-ethnic and surrounded by neighbours who denied its existence in one form or another, Macedonia's post-Yugoslav elite were confronted with a set of risk factors that many feared

would doom it to violence. Particular credit is due to its leadership at the time, which eschewed nationalism and made concessions- internally and externally- that set Macedonia on a different course from other Yugoslavian republics. Yet, with such a large segment of the population dissatisfied with their status, the peace attained was always a tenuous one. The exclusion felt by Albanian-Macedonians, and the sense of victimhood this fostered, reached a tipping point in January 2001, at precisely

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**While it remains the best solution for preserving Macedonia's inter-ethnic equilibrium and facilitating its integration into Euro-Atlantic institutions, the Framework Agreement is not without flaw.**

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the half-way point of Macedonia's post-Yugoslav existence, when a small guerrilla force, the National Liberation Army (NLA), took up arms to address the imbalance.

What occurred in the months that followed has been well documented and need not be repeated here. What is clear is that an initially localised insurgency concentrated deep along the Kosovo border was allowed to metastasise to major population centres and push Macedonia perilously close to civil war, the outcome of which, not inconceivably, could have precipitated its territorial division.

A deteriorating situation on the ground, allied to an inability to find a

breakthrough on the political track, placed Macedonia on a trajectory that local elites appeared incapable of correcting. Indeed, civil war was largely averted only thanks to the diplomatic intervention of the European Union (EU), the United States, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), culminating in August 2001 in the signing of a far-reaching political settlement, the Ohrid Framework Agreement (OFA).<sup>4</sup> Subsequent to this, NATO deployed a 3,500-strong peacekeeping force, Operation Essential Harvest, to oversee disarmament of the NLA,<sup>5</sup> as per the terms of the OFA. The latter, negotiated by Macedonia's four major political parties<sup>6</sup> under European and American auspices at the lakeside resort of Ohrid, called for fundamental changes to Macedonia's power-sharing arrangements, designed to better integrate ethnic minorities- above all the Albanians- into the day-to-day running of the state, in exchange for a cessation of violence and a commitment by all to the political process. The document also reaffirmed Macedonia's unitary shape, ruling out federalisation and, in doing so, assuaging a core concern of the majority community. The OFA has set in motion a series of constitutional and legislative reforms to expand the political and cultural rights of ethnic minorities,

including allowances for the official use of their languages and national symbols at the state and local level. These rights, however, are not automatic; for them to be triggered at the state level, an ethnic minority community must represent at least 20 % of the country's population, or, to take effect at the local self-government level, 20% of a municipality's population. Of Macedonia's many ethnic minorities, only Albanians satisfy this threshold at the state level, placing them, in effect, on a constitutional par with Macedonians.

To be sure, implementation of the Framework Agreement has been a lengthy and contentious process, particularly in the initial stage, as political elites and ordinary citizens struggled to make sense of its *raison d'être* amid much conjecture. For all the fear-mongering it provoked within the majority community, the country has made substantive progress in institutionalising the agreement's four core provisions: (1) devolving administrative authority from the central to municipal level; (2) achieving equitable representation in the public administration; (3) providing greater scope to non-Macedonians to express their ethnic identity through the use of their symbols and languages in government and in higher education; and (4) strengthening the parliamentary clout of ethnic minorities with the introduction of a double majority rule

on specific legislation. From a formal standpoint, this process is now in its final stage.

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The relatively low-level nature of the clashes in Macedonia is significant, not only in terms of allowing the country to return to normalcy relatively quickly, but also in creating a post-conflict environment amenable to the implementation of a peace settlement.

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The reconfiguration of power affected by the OFA has no precedent in Macedonia's history, and, as such, met resistance from an ethnic Macedonian public fearful of upending an internal balance of power that had always been tilted in their favour. By no means can the Framework Agreement be considered perfect. In the first instance, the process of its 'making' caused great bitterness among ethnic Macedonians, who- not without credence- claimed it rewarded violence, cultivating a sense of apprehension about the agreement, and about the outsiders who were perceived to have imposed it against their will, which lingers to this day. Public polls indicate that, while having gained acceptance over time, the document continues to be opposed by a majority of ethnic Macedonians.<sup>7</sup>

Further, from a practical viewpoint, it has not improved Macedonia's internal cohesion in any noticeable way, and has stunted the development of a truly multi-ethnic polity, facilitating and entrenching instead a bi-national state in which Macedonians and Albanians predominate politically over all others. For all these caveats, one can credibly say that, with the passage of time, the OFA has proved the best solution to the security crisis that engulfed the country and to the underlying grievances that fuelled it. The concessions arising from the Framework Agreement have been pivotal to the preservation of Macedonia's post-conflict inter-ethnic equilibrium, their implementation having kept it on a path to ultimate integration into Euro-Atlantic (EU and NATO) structures. The fact that its critics have never been able to offer a viable alternative is particularly telling. Even members of the former 'anti-Ohrid faction',<sup>8</sup> who pressed for a military solution at the height of the conflict and obstructed its implementation thereafter, have since retracted and praised the OFA for contributing to post-conflict stability.

## Political Possibilities and Pitfalls

This paper examines how the Framework Agreement has played out

on the ground in the 12 years since it was signed, juxtaposing the imagined political effects of the document with its actual consequences. It proposes that, for all its faults, there exists no sustainable alternative to the power-sharing framework established by the OFA, and, as such, that its full and unconditional implementation must be recognised as an absolute strategic priority. That said, the Framework Agreement should not be read as a panacea for Macedonia's myriad ills. The country has inherent structural weaknesses- an official rate of unemployment approaching 32%,<sup>9</sup> widespread poverty, an amorphous democratic political culture- that, left unchecked, threaten to disrupt the fabric of its society. In isolation, the OFA is insufficient to guarantee Macedonia's long-term future as a stable, multi-ethnic democracy. Rather, its full implementation must be understood as merely a means to an end, namely, accession to Euro-Atlantic institutions, and not an end in itself.

Scholars rightfully point out that what occurred in Macedonia in 2001 was unique, certainly in comparison to the conflicts fought on the territory of the former Yugoslavia in the 1990s.<sup>10</sup> Measured in terms of physical destruction, internal displacement and loss of life, the Macedonian conflict does not compare with antecedents

in Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo.<sup>11</sup> Upon its formal cessation, the insurgency is estimated to have claimed between 200-300 lives, primarily state security and rebel forces, and displaced 180,000 others.<sup>12</sup> The relatively low-level nature of the clashes in Macedonia is significant, not only in terms of allowing the country to return to normalcy relatively quickly, but also in creating a post-conflict environment amenable to the implementation of a peace settlement. For all the enmity the violence sowed, Macedonia did not cross the Rubicon, whereby political and public attitudes against the 'Other' hardened to an extent that made rapprochement impossible.

As a political settlement, the Framework Agreement is a complex amalgam of constitutional, legal and security components. The lengthy process of its implementation commenced in the immediate post-conflict period with the disarmament of the NLA, administered over a period of 30 days by NATO troops. Then followed the more substantive (and politically fraught) tasks of amending the constitution to formalise the concessions made at Ohrid,<sup>13</sup> part of which included changes to the wording of its preamble, to lend the state a civic definition in which all citizens would be constitutionally equal, and securing passage through parliament of the Amnesty Law, the controversial provision that pardoned

all NLA members in return for demobilisation. The precise ordering of these components proved to be a wedge issue: where Macedonians placed greatest store on security measures, Albanians emphasised the upgrading of their legal and constitutional status above all else. While the restoration of order- in the form of the disarmament and demobilisation of the NLA, and the return of police forces to former conflict areas- was necessarily fundamental, the security component of the Framework Agreement was supplanted by the legal and constitutional rationales with the country's stabilisation. Indeed, the latter two components, by affecting substantive changes to Macedonia's political system and democratic procedures, constitute the essence of the OFA.

The OFA is often proclaimed as the best of all the peace agreements signed on the territory of the former Yugoslavia. In theory, its key features are not exclusive to Macedonia- provisions for power-sharing, disarmament and reconciliation feature prominently in the accords that ended hostilities in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo, and are *de rigueur* in most contemporary peace settlements. In practice, however, the OFA- as an instrument and process designed not only to secure immediate peace, but to address those structural deficiencies that gave rise to the violence

and, post-conflict, promote a semblance of inter-ethnic reconciliation- has clearly worked better than settlements elsewhere in the region. The Bosnian and Kosovo accords have kept the peace, at least when understood as an absence of war, yet entrenched political deadlock and *de facto* territorial partition. As already noted, these divergent experiences are partly explained by the depth and breadth of the respective conflicts. Another important explanation is that implementation of the OFA, ultimately, has been driven by local rather than foreign forces. This is an important point of difference; while influential and very visible special representatives of the EU have monitored and supported the implementation process, the international community has never had to deploy an all-powerful proconsul with veto powers over Macedonia, along the lines of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo, as a cudgel with which to ensure progress. Of course, international parties have prodded- at times forcefully- local elites and proffered carrots whenever this process has appeared to stall,<sup>14</sup> and the inducement of NATO and EU integration offers the ultimate incentive for reform. Even so, in the absence of domestic political will, meaningful change is difficult to achieve. The seminal role played by the EU and the United States in bringing Macedonian

and Albanian interlocutors to the negotiating table and leveraging them into an agreement is beyond dispute. It is no exaggeration to say that, in their absence, civil war was likely. Yet, in terms of the Framework Agreement's actual implementation, local elites- Albanians and Macedonians alike- have been in the vanguard, championing the inter-ethnic model proposed at Ohrid as pivotal to the country's long-term wellbeing and passing relevant legislation in an independent and generally timely fashion, however unpopular with the majority community.

Critics of the Framework Agreement, convinced that Albanians view Macedonia only as a transitional entity, were quick to warn that its implementation would pave the way for the country's future disintegration. These fears have proved groundless; each stage of implementation has actually diminished the likelihood of it being formally divided or 'cantonised' along ethnic lines. Today, Macedonia, *de facto*, remains firmly divided along its main, Macedonian-Albanian fault line, as it always has been: the two communities speak different languages, practice different religions and inhabit different parts of the country. Nevertheless, *de jure*, Macedonia retains its unitary shape, which, post-conflict, it has never been in danger of losing; political elites

remain committed to the Framework Agreement and its full implementation, and the Albanian public is satisfied with their post-conflict lot. The OFA, in and of itself, was never going to precipitate Macedonia's territorial dissolution; in fact, its core provisions- as a means to redistribute power more equitably between Macedonians and Albanians and thus provide a basis for long-term stability- should have been adopted well before the onset of violence. So long as politicians adhere to the spirit and letter of the document, such a scenario will not come to pass.

Though requests to revise the OFA, or even draft a completely new document, have been made by the Albanian side, these have failed to gain traction, as a result of two factors. Firstly, requests for change have come almost exclusively from the opposition Democratic Party of Albanians (DPA), which did not object to the Framework Agreement while in government, nor articulated a viable political and legal alternative. In 2009, it requested the OFA be scrapped and replaced by a successor agreement,<sup>15</sup> one that proposed Macedonia's federalisation and the creation of a vice presidential office, to be set aside for the Albanian community; however, the DPA's plan has not met with any major approval, as underscored by its failure to make any substantial electoral inroads. This

links to the second, more peremptory explanation: the Albanian electorate in Macedonia has displayed not even the slightest enthusiasm for retrograde measures, neither before nor during election periods. According to Gallup, in 2008, 70% of Albanians were satisfied with the Framework Agreement as a long-term solution to Macedonia's ethnic problems.<sup>16</sup> This sentiment has manifested itself clearly at the ballot box: in the preceding 12 years, Albanians have never voted in significant numbers for those opposing the OFA, which partly explains the decline of the DPA, the pre-eminent force in the Albanian-Macedonian body politic in the 1990s. In effect, the DPA's machinations amount to nothing more than political opportunism. The party has (mistakenly) calculated that to discredit and ultimately supplant the OFA is the only way it can outflank the Democratic Union for Integration (DUI), the party formed by the demobilised leadership of the NLA in the immediate post-conflict period, and which has long displaced the DPA as the dominant Albanian political force in Macedonia. The DUI's political legitimacy is inextricably linked to the 2001 conflict and the attendant Agreement, as it is the DUI, in its previous guerrilla guise, which is understood in the popular consciousness to have 'won' the war and the subsequent

changes to the constitution – the very changes the DPA was unable to achieve through political means in the 1990s. In the DPA's reckoning, a new agreement will undercut the DUI's 'revolutionary' and, by extension, electoral legitimacy in the eyes of Albanian voters, hence its challenge of the agreement.

### Pillars of the Agreement: Shattered or Fixed?

#### *Decentralisation vs. Federalisation*

In July 2001, when the methodological and procedural details for the Ohrid negotiations were defined, the first proposal put forward by the representatives of the Albanian community was to federalise the country. This was rejected immediately by the Macedonian interlocutors and foreign facilitators, on the grounds that a federal model was inappropriate, given Macedonia's size, and also because it ignored the implications for ethnically-mixed urban areas such as Skopje. Instead, the EU and the United States suggested the term 'meaningful decentralisation', a compromise solution that would provide local governments with substantive autonomy- in terms of policy-making and revenue-collection- from the centre, but fall short of



territorial and political autonomy. Either way, the OFA explicitly rejects territorial solutions to ethnic issues,<sup>17</sup> and the position formally endorsed by successive post-conflict governments has been of a more inclusive unitary state, as opposed to an ethno-federal one.

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**Decentralisation called for a streamlining of Macedonia's municipal borders, a process that was driven- in theory, at least- by demographic, economic and infrastructural considerations.**

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Decentralisation is very much fundamental to the Framework Agreement: roughly two-thirds of the 70 laws that have been introduced or revised as a result of the OFA relate specifically to it.<sup>18</sup> The provision for decentralisation, and the redrawing of Macedonia's municipal borders on which it is based, has proved the most difficult to implement, and remains a formidable challenge for ethnic leaderships on all sides. Macedonia, given its communist past, emerged from the former Yugoslavia as a highly centralised entity; municipal authorities, in essence, had few substantive responsibilities beyond garbage collection and street cleaning, and were totally reliant on the state for funding. In the words of Sally Broughton,

Laura Davis, et al., Macedonia was 'possibly the most centralised state in Europe'.<sup>19</sup> Post-Ohrid, in contrast, substantive responsibilities have been transferred to local governments in such areas as taxation, primary and secondary education, health care, infrastructure and the appointment of police chiefs.<sup>20</sup>

The ethnic Macedonian public interpreted this development in negative terms. Most equated the empowerment of local government with federalisation,<sup>21</sup> and feared that administrative autonomy for Albanian municipalities would act as a precursor to the country's fragmentation. Decentralisation, however, at its core, was never an ethnic issue. Rather, the transfer of powers from the centre to the periphery was predicated on a twin, ethnically-neutral logic, designed to benefit all communities: one, that it would improve the provision of public services and promote administrative transparency at the local level; and, two, that it would encourage citizens to play a more active role in local decision-making,<sup>22</sup> and in doing so strengthen their sense of ownership of the state. Decentralisation called for a streamlining of Macedonia's municipal borders, a process that was driven- in theory, at least- by demographic, economic and infrastructural considerations.<sup>23</sup> In reality, the inverse was true: the ethnic factor proved just as prominent, if not

more so. An implicit understanding existed among the Macedonian negotiators at Ohrid that reorganisation of these boundaries would entail some ethnic gerrymandering, a trade-off they were reluctantly willing to make. Further, by addressing their longstanding demand for greater administrative autonomy at the local government level, the Macedonian side reasoned it would obviate a future Albanian push for formal federalisation.

Implementation of the Law on Local Self-Government, which was adopted by parliament in January 2002, has been characterised by a number of shortcomings, particularly in the initial stage – giving the impression to many citizens that the purpose of decentralisation was to create new internal borders, rather than better services for all. The fact remains that, in some parts of the country, ‘redistricting’ was based, first and foremost, on political and ethnic interests, rather than on economic and socio-geographical ones. In drawing new municipal borders, the Albanian side worked towards two goals: one, to create a maximum number of Albanian-majority municipalities, and, two, to ensure that most Albanian-Macedonians fell under the jurisdiction of municipalities in which they constitute a majority. Today, Albanians are a majority in 16 of Macedonia’s

85 municipalities, while 79.3% of all Albanian-Macedonians reside in Albanian-majority municipalities.<sup>24</sup>

As this process took shape, the key issue – of whether local governments would have the personnel to manage their new responsibilities and collect the revenues to adequately meet the needs of their communities- was largely missed. For years, Macedonian and Albanian mayors alike were unified in demanding the devolution of more competences from the centre, yet lacked the institutional and financial capacities to carry them out. The outcome has been a predictable one: a weak state transformed into a patchwork of weak municipalities. While progress has undoubtedly been made, with post-Ohrid legislation strengthening the financial viability of the periphery by expanding its powers to tax and increasing fiscal transfers from the centre, many local governments, particularly in rural areas, continue to lack the means- human, institutional and financial- to provide the services for which they are theoretically responsible.<sup>25</sup>

Though it has appeased Albanians, the process of decentralisation- 12 years on- can be said to have been plagued by two failings. Firstly, it has not necessarily met its stated objective of enhancing the effectiveness and transparency of local government- a not entirely unexpected

development, and one that is likely to improve over time. Decentralisation remains very much a work in progress, both in terms of full and unconditional transfer to local governments of those competences stipulated in the Law on Local Self-Government and in building the capacity of these governments to fulfil their post-Ohrid responsibilities.<sup>26</sup> The second and greater cause for concern relates to the manner in which decentralisation has been implemented on the ground: to the extent that it has been driven by ethnic considerations above all else, it has seemingly aggravated the segregation of Macedonia's two largest ethnic communities, and thus, in practice, worked against the consolidation of a truly cohesive country.<sup>27</sup>

### *Equitable Representation and Legitimacy of the Macedonian State*

The strategic importance to Macedonia's long-term stability of achieving equitable representation in the public administration and other state institutions was recognised early in the Ohrid negotiations. In a multi-ethnic society, for all communities to buy into the state, institutions must accurately reflect its ethnic composition, which was evidently not the case in post-

communist Macedonia. Accordingly, in the name of balanced representation, political elites agreed to a 'quota system'- based on an ethnic community's proportion of the population- to govern future recruitment and promotion in the public administration, including the police force. While the move towards proportional representation is to be applauded, the introduction of ethnic quotas has had two major unintended consequences. Firstly, it has swelled the ranks of an underperforming public sector. By way of background, the process of implementing this provision was accompanied by feverish speculation by ethnic Macedonian political parties and media, designed to stoke fear within the majority community. For instance, it was misleadingly suggested that Macedonians would be removed from their positions and replaced by Albanians. As a basic point of departure, the public administration is highly inefficient and, more importantly, oversized. However, in order to maintain social stability and preserve a delicate inter-ethnic equilibrium, a unique phenomenon has emerged in the post-conflict period whereby the Macedonian party in power<sup>28</sup> has kept its obligation to ethnic quotas by recruiting Albanians, but, in parallel, hired just as many, if not more, Macedonians. Such policy is clearly unsustainable, with the public

administration consuming 15% of the state budget.<sup>29</sup> Yet utmost priority was given to its undeclared political goals: firstly, it would alleviate social tensions brought about by high unemployment and, more importantly, provide thousands of voters a stable income. The net result is not only costly, but distorted: while thousands of Albanians have been added to the public administration, in real terms, the ethnic ratios dictated by the most recent national census remain unmet. Put another way: one of the main objectives of the OFA, to achieve proportional representation in the public administration, is further from fruition today than it has been at any point in the preceding 12 years.<sup>30</sup>

Secondly, the quota system has elevated ethnic origin over meritocracy in recruitment processes. Though the article on equitable representation explicitly mentions ‘competence and integrity’ as a basis for enrolment,<sup>31</sup> ethnic (and political)<sup>32</sup> considerations have assumed precedence in virtually all areas. To the extent that individuals are recruited by dint of their ethnicity, as opposed to their level of education and experience, this practice is counterproductive. While the pursuit of ethnic balance in a diverse society like Macedonia’s is a commendable and necessary goal, it should not come at the expense of a professional, proper functioning public

administration. This is not to dismiss the provision for ethnic quotas *per se*, only the manner in which it has been implemented. In effect, politicians have used recruitment into the public administration to buy popular support, regardless of its cost. So long as public finances allow, they have little incentive to curb this practice, which augurs ill for the efficacy and fiscal sustainability of Macedonia’s public sector.

### *Ethnic Symbols in a Unitary State*

Alongside their under-representation in state institutions, a core grievance of the Albanian community related to restrictions on the official use of the Albanian language and public use of the Albanian flag. Unlike the communist era, when it was permitted under specific circumstances,<sup>33</sup> Macedonia’s post-Yugoslav elite outlawed the flying of the Albanian flag on public buildings- as it did other foreign flags- on the grounds that it implied allegiance to a foreign state. For ethnic Macedonians, this was a specially emotive issue, not only because of the nationalist climate of the day in the Balkans, but also because neighbouring countries appeared to be engaged in a systematic campaign to discredit the authenticity of Macedonians’ ethnic identity and/or deny Macedonian

minority communities situated inside their borders the right to freely express this identity. In a major flashpoint in 1997, the mayors of Tetovo and Gostivar, two predominantly Albanian cities in the northwest of the country, were arrested and imprisoned during demonstrations against the ban, with dozens of others subjected to police maltreatment.

Against this backdrop, the issue of foreign flags was the subject of heated debate at Ohrid. Ultimately, it was agreed they could be flown on public buildings—together with the Macedonian flag<sup>34</sup>—in municipalities where an ethnic minority community is in the majority. The corresponding Law on the Use of Flags of Ethnic Communities was incrementally adopted in the post-conflict period, and was eventually passed by parliament in 2005; however, two years later, the Constitutional Court struck the law down, on the grounds that only the official state flag, that is, the Macedonian flag, should be flown on public buildings – prompting the resignation of its two Albanian judges, including Mahmut Jusufi, the court's president. In practice, the Constitutional Court's decree was largely ignored, with successive governments preferring instead to respect the arrangement reached at Ohrid. This arrangement was formally confirmed by amendments to the law being passed in July 2011, to

permit the public use of foreign flags in local government units where an ethnic minority community accounts for 50% of the population. More broadly, the right to freely express ethnic symbols as part of one's cultural identity has been gradually accepted by Macedonians, and proved an important factor in the deceleration of tensions between the country's two dominant communities.

The Framework Agreement also elevated Albanian to the status of a second official language, thus allowing for its use in parliament,<sup>35</sup> and an official language—alongside Macedonian—in units of local self-government where Albanians are 20% of the population.<sup>36</sup> The final wording of the constitution relating to this change is contested, however, and has prompted diametrically opposed readings across the two communities. Macedonians prefer to differentiate between the Macedonian language as the prime 'state' language, insofar as its usage is stipulated throughout the entire territory and in the country's international relations, and the Albanian language, which has equal status only in those municipalities where Albanians comprise 20% of the population. Conversely, Albanians tend to overemphasise the passage of the OFA that stipulates 'any other language spoken by at least 20% of the population is also an official language',<sup>37</sup> and neglect the

subsequent paragraphs, which delineate their usage at the local level, where, for a minority language to enjoy official status, it must satisfy the 20% threshold. In other words, while the OFA has elevated the status of Albanian and expanded its usage, in reality, Macedonian, as the sole language enjoying official status *throughout* the country, one that is not subject to any constitutional threshold, as well as Macedonia's official language in its international dealings, maintains primacy over all others.

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**As a peacebuilding strategy, political integration can advance reconciliation between former warring parties, and is often the difference between long-term stability and renewed violence.**

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The issue of the use of minority languages in education was likewise a source of friction between the Macedonians and the Albanians. Indeed, it is here where the tensions of the 1990s were principally played, specifically over the state's policy prohibiting the use of Albanian as a language of instruction at the tertiary level. While Macedonia's post-Yugoslav constitution allowed Albanians- as it did other minorities- to be instructed in their mother-tongue at primary and secondary school

levels, together with the Macedonian language,<sup>38</sup> they decreed that, for purposes of social cohesion, tertiary-level instruction be delivered strictly in Macedonian. This created a deep sense of grievance among Albanians, who perceived it as a deliberate ploy to deny them a university education and hinder their employment prospects, prompting mass demonstrations and violent clashes with the police. In 1995, in a major flashpoint in the Tetovo suburbs, one demonstrator was killed when police closed the premises of the Albanian-language University of Tetovo, which the government refused to accredit. Significant progress had been made in resolving this impasse prior to the outbreak of insurgency, and was eventually addressed by the OFA, which allows for state funding for university-level education in those languages spoken by 20% of the population.<sup>39</sup> In addition to legalising the University of Tetovo, the Framework Agreement also facilitated recognition of the South East European University, also situated in Tetovo, where instruction is provided in Albanian, Macedonian and English. While Macedonians occasionally criticise the existence of two Albanian universities as straying beyond the parameters of the OFA, on the whole they recognise the economic and social benefits they bring in the form of a better educated

and upwardly mobile population. In this respect, the agreement on the issue of Albanian-language higher education was belated.

### *Transforming Rebels into Civilians*

The political integration of former militants, however unpalatable, is a price many states emerging from violence have had to pay for peace. From Northern Ireland to Nepal, militants have been integrated into the very structures of the state they waged war against- at which point they have disavowed the method that facilitated their political rise. Understandably, this process, inasmuch as it rewards violence, is a problematic one, particularly for those to whom the violence was directed at. Yet, as a peacebuilding strategy, political integration can advance reconciliation between former warring parties, and is often the difference between long-term stability and renewed violence. Macedonia highlights many of these tensions and contradictions. Post-Ohrid, it has absorbed the entire leadership of the NLA into state institutions- a political precedent unknown in Europe in the last 50 years. Generally speaking, these individuals have played a positive role in consolidating and strengthening the peace. Given their past, however,

they continue to be perceived by most ethnic Macedonians as ‘terrorists’, and, as such, are unlikely to ever be fully trusted or accepted by the majority community.

Certainly, emotions from 2001 continue to run deep among ethnic Macedonians, as ongoing allegations of war crimes against former members of the NLA, spanning both its leadership and rank-and-file, illustrate. In 2002, the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) assumed jurisdiction over five cases of alleged war crimes, four involving the NLA and one involving the Macedonian state security forces. An indictment was issued only for the latter, relating to the extrajudicial killing of 10 Albanian civilians by Macedonian police in the village of Ljuboten in August 2001.<sup>40</sup> The four cases<sup>41</sup> concerning the NLA for which ICTY failed to issue indictments were returned, in 2008, to the Office of the Public Prosecutor for re-examination, to the anger of Albanian political parties, which claimed that the cases in question fell under the purview of the Amnesty Law and therefore had no validity.<sup>42</sup> As many of the suspected individuals- including its leader, Ali Ahmeti- are senior members of the DUI, which has spent most of the post-conflict period in coalition government, the lingering uncertainty delayed the formation of a new government following the

general election of June 2011. The issue was resolved only when the newly constituted parliament voted to extend the Amnesty Law to these cases, thus halting all outstanding court proceedings on suspected war crimes.<sup>43</sup>

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**In constructing a political and social system that better reflects Macedonia's ethnic distribution, the compact reached between the Macedonian and Albanian leaderships at Ohrid provides a basis for long-term peace between its two largest communities.**

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Clearly, this outcome was in the interest of those in power, given that the DUI had made the annulment of proceedings a precondition for re-entering into coalition with its senior partner, the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Party- Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity (VMRO-DPMNE). Yet it also reinforced the sense of injustice on the part of ethnic Macedonians that prominent DUI officials would not be held to account for their actions from the previous decade. While the flexibility of the VMRO-DPMNE, the dominant political force in Macedonia since 2006, helped resolve the impasse, principles of international law that

bar war crimes from being covered by national amnesty laws were ignored. Amnesty International was particularly vocal in its criticism, claiming in a press release that the decision would 'have the effect of denying justice, truth and reparation to the victims of the 2001 armed conflict', and, to that end, enjoined the government to reopen the cases.<sup>44</sup> All things considered, coalition partners moved on this issue not out of a moral urge to close one of the remaining chapters of 2001, but for reasons of political expediency and self-interest, namely, to achieve the political consensus necessary to continue ruling the country.

### *Bi-nationalism in the End? Two People Instead of Many*

The Framework Agreement has benefited Macedonia in multiple ways. In the first instance, it prevented what potentially could have become a protracted civil war, and one that likely would have drawn in neighbouring states. Secondly, its implementation has corrected structural inequalities that had long been a source of internal tension and instability. In constructing a political and social system that better reflects Macedonia's ethnic distribution, the compact reached between the Macedonian and Albanian leaderships at Ohrid provides a basis for long-term peace



between its two largest communities. In this sense, the 2001 settlement can be understood as an inflection point in Macedonia's democratic evolution. Finally, institutionalisation of the OFA's provisions has kept the country on course for ultimate NATO and EU membership. That said, a closer examination of trends on the ground in the 12 years since it was signed reveals a number of flaws, some already outlined. Possibly most fundamentally, it has slowly but surely moved Macedonia towards a bi-nationalism in which power is monopolised by Macedonians and Albanians at the expense of other communities. In and of itself, this trend should not necessarily be construed as negative- based on Macedonia's ethnic distribution, the trend is a natural one. However, it fails to justly reflect the country's broader, multi-ethnic reality.

Indeed, while elevating the constitutional and political status of Albanians, the rights stipulated in the OFA largely bypass smaller minorities such as Turks, Serbs, Roma, Vlachs and Bosniaks. Of these communities, the Turks meet the 20% threshold, triggering concessions relating to language and ethnic symbols at a local government level, in only three municipalities, and the Serbs and the Roma in one municipality each.<sup>45</sup> At a state level, none of these communities meet the designated

threshold. Even those provisions of the OFA that ostensibly apply to all non-majority communities, regardless of their share of the population, such as proportional representation in the public administration,<sup>46</sup> have been applied primarily to Albanian-Macedonians; as the International Crisis Group notes, Turks and Roma remain under-represented.<sup>47</sup> As a general observation, non-Macedonian and non-Albanian communities lack the numbers to wield any meaningful political influence. Absent a critical mass of people, these communities have been pushed further to the political margins post-Ohrid, giving rise to suspicions that the Framework Agreement has unintentionally created a *de facto* bi-national state, as opposed to the genuinely multi-ethnic one it ostensibly envisaged.

The move towards bi-nationalism has clearly suited the Albanian community, in the sense that, politically, it has effectively placed it on an equal footing with ethnic Macedonians- a trend that Albanians, naturally, have encouraged. This, in turn, has alarmed Macedonians, wary that the newly empowered Albanian community might one day threaten their primacy over the state. As a counterweight, its leadership has promoted a bigger political role for smaller ethnic communities, albeit with minimal success. Albanians have perceived the empowerment of

other minorities as a hidden agenda to dilute their political standing, and have instinctively pushed back against any such proposals.

Two examples attest to this behaviour. Firstly, while the official use of the languages of non-Macedonian and non-Albanian communities at the municipal level is subject to a discretionary decision by local decision-makers,<sup>48</sup> even where the language is not spoken by 20% of the population, as stipulated in the OFA, official status has been granted only sporadically in the past 12 years, and only after prolonged procedural infighting at the local council level.<sup>49</sup> Secondly, measures to introduce guaranteed parliamentary seats for smaller ethnic communities have been opposed by the Albanian parties. On average, smaller communities hold between one and four of Macedonia's 120 parliamentary seats, usually as a result of pre-election alliances formed with ethnic Macedonian parties- a level of representation that translates into merely marginal political influence.<sup>50</sup> While both the VMRO-DPMNE and the Social Democratic Union of Macedonia (SDSM) have previously supported suggestions to guarantee parliamentary seats for these communities as a means of enhancing the multi-ethnicity of local politics, they have routinely met resistance from the

Albanian side. Even those Macedonian parties formally propagating multi-ethnicity were doing so chiefly out of self-interest, insofar as the introduction of additional, non-Albanian minority seats would likely undercut the power of Albanian-Macedonians, and, since non-Albanian representatives generally side with Macedonian parties, theoretically strengthen their ability to pass legislation considered anathema by the Albanians.<sup>51</sup> Ultimately, as individual communities, non-Macedonians and non-Albanians lack the numbers- and, therefore, the clout- to play a more decisive role in the country's politics. It is instructive to note that, in the last parliamentary election, three new seats were set aside for members of the Diaspora, but none for the smaller ethnic communities.

An important procedural aspect of bi-nationalism is the Badinter majority,<sup>52</sup> an innovative principle considered to be a key safeguard of the OFA. According to this rule, for amendments to the constitution and legislation deemed to be of specific importance to ethnic minorities- for instance, as they relate to local self-government, language, education and the composition of the Constitutional Court- to pass through parliament, approval is needed from a majority of all deputies *plus* a majority of deputies representing the minority communities.<sup>53</sup> The logic of Badinter

is to ensure ethnic minorities- whose representatives, on average, occupy a quarter of parliament's seats- cannot be outvoted by Macedonian deputies, based on a simple majority ruling, on sensitive constitutional amendments or legislation that has a particular bearing on them.<sup>54</sup> Concerns were immediately raised that the requirement of a double majority would needlessly slow parliament's decision-making. Undeniably, the Badinter procedures have empowered Albanians through the power of *veto* in prescribed areas; however, the pace of legislation-making has not changed in any discernible way from the pre-2001 period. What is more, the elevated legal threshold has forced political actors to actively explore ways to build consensus across the ethnic divide- a positive development that, hitherto, had largely been absent from domestic politics.

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**The Framework Agreement can be said to have served its primary goal of addressing core Albanian grievances while preserving Macedonia's territorial integrity and the unitary character of its state.**

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That said, the Badinter principle is not without flaw. In recent years, there

has been an ongoing political struggle to broaden the scope of its application. Albanians have pushed for ever more legislative areas to be covered by double majority voting, including as they relate to the election of the National Bank governor, adoption of the national budget and the internal decision-making procedures of the Constitutional Court, a debate that Macedonians have generally been unwilling to partake in. More fundamentally, given their respective numbers and level of parliamentary representation, the Badinter majority, again, gives undue sway to Albanians at the expense of other minorities. While the provision on double majority voting applies to all ethnic minorities, achieving a majority among the representatives of non-Macedonians is totally dependent on the votes of Albanian deputies, considering the paucity of seats held by smaller communities- a situation that effectively sidelines the political voice of non-Macedonians and non-Albanians, and further embeds bi-nationalism. In the final analysis, neither the Macedonian nor the Albanian community consider smaller ethnic groups, collectively some 10% of the country's total population- a not-insignificant amount- to be important enough to participate in policy debates that are crucial to the future of Macedonia and its citizens.

## Conclusion: An Assessment of the OFA's Prospects

Empirical studies suggest that 40% of all civil wars reappear in some form within a decade.<sup>55</sup> Macedonia, in theory, has passed the most dangerous phase. The biggest threat to its unitary state, the 2001 conflict, appears resolved politically and legally. In reality, it is not. Scepticism *vis-à-vis* the intentions of the 'Other' persists. Ethnic fissures remain, particularly at the grassroots level. Macedonia will be unified in diversity only when the majority community accepts genuine power-sharing with its Albanian co-habitants, the latter pledge their unequivocal allegiance to the country and respect the common symbols of state, and an opening is created for smaller ethnic communities to play a genuine role in shaping the country's future direction. It is incumbent on politicians and the general public to adhere fully to the OFA and, together as co-citizens, work towards a common Euro-Atlantic future. At this point, a caveat is in order: the job of establishing and solidifying a stable, multi-ethnic democracy will not end with the Framework Agreement's implementation. Long-term peace will be determined less by the normative solutions prescribed by the OFA than by political maturity on the part of

local elites, of all ethnic hues, allied to a culture of tolerance among the broader population. In this context, politicians must remain steadfast in articulating the agreement's benefits and reiterating to the Macedonian people the value of non-violence, even though the OFA is a product of it.

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Macedonians believe that gradual improvements would have happened without armed violence, whereas Albanians portray the insurgency as the last resort of what had become a futile endeavour.

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For all its flaws, the Framework Agreement can be said to have served its primary goal of addressing core Albanian grievances while preserving Macedonia's territorial integrity and the unitary character of its state. As an antidote to Macedonia's skewed internal balance of power, it has made important headway in the 12 years since it was signed. The agreement's implementation has oftentimes been slow, and remains incomplete. The document is not perfect; indeed, it was never designed to fix all of the weaknesses of what is a complex society. It cannot be denied that, designed as it is, the OFA empowers

Albanians disproportionately over other minorities. Yet, as a hedge against future inter-ethnic physical confrontation, it has proved successful- and durable. With the political and legal status of Albanians secured, the likelihood of Macedonia backsliding into violence along the lines of 2001 is remote. As a reflection of its stabilising function, the OFA today enjoys majority support among the population as a whole. Though a majority has never been achieved among ethnic Macedonians *per se*, tangible gains have nevertheless been made, with public support for the Framework Agreement showing a steady increase within the ranks of the majority community over the preceding 12 years. Macedonians have come to recognise the OFA's benefits with time, and, in general terms, do not believe it has ceded too much power to the Albanians, just as the latter believe they have won more concessions than the agreement stipulated. This diverging- albeit positive- cross-ethnic perception has been an important factor in maintaining post-conflict stability.

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Without the carrot of integration, and the conditionality it carries, the likelihood of political elites observing the OFA as a basis for sound inter-ethnic relations will recede.

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Nevertheless, doubts persist among ethnic Macedonians over the future intentions of their Albanian co-habitants. While the majority community considers it a 'final answer' to Albanian demands, the perception that in Albanian eyes the OFA is merely a transitional platform for the future architecture of the country, meaning federalisation or outright secession in the unlikely event the regional context allowed for a redrawing of national borders, still holds sway among average Macedonians, even though for the most part these options have been explicitly ruled out by Albanian politicians, who remain committed to the OFA and a unitary Macedonia. The key point to be made is that, looking forward, modifications to the text or the negotiation of a new grand bargain cannot be reached through violence, but only via dialogue and mutual consent. That said, the constitutional and legislative reforms catalysed by the OFA are unlikely to have been achieved in a timely manner through the process of negotiation between Macedonians and Albanians, using parliamentary procedures. While several attempts were made in the 1990s by Albanian parties in the coalition government to initiate structural change, the wont of their Macedonian partners was to offer rhetoric, not laws. At this point two conflicting perspectives

continue to overlap: Macedonians believe that gradual improvements would have happened without armed violence, whereas Albanians portray the insurgency as the last resort of what had become a futile endeavour. Either way, violence for political ends is no longer an option, which Albanians, generally speaking, have now grasped.

The time when experts believed that Macedonia's future was dependent on external forces<sup>56</sup> has largely passed. The turn of historical events over the course of the last decade has rendered once powerful regional dynamics less influential. North Kosovo notwithstanding, the immediate neighbourhood is not generating instability, regional processes of reconciliation and Euro-Atlantic integration are proceeding in parallel- however fitfully at times- and global powers are preoccupied with different agendas elsewhere. Rather, it is the internal contradictions inherent in Macedonian society that pose the greatest threat to its future. Fragile internal cohesion, coupled with high rates of poverty and unemployment, will continue to be a drag on Macedonia's development. Increasingly negative political trends, linked in part to sluggish progress on the EU front,<sup>57</sup> are a major cause for concern. While it has grown in confidence, Macedonia remains weak and insecure. In this sense, the

diplomatic retreat of the United States from the Balkans and the seeming decline of Europe are negative developments, which cast doubt on Macedonia's ability to address the strategic challenges that confront it, namely, resolving the longstanding name dispute with Greece<sup>58</sup> and achieving Euro-Atlantic integration. Clearly, without resolution of the name dispute, there will be no Euro-Atlantic future; without the carrot of integration, and the conditionality it carries, the likelihood of political elites observing the OFA as a basis for sound inter-ethnic relations will recede; and without integration into a wider, value-based community, the prospect of a genuinely democratic, European-standard polity taking root in the country will dissipate. Taken together, these factors threaten to relegate Macedonia to the group of regional laggards, alongside Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo – the latest informal sub-group of Western Balkan states, which have long struggled for internal and external legitimacy in the face of formidable structural weaknesses. Citizens of these countries should worry that, at this moment in time, there appears to be neither an international strategy, nor independent national visions, in sight to secure their place in Europe and the world.

## Endnotes

- 1 Greece objects to Macedonia's use of cultural symbols and references it considers Greek, including the name 'Macedonia', the use of which, it argues, implies territorial pretensions over its northern province of the same name. Resolution of this dispute remains ongoing. For the purpose of brevity, the country will be referred to as 'Macedonia' throughout this paper, as opposed to the more cumbersome 'the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia', as it is known in international fora, pending agreement on a name that satisfies both sides.
- 2 According to Macedonia's last national census, staged in 2002, of a population of just over 2 million, ethnic Macedonians account for 65% of the population; Albanians 25%; Turks 3.9%; Roma 2.7%; and Serbs 1.8%; see, International Crisis Group, "Macedonia: Ten Years After the Conflict", *Europe Report No. 212*, (August 2011), p.1, n.3, at <http://www.crisisgroup.org/-/media/Files/europe/balkans/macedonia/212%20Macedonia%20---%20Ten%20Years%20after%20the%20Conflict.pdf> [last visited 29 March 2013].
- 3 Rogers Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe*, New York, Cambridge University Press, 1996, pp. 4-5.
- 4 The full text of the Framework Agreement is available at the Secretariat for Implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement, Republic of Macedonia, "Ohrid Framework Agreement", at [http://siofa.gov.mk/mk/dokumente/Ramkoven\\_dogovor.pdf](http://siofa.gov.mk/mk/dokumente/Ramkoven_dogovor.pdf) [last visited 27 July 2012].
- 5 Sasho Ripiloski, *Conflict in Macedonia: Exploring a Paradox in the Former Yugoslavia*, Boulder, First Forum Press, 2011, p.116.
- 6 The Social Democratic Union of Macedonia (SDSM) and the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Party – Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity (VMRO-DPMNE) on the Macedonian side, and the Democratic Party of Albanians (DPA) and the Party for Democratic Prosperity (PDP) on the Albanian side.
- 7 According to Gallup's 2008 Balkan Monitor, only 30% of ethnic Macedonians view the OFA as a long-term solution to the country's ethnic problems; see, Gallup Balkan Monitor, "Insights and Perceptions: Voices of the Balkans- 2008 Analytical Report", p.10, at [http://www.balkan-monitor.eu/files/BalkanMonitor-2008\\_Analytical\\_Report.pdf](http://www.balkan-monitor.eu/files/BalkanMonitor-2008_Analytical_Report.pdf) [last visited 24 September 2012].
- 8 The term "anti-Ohrid faction" is widely recognised as referring to Macedonia's prime minister, interior minister and parliamentary president during the 2001 conflict; see, International Crisis Group, "Macedonia's Name: Why the Dispute Matters and How to Resolve It", *Europe Report No. 122*, (December 2001), p. 3, at <http://www.crisisgroup.org/-/media/Files/europe/Macedonia%2014.pdf> [last visited 3 August 12].
- 9 According to the State Statistical Office, Macedonia's current rate of unemployment stands at 31.6%; see, State Statistical Office, Republic of Macedonia, "Labour Market", at [http://www.stat.gov.mk/OblastOpsto\\_en.aspx?id=14](http://www.stat.gov.mk/OblastOpsto_en.aspx?id=14) [last visited 15 October 2012].
- 10 Florian Bieber, "Power-Sharing and the Implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement", Skopje, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Macedonia Office, 2008, pp. 7-8.
- 11 Ripiloski, *Conflict in Macedonia*, p. 100.

- 12 Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, “Macedonia: A Conflict Analysis”, p. 8, at [http://www.sida.se/shared/jsp/download.jsp?f=SIDA3044en\\_MacConfAnaWEB.pdf&a=2899](http://www.sida.se/shared/jsp/download.jsp?f=SIDA3044en_MacConfAnaWEB.pdf&a=2899) [last visited 4 November 2011].
- 13 A total of 15 amendments were made to the constitution.
- 14 For instance, in March 2002, an international donors’ conference was staged in Brussels, where donors pledged US \$515 million to Macedonia to assist with post-conflict reconstruction and economic development; see John Phillips, *Macedonia: Warlords and Rebels in the Balkans*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 2004, p. 186. Likewise, in November 2004, days before a national referendum on the validity of the Law on Local Self-Government, the United States recognised Macedonia under its constitutional name- a move that was widely acknowledged as being designed to encourage ethnic Macedonians from participating in a vote which, if passed, threatened to reverse post-conflict gains. In the event, voter turnout was well below the 50% threshold for the result to have taken legal force.
- 15 See “Нов рамковен договор за сопствен рејтинг” (New Framework Agreement For Their Own Rating), *Time* (Skopje), 12 May 2009.
- 16 Gallup Balkan Monitor, “Insights and Perceptions: Voices of the Balkans – 2008 Analytical Report”, p. 10.
- 17 Ohrid Framework Agreement, Section 1.2, Basic Principles.
- 18 Merle Vetterlein, “The Influence of the Ohrid Framework Agreement on the Educational Policy of the Republic of Macedonia”, paper presented at the 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Kokkalis Graduate Student Workshop-Kokkalis Program on Southeastern and East-Central Europe, Harvard Kennedy School, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 2-3 February 2006, p. 7.
- 19 Sally Broughton, Laura Davis and Andrew Loomis, “Politics and Identity in Macedonia: Intrinsic versus Extrinsic Understandings”, paper presented at the conference Macedonia–Macedonias: Changing Contexts in the Changing Balkans, Centre for South-East European Studies- School of Slavonic and East European Studies, University College London, London, 14-16 June 2001, p. 9; cited in Ulf Brunnbauer, “The Implementation of the Ohrid Agreement: Ethnic Macedonian Resentments”, *Journal on Ethnopolitics and Minority Issues in Europe*, No. 1 (2002), p. 6.
- 20 Ohrid Framework Agreement, Section 3.1, Development of Decentralized Government.
- 21 Ripiloski, *Conflict in Macedonia*, p. 119.
- 22 Awa Dabo, Patrick Keuleer, Jago Salmon and Moises Venancio, “Local Governance, Peace Building and State Building in Post-Conflict Settings: A UNDP Discussion Paper”, p. 13, at <http://www.uncdf.org/gffd/docs/post-conflict.pdf> [last visited 16 September 2012].
- 23 See the Law on Local Self-Government of the Republic of Macedonia, Article 12 (“Criteria for Formation”) and Article 13 (“Delineation of Territory”) at the Urban Institute, *Law on Local Self-Government of the Republic of Macedonia*, p. 4, at [http://www.urban.org/PDF/mcd\\_locgov.pdf](http://www.urban.org/PDF/mcd_locgov.pdf) [last visited 11 November 2011].
- 24 Veli Kreci and Bekim Ymeri, “The Impact of Territorial Re-Organisational Policy Interventions in the Republic of Macedonia”, *Local Government Studies*, Vol. 36, No. 2 (2010), p. 279, Table 2; cited in Tom Vangelovski, “The Framework Agreement in Macedonia: Successful



- Intervention or Prelude to Conflict?”, in Kirill Nourzhanov (ed.), *Two Decades without the Soviet Union: Transformations in Eurasian Space. Proceedings of the 10<sup>th</sup> Biennial Conference of AACaPS, 3-4 February, 2011*, Australasian Association for Communist and Post-Communist Studies and the Australian National University, Canberra, 2011, p. 4.
- 25 International Crisis Group, *Macedonia: Ten Years After the Conflict*, p. 19.
- 26 Ibid, pp.18-19.
- 27 Dabo et al., “Local Governance, Peace Building and State Building in Post-Conflict Settings: A UNDP Discussion Paper”, p. 13, at <http://uncdf.org/gfd/docs/post-conflict.pdf> [last visited 16 June 2013].
- 28 While both major ethnic Macedonian parties have been guilty, this phenomenon has become particularly pronounced since 2006, under the watch of the VMRO-DPMNE.
- 29 ‘Половина буџет за плати и социјала’ (A Half of the Budget for Salaries and Social Affairs), *Dnevnik* (Skopje), 25 October 2010, at <http://dnevnik.com.mk/?itemID=9A2E3281E1E54944BEAE4DE6FB1703D7&arc=1> [last visited 8 September 2011].
- 30 Based on what was agreed on at Ohrid, Albanians should make up 25% of the public administration, in line with their share of Macedonia’s population. The simultaneous recruitment of Macedonians, however, means this target has yet to be reached. The precise number of people employed in the public administration is a closely guarded secret. In the absence of official figures, based on verbal statements by government ministers, it is thought to number upwards of 120,000, of which 17% are believed to be Albanian- well below the 25% mandated by the OFA. As such, of the Framework Agreement’s core provisions, it is proportional representation in the public administration that, today, remains the furthest from being accomplished; see, “Се вработуваат Албанци, но и многу Македонци” (Albanians are getting hired, but so are many Macedonians), at <http://www.vreme.com.mk/DesktopDefault.aspx?tabindex=10&tabid=1&EditionID=1913&ArticleID=130890> [last visited 8 September 2011].
- 31 Ohrid Framework Agreement, Section 4.2, Non-Discrimination and Equitable Representation.
- 32 Macedonia’s public administration is highly politicised. Indeed, gaining employment in the public administration depends largely on whether one is affiliated to the political parties in power- a practice that Macedonian and Albanian parties alike are guilty of; see, International Crisis Group details in, “Macedonia: Ten Years After the Conflict”, pp. 10-11.
- 33 For example, on state holidays such as the Republic Day (November 29) and the Macedonian National Uprising Day (October 11).
- 34 The Law on the Use of Flags of Ethnic Communities stipulates that the Macedonian flag must be one-third larger than the national flag of the non-Macedonian community.
- 35 The use of Albanian in parliament has come to be accepted, despite initial opposition from ethnic Macedonians, as evidenced by the refusal of some members to use translation headsets in the opening session of the first post-conflict parliament.
- 36 Ripiloski, *Conflict in Macedonia*, p. 117.
- 37 Ohrid Framework Agreement, Section 6.5, Education and Use of Languages.

- 38 Vetterlein, “The Influence of the Ohrid Framework Agreement”, p. 8.
- 39 Ohrid Framework Agreement, Section 6.2, Education and Use of Languages.
- 40 Indictments were specifically issued for Ljube Boškoski, Macedonia’s then interior minister, and Johan Tarčulovski, an ethnic Macedonian police officer. Boškoski was acquitted in 2008 of war crimes, while Tarčulovski was given a 12-year prison sentence.
- 41 For specific information on these cases (“NLA Leadership”; “Mavrovo Road Workers”; “Lipkovo Water Reserve”; and “Neprosteni”), see International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, “Press Release: The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia Requested to Defer Five Cases to the Competence of the International Tribunal”, at <http://www.icty.org/sid/8069> [last visited 10 August 2012].
- 42 Sinisa Jakov Marusic, “Macedonia Abandons Hague Cases”, *Balkan Insight*, at <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/macedonia-passes-amnesty-for-hague-cases> [last visited 25 September 2012].
- 43 In July 2011, parliament adopted the so-called “authentic interpretation” of the Amnesty Law, which obliged the Office of the Public Prosecutor and all courts on the territory of the country to halt procedures connected to the four cases.
- 44 Amnesty International, “Macedonia: Time to Deliver Justice to the Victims of War Crimes”, at <http://www.amnesty.org/en/for-media/press-releases/macedonia-time-deliver-justice-victims-war-crimes-2011-09-01> [last visited 30 October 2011].
- 45 The Turkish community in Centar Župa, Mavrovo and Rostuša, and Plasnica; the Serb community in Čučer-Sandevo; and the Roma community in Šuto Orizari; see, 2002 national census, Table 3: Total Population of the Republic of Macedonia According to Ethnic Affiliation, pp. 34-35: State Statistical Office, Republic of Macedonia, ‘Census of Population, Households and Dwellings in the Republic of Macedonia, 2002, Final Data’, 2005, at [http://www.stat.gov.mk/pdf/kniga\\_13.pdf](http://www.stat.gov.mk/pdf/kniga_13.pdf) [last visited 24 November 2011].
- 46 Section 4.2 of the Framework Agreement, on Non-Discrimination and Equitable Representation, calls for “the authorities...[to] take action to correct present imbalances in the composition of the public administration, in particular through the recruitment of members of under-represented communities”.
- 47 International Crisis Group, “Macedonia: Ten Years After the Conflict”, p. 15, n.151.
- 48 Ohrid Framework Agreement, Section 6.6, Education and Use of Languages.
- 49 The Turkish language has been granted official status in Gostivar, the Vlach language in Kruševo, and the Serbian and Romani languages in Kumanovo despite these communities not meeting the 20% threshold in the municipalities in question; see, International Crisis Group, “Macedonia: Ten Years After the Conflict”, p. 16.
- 50 Florian Bieber, “Partial Implementation, Partial Success: The Case of Macedonia”, in Ian O’Flynn and David Russell (eds.), *Power Sharing: New Challenges for Divided Societies*, London, Pluto, 2005, p. 113.
- 51 Vangelovski, “The Framework Agreement in Macedonia”, p. 10.
- 52 The constitutional mechanism that specifies double majority voting is named after the French

jurist Robert Badinter, who recommended the provision.

- 53 Ripiloski, *Conflict in Macedonia*, p. 117.
- 54 Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, “Law Drafting and Regulatory Management in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia: An Assessment”, p. 13, n.8, at <http://www.osce.org/odihr/34685> [last visited 23 September 2012].
- 55 Paul Collier, Anke Hoeffler and Måns Söderbom, *Post-Conflict Risks*, CSAE WPS/2006-12, University of Oxford, 2006, p. 9.
- 56 See, for instance, Cindy Jebb and Peter Liotta, “Macedonia: End of the Beginning or Beginning of the End?”, *Parameters*, Vol. 32, No. 1 (Spring 2002), pp. 96-111.
- 57 Macedonia’s bid for EU membership is effectively frozen, linked to the failure to resolve the name dispute with Greece, with the country still awaiting a start date for negotiations some seven years after it was granted candidate status. The EU’s standing- within government and the general public- has waned as the integration process has stalled. Simply put, membership of the organisation no longer carries the gravitational pull in Macedonia that it once did, certainly within the majority community. With its appeal and influence noticeably diminished, Macedonia has changed its behaviour towards the union, which, today, is more engaged in delivering soft criticism to political leaders in regular meetings held behind closed doors, as opposed to bringing genuine and concerted pressure to bear on the government to leverage it into necessary reform. This is an important factor in explaining the recent atrophy of Macedonia’s internal politics, most noticeably restrictions on media freedom.
- 58 The name dispute has proved intractable, producing one of the more peculiar bilateral disagreements of modern times. Greece placed trade sanctions on its landlocked northern neighbour in the early to mid-1990s, and obstructed its accession to regional and international bodies. Macedonia did not become a UN member until April 1993, and only then under the provisional name of “the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”. Talks between the two sides remain ongoing- albeit irregularly- under the auspices of the UN.



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# Turkey and the Balkans: Overcoming Prejudices, Building Bridges and Constructing a Common Future

Birgül DEMİRTAŞ\*

## Abstract

*Turkey is a historically important regional actor and is trying to contribute to the establishment of a peaceful and secure environment in the Balkans. The region has had a salient place in the Turkish foreign policy agenda in the last two decades. In the 1990s Ankara started to play a considerable role by developing initiatives that aimed at contributing to the end of the conflicts there. This paper analyses Turkey's regional policies in the last decade in order to understand the main continuities and changes. The main research question of the study is as follows: Has there been any considerable change in Turkey's relations with the Balkan countries? The study has two fundamental arguments: First, although the main aims of Turkish foreign policy remain the same, there are now different instruments that have been implemented to an increasing degree. Second, relations have been transnationalising thanks to the spillover effects of globalisation.*

## Key Words

Turkey, Balkans, positive peace, negative peace, soft power, transnationalisation.

## Introduction

The 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Balkan Wars is a great opportunity to examine from different perspectives why former friendly neighbouring peoples became enemies and how the outbreak of new wars can be prevented on the Balkan peninsula. Although the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century witnessed the start of a new page in the history of the region after the formal ending of the violent conflicts of the 1990s, the Balkans have still not attained positive peace. Despite all the international and regional attempts and cooperation, there are still important security issues in the region that have not been solved and limit the potential of a full and durable peace. The continuing existence of important problems has the potential of pushing nationalist-oriented leaders to label political issues existential threats, to call for securitised policies and to implement emergency measures.<sup>1</sup>

Turkey is a historically important regional actor that aims at contributing to the establishment of a peaceful and

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secure environment. The Balkans has always had an important place in Turkish foreign policy. In the 1990s the country started to play a greater role in the region by developing some salient initiatives that aimed at ending the conflicts. This paper analyses Turkey's regional policies in the last decade in order to understand the main continuities and the changes. The main research question of the study is as follows: Has there been any considerable change in Turkey's relations with the Balkan countries? The study has two fundamental arguments. First, although the main Turkish aims remain the same, there are now different instruments that have been increasingly implemented. Second, relations have been transnationalising thanks to the spillover effects of globalisation.

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Turkey is a historically important regional actor and is trying to contribute to the establishment of a peaceful and secure environment in the Balkans.

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The study comprises the following sections. The first part will explain the theoretical approach. The second section will shed light on the historical background of relations. The third part will analyse the continuing

security issues in the region. Then, the fundamental characteristic of Turkey's regional policy in the last decade will be examined. Afterwards, the main regional and international challenges confronting Turkey will be taken into account.

## A Changing International System and Changing Identities

In order to give meaning to Turkey's regional policies, one should take into account the changes taking place at both the international and domestic levels. The global conjuncture facing Turkey today is fundamentally different from that during the bipolar system. During the Cold War years, when formulating its foreign policy Turkey had to carefully analyse the attitudes of the then great powers. But since the early 1990s Turkey has had a larger space for manoeuvring and has benefitted from this new conjuncture by launching new initiatives in different regional contexts, ranging from the Caucasus to the Middle East, from Central Asia to the Balkans.

According to the neorealist theory change or progress in global affairs can stem from two factors. First, there can be a change of the number of great powers. Second, the relative capability of the units can change.<sup>2</sup>

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In fact, both kinds of changes are relevant in the Turkish case. Not only has the international system undergone a radical change, but also Turkey's demographic and economic powers have increased considerably compared to two decades earlier. This conjuncture has allowed Turkey to create new initiatives for its neighbouring regions, to be involved in various mediation-facilitation activities and to develop alternative approaches.

In addition, in order to understand Turkey's current approach towards the Balkans, one should also analyse the changes taking place in its national and state identity. As a result of the radical changes of the early 1990s a new discussion started in Turkey as to what would be the direction of Turkish foreign policy in the new millennium. This discussion was closely related to debates about Turkey's identity. According to some, Ankara should prioritise the newly

independent states in the Caucasus and Central Asia and create new bonds based on the common identity of "Turkishness". For others Turkey should have a much more religiously oriented foreign policy, and the country should try to better its relations with those countries that have Muslim majority populations. Another view was that Turkey's European orientation should continue as was the case during the Cold War.<sup>3</sup>

As a result of the heavy discussion about the future orientation of Ankara's foreign policy, the prevailing opinion has been that while Turkey should follow the European path, it also must not ignore the newly independent states in its neighbouring regions as well as other states and actors that are ignored by the great powers.

Within that context the 1990s also represented a time period in which Turkey's Ottoman past came into the discussion more. Traditional Turkish foreign policy tended to ignore the Ottoman period as much as possible and acted as if the Ottoman legacy did not have any influence upon Turkish society or on Turkey's foreign and security policies. But as the Bosnian War started in 1992, Turkey's decision makers came to understand that one could no longer ignore the Ottoman legacy.<sup>4</sup>

This article is based on the assumption that interests cannot be understood by isolating identity. In other words, foreign policy makers can decide about “national interests” only by taking national identity into account. Located both in Asia and Europe, its history being based on both Western and Eastern values, Turkey presents an interesting case study in terms of constructivism. This study argues that Turkey’s changing relative position in international politics as well as its identity and its reinterpretation of its own history provide an important way to give meaning to its policies toward the Balkans. The following section will dwell on the historical background of Turkish-Balkan ties based on the structure of global politics and the concept of identity.

## Historical Background: The International Structure-National Identity Nexus

Ottoman rule over the region has had considerable impact on the Balkan territories and societies. The Ottoman legacy still exists in the Balkans in many political, cultural and social aspects. One important effect of this legacy is the state borders that are still valid today.<sup>5</sup> The borders of present states were drawn as a result of their wars with the Sublime Porte, as well as the interventions of

the great powers. Another aspect of the legacy can be seen in the demographic structure of the regional countries. Ottoman settlement policies contributed to the multicultural and multi-religious nature of the Balkans. In addition to settling Turkish populations in various parts of the region, Ottoman rulers brought the Serbian population to the Banat and Vojvodina, Romanians to the Banat, and Albanians to Kosovo, Epirus and Macedonia.<sup>6</sup> Turkish minorities in the Balkan countries, especially in Bulgaria, Greece and Macedonia, as well as the Muslims of Albania, Kosovo and Bosnia Herzegovina, are part of the Ottoman legacy.<sup>7</sup> The fact that Balkan Muslims on the territories of the former Yugoslavia are still called Turks is an important symbol of the living memory of the empire among the Balkan peoples.

Furthermore, from remaining Ottoman buildings to common cuisine and social beliefs, one can see the impact of the empire within present Balkan boundaries in many aspects.<sup>8</sup> Even today there are many Turkish-origin words in the Balkan languages. Even the term “Balkan” itself is a Turkish word meaning a series of mountains.<sup>9</sup> However, after the formation of nation-states, national leaders often resorted to discourse of the “Ottoman yoke”<sup>10</sup> and began to use the Ottoman past as the “other” in order to strengthen national consciousness,



thus overemphasising negative features of the empire and ignoring the positive parts. This attitude on the part of leading elites led to hatred towards Turkey and suspicion towards Turkish minorities living within their borders. This fact made cooperation between Turkey and some of the Balkan states difficult in the succeeding decades.

This historical legacy has had an impact on Turkish-Balkan ties after the establishment of the Republic of Turkey irrespective of how the Ottoman past was perceived (or misperceived). After the Western-style nation-states were formed on the Balkan peninsula, the international system and state identities had their effects on regional relations. As an example, the multi-polar environment in the interwar years allowed regional states to launch regional initiatives, as seen in the case of the Balkan Pact of 1934. The Balkan Pact was an important international treaty in the history of cooperation of the Balkan countries because it was a Balkan-originated treaty and did not come into being through the encouragement of any great power.<sup>11</sup> In comparison, the bipolar structure after 1946 led to the dominance of great power politics in regional affairs. Due to the perception of mutual risks and threats the countries of the region had to act within the limitations of the Cold War environment. Under such circumstances

only countries with similar identities (Eastern or Western) had an opportunity to come closer.

A salient example of the changing international circumstances on Turkish foreign relations was the détente period. Thanks to burgeoning relations between the opposing blocs Turkey started to pursue a more active policy toward the region, as can be seen in the conclusion of the Agreement on Migration and Family Unification between Sofia and Ankara in 1968, with its aim of bringing families together that were separated because of the expulsion policies of the Bulgarian regime in the 1950s.<sup>12</sup>

Turkey's Balkan agenda was preoccupied with security issues in the 1990s because of the succession wars of Yugoslavia. Due to the changing international circumstances Turkey could develop its own initiatives to contribute to its solution. At the time Turkey was trying to find a new place and identity for itself in the international system and its foreign policy towards the Bosnian and Kosovo Wars led to that search for a new identity.

From the very beginning of the Bosnian War, Turkey started a substantial number of initiatives in the international platforms and argued for the necessity of an international military measures. As the then president, it

called the Organization of the Islamic Conference to an extraordinary meeting, proposed an action plan for the solution of the conflict, convened a Balkan Conference, undertook many initiatives at the UN, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and NATO to convince its Western partners of a military campaign, and made efforts to reach an agreement between Bosniaks and Croats. In summary, Turkey followed a consistent, active and assertive policy throughout the war.<sup>13</sup>

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Throughout the conflict, Turkish decision makers emphasised that Turkey was a great state that should play a leading role in regional affairs. In addition to launching many international initiatives, it also declared its readiness to participate in all possible diplomatic and military measures that were decided upon by international organisations like the UN or NATO. By referring to the expectations of Bosniaks from Turkey, Turkish decision makers made sure that they would listen to these expectations

and act accordingly. Furthermore, the Turkish political elite compared Turkey's role in Bosnia to that of the US in the Persian Gulf since the Bosniaks perceived Ankara as a major actor in the Bosnian affairs.<sup>14</sup>

The Turkish governments at the time saw that as long as they proved their importance in the Balkans, they were taken into consideration in international platforms, as can be seen in the visits of officials from the UN and the EC, as well as American politicians, to Ankara, and Turkey's invitation to the London Conference. Therefore, one could state that Turkey's traditional Western identity, and its interest in the maintenance of this identity in the post-Cold War period, was an important factor in the formulation of Turkish policies. By being active on the Balkan stage and undertaking a supportive role for Bosniaks in the international platforms, Turkey attempted to prove its importance to the Western world.

In the case of Kosovo War, Turkey pursued an active policy as well, though with a low profile. Turkey's efforts to show its importance for the Balkans and for Western security played a role in its formulation of the policies in the Kosovo conflict too. Despite Kosovo's different legal status within Yugoslavia, Turkey joined the Western world's

efforts to find a solution. Although it was not as active as it had been during the Bosnian War, it stated beforehand that it would not hesitate to join a possible international military intervention. It warned the Western countries not to be too late in reacting to the atrocities in Kosovo. In spite of being more cautious in comparison to the Bosnian conflict, it aimed at not remaining on the sidelines of international efforts but to take an active part in them. Kosovo was another case where Turkey could present itself as an important ally of the West in the Balkans. That was an important reason for Turkey's participation in the air strikes.<sup>15</sup>

### Regional Security Issues: From Negative to Positive Peace Through Small Steps

Although the current security environment of the region is radically different than in the 1990s, it has not yet reached the level of positive peace. Considering that the concept of security has acquired multiple meanings and cannot be limited to military security, there are still many security issues in the region. One of the biggest issues today is the predominance of ethnic nationalism in many of the countries. Although Yugoslavia was one of the best examples of multiculturalism, in

the 1990s this was replaced with mono-ethnic identities. Despite the fact that more than a decade has passed since the end of the violent conflicts, ethnic nationalism is still a fact of life in many parts of the ex-Yugoslav territories. This can be seen in the high level of support that nationalist parties have from the electorate. Because of emigration during the wars, the ex-Yugoslav territories in which wars were waged lost part of their multicultural structures. Strangely enough the dominance of the nationalist approaches has also been reflected in the legal structures in some countries. For example, according to the constitution in Bosnia Herzegovina only the members of three major ethnicities can be a candidate for the presidency. Despite the decision of the European Court of Human Rights in the Sejdić and Finci cases in favour of changing the relevant law in 2009,<sup>16</sup> the authorities in the country have not made the necessary change yet.

Another important issue is that there are still disputed borders in the Balkans, as can be seen in the problems between Kosovo and Serbia as well as the rhetoric of the *Republika Srpska* leadership. World history shows us that only in regions in which there is no dispute over borders can there be a durable peace. In fact it is this lack of territorial issues that led to the integration project in Europe, a good example of a security community.

Therefore, it can well be assumed that solving the border issues is a *sine qua non* for the establishment of a positive peace in the region.

Another important security issue is related to the mushrooming of organised crime due to the violent events of the 1990s. The problem has reached such a level that it has become an issue for the EU member countries as it was mentioned in the 2003 European Security Strategy Document.<sup>17</sup> The degree of the problem can be better understood when it is remembered that during the chaotic environment in Albania in 1997 when a pyramid scheme failed one million Kalashnikov weapons were stolen from the army barracks<sup>18</sup> and it can be imagined that some of these weapons were sent abroad. The range of activities of the regional crime groups varies from drug trafficking to weapons trafficking to human trafficking. The following example is interesting in order to prove the importance of the issue: In 2010 when organised crime groups stole electric wires in Sofia, two thirds of the capital city remained without electricity for one week.<sup>19</sup>

If EU membership prospects had been clearer for western Balkan countries, these vitally important problems could have been solved in an easier way. But due to reasons stemming from the

regional countries' reluctance to reform themselves as well as the European Union's economic crisis and enlargement fatigue, there is no clear light at the end of the tunnel yet. This ambiguity in their membership prospects complicates the transformation processes on the Balkan peninsula. If the accession of western Balkan countries is delayed further, there is a potential danger that a Balkan ghetto will be formed.<sup>20</sup>

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In response to changing regional and international circumstances as well as Turkey's growing self-confidence Ankara's approach in the last decade has been dominated by soft policy instruments.

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Another vital issue is the persistence or even increase of economic problems in most of the countries. Experiencing multiple transition processes it took a long time for the Balkan countries' GDP to return to their 1989 levels. Romania was able to reach its 1989 GDP only in 2004, Croatia in 2005. For Macedonia and Bulgaria it took longer, until 2006.<sup>21</sup> The fact that the unemployment rate in Bosnia Herzegovina is more than 40% and 50% in Kosovo gives us a clue about the depth of the economic problems. The economic crisis in the EU member states

only exacerbates the level of problems in the Balkans.

Another problem is the difficulty in dealing with the past. All the parties have one-sided answers to the questions of what happened in the 1990s and why. All parties generally argue that it was only they who were the victims and it was the other party that was the aggressor. There is not any considerable attempt to look at the narratives of the other side.

This section analysed the main security issues in the region by examining security in a wider context. In summary, although the era of violent conflicts seems to have ended in the region and there is no indication that any war or conflict might emerge in the future, there is still no durable peace. In other words, the transition from negative to positive peace is still continuing.<sup>22</sup> In the following section the main parameters of Turkey's Balkan policies in the 21<sup>st</sup> century will be examined.

## Turkey and the Balkans: Recent Developments

The main parameters of Ankara's post-Cold War foreign policy were determined in the early 1990s as a result of painful processes, and many of the policies that we have had since the early 2000s are a continuation of that period.

Taking into account the fact that the fundamental goals have remained almost the same, one can see partial difference in the instruments.

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With the aim of overcoming the bitter memories of the past, Ankara stands behind an approach focusing on the future that is imagined to be a more constructive type of relationship.

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The Yugoslav succession wars and transition processes of the 1990s had a fundamental impact on Turkish decision makers' attitude towards the region since they in general attempted to respond to the regional challenges at the time. The main idea was to develop a variety of new initiatives to stop the conflicts and convince the international community to act in a more active way. During and after the conflicts, as the UN, OSCE and NATO missions were sent to stabilise the post-conflict environment Turkey was an active participant. Just to give an example, officers from the Turkish armed forces were active participants in the United Nations Protection Force, Implementation Force, Stabilization Force in Bosnia Herzegovina; Operation Alba in Albania; Essential Harvest, Amber Fox, Concordia, Proxima in Macedonia; and the United Nations

Mission in Kosovo, OSCE Kosovo Verification Mission and Kosovo Force. In addition, in the framework of the Partnership for Peace Training Centre Turkey has provided training to officers of the countries that aim to become full members of NATO. In brief, by looking back at the main course of Turkey's activism in the 1990s one can state that it was more political and security oriented.<sup>23</sup> However, it is noteworthy that even some of the military missions have included cultural components as well. For example, Turkish Armed Forces established Turkish language courses in Albania, Bosnia Herzegovina, Macedonia, Romania and Kosovo. So far, 21 language courses have been opened and 3,393 officers from various Balkan, Central Asian, African, and Caucasus countries have attended them.<sup>24</sup>

In response to changing regional and international circumstances as well as Turkey's growing self-confidence Ankara's approach in the last decade has been dominated by soft policy instruments. Though the political and security dimension in bilateral and multilateral relations have continued without any interruption, there has been an increasing use of economic and cultural instruments as well, something that might be interpreted as one of the results of the Europeanisation of Turkish foreign policy.<sup>25</sup> The intellectual basis of

Turkey's new approach was explained by the Minister of Foreign Affairs Ahmet Davutoğlu in his article "A Forward Looking Vision for the Balkans".<sup>26</sup> At a time when most of the international actors have lost their enthusiasm in launching new initiatives for the remaining regional problems, Turkey stands as an actor within the region that is closely following the developments and working to contribute to the solution of regional issues. The main characteristics of Turkey's new policies are its vision-oriented, forward-looking and values-based approaches. In addition, its fundamental policy principles are regional ownership and inclusiveness, regional reintegration, an emphasis on European integration, and a development of a common stance in regional and international organisations.<sup>27</sup> With the aim of overcoming the bitter memories of the past, Ankara stands behind an approach focusing on the future that is imagined to be a more constructive type of relationship. Another feature of the Turkish approach has been its insistence that the region belongs to its own people who should be the key actors deciding on its future.

Since 2009 Bosnia has been at the top of Turkish foreign policy's agenda mainly because of the fragility of the inter-ethnic relations within the country and the resulting deadlock in the functioning

of the political system. As Turkey was not part of the US-EU attempt, known as the Butmir process, to contribute to the solution of the problems in Bosnia Herzegovina, Ankara launched its own initiative to bring the parties together and encourage them to have more dialogue with each other.<sup>28</sup> Although the Dayton Peace Agreement ended the war in 1995, it could not create a functioning stable political system. The fact that following the October 2010 elections it took 15 months to establish a new government is an important sign of the political stalemate. Furthermore, the rhetoric of the leaders of the *Republika Srpska*, mainly its President Milorad Dodik, to question the territorial integrity of the country and his frequent calls for a referendum for independence create a continuing political crisis in the country.<sup>29</sup>

The Turkish initiation of two trilateral mechanisms has been an important sign of the relaunch of an active foreign policy. Within that framework, there have been regular gatherings of the foreign ministers of Turkey, Bosnia Herzegovina and Serbia, as well as the foreign ministers of Turkey, Bosnia Herzegovina and Croatia. As a result of that initiative the foreign ministers of Turkey, Bosnia Herzegovina and Serbia have come together eight times and the foreign ministers of Turkey, Bosnia Herzegovina

and Croatia have gathered four times since 2009. In addition, the leaders of Turkey, Bosnia Herzegovina and Serbia have held joint summits twice.<sup>30</sup> The summit in İstanbul produced the İstanbul Declaration on 24 June 2010, which is considered an historic document since it guaranteed the territorial integrity of Bosnia Herzegovina.<sup>31</sup> This summit has a historical importance because for the first time Serbian President Boris Tadic and Bosnia Herzegovina President Haris Silajdzic came together.<sup>32</sup>

Considering the total failure of the Butmir process organised by the EU and the USA, that Turkey's initiatives have borne some early fruits is noteworthy and can be considered a success, though limited. First, as noted above, the recognition of Bosnian territorial integrity by Belgrade at the İstanbul Summit is of historical importance. Second, as a result of Turkey's active engagement, Bosnia Herzegovina sent an ambassador to Belgrade following a three year interruption. Third, in 2010 the Serbian parliament adopted a declaration condemning the crimes in Srebrenica.<sup>33</sup> Furthermore, Turkey also tried its best to facilitate Bosnia Herzegovina's membership to NATO in order for Sarajevo to be accepted into the Membership Action Plan.<sup>34</sup>

In the recent years there has been the most astonishing improvement in

relations between Turkey and Serbia. In fact, although the Ankara-Belgrade relationship witnessed tough times in the 1990s as soon as the conflicts on the Yugoslav territories were over, both sides did try to mend relations. But it never reached the current level. It has been emphasised by the leaders that the Turkish-Serbian relationship has been enjoying a golden period and is in the best shape ever. The rhetoric used by the decision makers, that although Turkey and Serbia do not have common borders they are still neighbours, is an important indication of the degree of the rapprochement.<sup>35</sup> The fact that good ties continued following the 2012 Serbian elections despite the election of a more nationalist group has shown that the burgeoning ties are not dependent on a particular party or government.

An important high-political event in recent years has been the recognition of Kosovo by Turkey one day after Kosovo's declaration of independence, and when discussions were continuing about whether it was in line with international law. How can we explain Turkey's positive attitude toward Kosovo independence since the country traditionally follows a cautious position toward such movements? Another important question is whether this policy represents a change or continuity in Turkish foreign policy.<sup>36</sup>

It was the then Turkish President Turgut Özal who was the first leader to recognise Ibrahim Rugova as president of Kosovo. This was a symbol of Turkish sympathy towards the Kosovo Albanians. However, as the conflict started between the parties in the late 1990s, Turkey first tried to maintain dialogue with both the Serbians and Albanians. Turkey supported the territorial integrity of Yugoslavia and also emphasised the rights of Albanians in Yugoslavia's 1974 Constitution. In the aftermath of the NATO intervention in 1999, Turkish forces participated in KFOR and Turkey also paid attention to the problems of the Turkish minority living in Kosovo.

As the conflict was going on in Kosovo in the second half of the 1990s, Turkish politicians discussed the future of Kosovo and Turkish policies towards the region. Both leftist and rightist political parties in the opposition supported the recognition of Kosovo independence in sessions of the Turkish Grand National Assembly. Almost all the opposition parties in the parliament accused the government of only supporting the territorial integrity of Yugoslavia and not paying adequate attention to the problems of Kosovo. Therefore, from the very beginning the government's cautious policies led to a heavy internal discussion. At this point, one can argue that a policy can be re-evaluated if it



leads to a reaction from other actors, as Charles F. Hermann emphasised in his model analysing change and continuity in foreign policy.<sup>37</sup> This can clearly be seen in Turkey's policy toward Kosovo.

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Considering that the regional countries have been experiencing a transitional period and their economies need more investment, there is much that can be done in terms of increasing Turkey's economic ties with the region due to Ankara's past experiences of harmonising its economy with the global trends.

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In addition, as the negotiations between Albanians and Serbians reached a deadlock in 2007 and Western countries, led by the US, started to look more positively on the idea of Kosovar independence, Turkey also started reconsidering its policy. If the discourse of Turkish politicians and diplomats from 2005 onward is analysed, one can notice the beginning of a change in Turkish policies. Hence, Turkish recognition of Kosovo's independence on 18 February 2008 represents continuity rather than change. According to Hermann's model, we can interpret it as a programme change, in other words a tactical change,

not a total restructuring. It should also be noted that Turkey's recognition of Kosovo did not lead to any deterioration in its relations with Serbia; in other words both countries "agreed to disagree" on the issue of Kosovo.<sup>38</sup>

An important feature of Turkey's Balkan policy in the last decade has been its emphasis on soft power.<sup>39</sup> In a continuation of the foreign policy approach of the Turgut Özal years economics is important in Turkey's foreign relations. Emphasising the liberal view that increasing economic relations will lead to an improvement in political relations and economic interdependence, Ankara has been advocating better economic ties with regional countries. However, as it is not the state but the private sector that is expected to increase trade and investment, the basic aim is to facilitate and encourage an increase in bilateral trade relations. The practice of taking businesspeople on the foreign trips of key decision makers was started during the Özal era; however, it was suspended during the coalition governments that followed. This practice was resumed by the Justice and Development Party (JDP) after it came to power in 2002. It can be considered as an indication of the impact of "trading state" approach in Turkish foreign policy.<sup>40</sup> There are also some indications that Turkish companies are being affected by the

dynamism of Turkish foreign policy and they have started to use similar rhetoric. For example, General Director of Ziraat Bank, the largest public bank, Can Akın Çağlar stated that they aim to transform the “local power” of the bank into “regional power” and they want to be “big player”.<sup>41</sup> Hence, the multi-dimensionalisation of Turkey’s foreign relations is visible in the sphere of economics as well.

However, in the case of the economic relations with the Balkan countries there is still ample place for improvement. Though Turkey’s trade volume and direct investments have increased considerably in the last decade, their place in Turkey’s total trade is quite low. A comparison with the beginning of the 2000s gives an idea about the increasing trend: Turkey’s trade volume with the Balkan countries was just US \$ 2.9 billion in 2000, increasing to US \$ 18.4 billion in 2011, a six fold increase. There was also a similar increase in Turkish direct investment in the region: In 2002 it totalled about US \$ 30 million; and it increased to US \$ 189 million in 2011. Turkish investments mainly concentrate in construction, banking, communications, retail and the mining sectors. Yet only 7% of Turkish total foreign investment is conducted in the region despite its geographical proximity.<sup>42</sup> In addition, the Balkan countries carry out an

important proportion of their trade with EU countries and Turkey is not among the top partners. Considering that the regional countries have been experiencing a transitional period and their economies need more investment, there is much that can be done in terms of increasing Turkey’s economic ties with the region due to Ankara’s past experiences of harmonising its economy with the global trends.

In addition to benefitting more from the economic ties, Turkish foreign policy has also started to use another element of soft power, namely culture, and primarily language. The Yunus Emre Association started its activities in 2007, and so far 10 Yunus Emre Cultural Centres have been opened in five Balkan countries; Albania, Bosnia Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia and Romania. At these centres not only are Turkish language courses offered, but there are also other cultural activities organised as well. The role of language in Turkey’s ties with the region has only been lately recognised despite the fact that there are many similar words between the Turkish language and the languages of the region. In some places the Yunus Emre Centers have also been active in spreading the teaching of the Turkish language in public schools as well. The centre in Sarajevo is a good example since as a result of its attempts in the academic year of 2012-2013, 59

primary and secondary schools started to offer Turkish as an elective course, as a result of which 4,863 students have been taking Turkish courses.<sup>43</sup> There is no other regional country that has such an ambitious attempt to increase cultural relations. One can notice that the Turkish language has been emerging as a *lingua franca* in the region, unrivalled by any other regional language.<sup>44</sup> In addition, one can add the influence of increasing number of Turkish universities in various Balkan countries, such as Epoka University in Albania, the International University of Sarajevo and the International Burch University in Bosnia Herzegovina. Benefitting from culture has surely been part of the foreign policy of the Western countries so far, but it seems that Turkish decision makers have also become aware of the increasing salience of soft power instruments as a result of globalisation.

Another important soft power instrument of Turkey has been the scholarships that Ankara has offered to foreign students since the early 1990s. When the scholarships were first started, they mainly focused on the Turkic republics of the former Soviet Union. However, after a while, they started to cover the whole world from Europe to Asia, and from Latin America to Africa. A recently established institution called the Presidency for Turks Abroad and

Related Communities is responsible for the granting of scholarships. Thanks to global technological developments, like the start of online applications, in 2012 there were 45,000 applications from 160 countries, 1,600 of which from the Balkan countries. In the last decade the number of foreign students studying at Turkish universities has increased by 70%, reaching 26,000 from 145 countries.<sup>45</sup> Considering the holders of Turkish grants from the Balkan countries the number increased from 467 in 1992 to 721 in 2011.<sup>46</sup> It should also be noted that Turkish scholarships are the most comprehensive scholarship programme offered by any country in the region.

Another important proof of soft power is the increasing interest in Turkish media in the Balkan countries. The launch of a new channel by the Turkish radio and TV broadcasting organisation TRT, called TRT Avaz, is a noteworthy development. It broadcasts some cultural programmes as well as daily news in the Balkan languages, and hence has a potential to be a cultural bridge. Another salient recent development has been the opening of the Directorate of the Region of the Balkans in the Anatolian News Agency (*Anadolu Ajansı*, AA) in Sarajevo last year. Broadcasting in all three local languages, Bosnian, Serbian and Croatian, the Turkish news agency provides not only a medium to transmit

the developments in Turkey to the region, but also to broadcast the events in Bosnia to the Turkish public. Since the Turkish media is mostly dependent upon foreign news sources on Balkan issues, and the media in the Balkans is also taking its news about Turkey from foreign broadcasting organisations, the AA office in Sarajevo has great potential. It is of symbolical importance that a member of presidency, Bakir Izetbegovic, attended the opening ceremony.<sup>47</sup> Another important development is the recent opening of Sarajevo branch of public broadcasting organization, TRT.

Another important feature of Turkey's ties with the Balkan countries is its ever increasing transnationalisation. In a landmark study, Kemal Kirişçi argued that transnationalisation has been a major feature of Turkish foreign policy towards its neighbouring regions, mainly thanks to three channels: economy, movement of people and civil society.<sup>48</sup> The Balkans is an appropriate case study to examine the increasing ties beyond the state-to-state level. The importance of economic ties and the importance attached to them by the Turkish decision makers have already been explained. Due to Turkish attempts in recent years all the Balkan countries, except the EU members, have become a visa-free travel area for Turkey and vice versa. Therefore, there has been a considerable increase in

people's mobility. For example, in 2000, 28,620 people from Bosnia Herzegovina visited Turkey, and 56,522 in 2011. In the case of Serbia there has been an increase from 128,409 in 2000 (at the time Yugoslavia) to 137,934 in 2011. In the case of Macedonia there has been an increase from 108,904 to 130,648.<sup>49</sup> An important consequence of this increasing mobility has been the increasing level of contacts between the universities and NGOs.

Another dimension of transnationalisation has been the activities of municipalities, especially those in which an important number of Balkan-origin people lives. For example, the Bayrampaşa municipality in İstanbul, 50% of the residents of which have origins in the Balkans, has been quite active in that regard. Since 2005 the municipality carries out different social and cultural activities within the Project of Ramadan in the Balkans (*Balkanlar'da Ramazan*) in various countries.<sup>50</sup> Another example is the İzmit municipality, which is also involved in various projects, such as the construction of a centre for social and cultural activities in Momchilgrad (Mestanlı) in Bulgaria, as well as the building of a children's park in Travnik in Bosnia Herzegovina.<sup>51</sup>

Another important facet of transnationalisation of relations has been

the increasing popularity of Turkish soap operas in many Balkan countries. Although the trend started in the last few years, it reached its peak with the *Magnificent Century* series.<sup>52</sup> Though a thorough scientific study needs to be conducted in order to grasp the reasons for their popularity, it can be stated that cultural similarities have played an important role in the creation of this huge interest. The author of this study has met people, mainly in Bosnia Herzegovina, who learnt to carry out daily conversations in Turkish just through these series. Hence, it can be argued that the interest in Turkish series will increase the number of Turkish speakers as well.

## Conclusion

This study has two main arguments. First, that Turkish foreign policy towards the Balkans is no longer just based on political-security issues, and there has been an increasing importance in soft power. Second, there has been a transnationalisation of relations as well, as seen with the activities of municipalities, the popularity of soap operas and the increasing level of engagement of businesspeople. In this framework it can be stated that there are some elements of change, mainly with regard to the actors and instruments but

the basic goals remain the same, namely the construction of a stable and secure region strictly and extensively anchored in the Euro-Atlantic structures.

But there are important challenges ahead. The western Balkan countries have not yet reached a durable peace since there are still frozen conflicts waiting to be solved. Though Turkey's courageous initiatives have let the parties contact each other and make some goodwill gestures, and Ankara has the ability to talk to the most of the parties, the main problems are still there. Second, an increasing reference to the Ottoman past has different connotations in the region. Although the references to the Ottoman Empire in the formulation of Turkey's foreign affairs started back in the 1990s, it has become more pronounced. There are different interpretations of this phenomenon. According to some whether Turkey accepts it or not, the Ottoman past already has an impact on all foreign policy aspects. But according to other actors in the Balkans, Turkey has a "hidden agenda" and is trying to recreate the Ottoman Empire. This claim has always been rejected by the Turkish leaders, but still even misperceptions should be taken into account. A Turkish foreign policy embracing even the most concerned actors does have more potential to contribute to the solution of the problems.

In brief, changing international circumstances in general and Turkey's changing place in it in particular have led to a reconsideration of Turkish identity and subsequently its perception of interests. That is why one can notice the use of new instruments and the emergence of new actors in the formulation of Turkey's ties with the region. The roots of these changes can be traced back to Turkey's Europeanisation process when

Turkey acquired a new understanding of security. It is also noteworthy that although Turkey's European accession process has been suspended, its impact is still visible. Hence, Turkey's Balkans policy can be considered a success since Turkey has been able to start its own initiatives, get the support of regional partners and get some concrete results. However, there are challenges ahead if Turkey wants to move further.

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## The Dispensable Nation: American Foreign Policy in Retreat

*By Vali Nasr*

New York: Doubleday, 2013, 320 pages, ISBN: 9780385536486.

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Vali Nasr, a renowned US academic and author of the best-seller *The Shia Revival*, makes an important contribution to understanding the behind-the-scenes subtleties of US foreign policy towards the greater Middle East, a region stretching to Southeast Asia. His argument mainly centres on three points: the internal power play within the US administration, regional power rivalries and global US-China competition.

Nasr's main target is the US foreign policy-making community. Since the launch of the book, he has actually received a significant amount of attention in the US media and journals. As a former member of the Obama administration, his ability to describe the internal battle of ideas and personalities is the primary asset of the book. He portrays Obama and his entourage as political campaigners, lacking the required vision and tools to carry out long-term policies. The short-termist Obama team is thus tuned to public opinion polls and domestic audiences, which have largely gone against the necessity of committing and engaging through the laborious processes of diplomatic conciliation. In other words, Obama is the non-diplomat

who has turned international processes into tools of domestic politicking. Thus, he has sought easy victories to intricate foreign conflicts. After a series of early failures, the President of the United States has shifted to legitimise his case for detachment.

Nasr has a personal story of living through this as an advisor to Ambassador Richard Holbrooke. This distinguished and ambitious US diplomat reportedly had an eye on the post of Secretary of State before Hillary Clinton accepted the post. Assigned to a lesser role, Holbrooke never lost his passion to prove his skills and eligibility for what he deserved. In the beginning, things went right for him. Obama was personally persuaded to the idea that Afghanistan was a war of necessity, while Iraq was a war of choice. This emphasis was what he was looking for and as result his visibility was boosted. Holbrooke's principal contribution to US policy in Afghanistan- or to use the neologism, which has come to be largely loathed in both countries, Af-Pak, was to prioritise diplomatic processes over military solutions. He sought an exit option by building alliances, making compromises and trying to earn the

goodwill of parties with vested interests. His comprehensive approach paved the way for not only engagement with Taliban, but also persuaded neighbouring states to get involved in the negotiations.

This promiscuous opening though failed to make a breakthrough. In that regard, Nasr condemns the Obama team's reluctance, despite Holbrooke's attempts for active diplomacy. He describes how Holbrooke was sidelined, left in the dark, isolated and finally discarded in the corridors of the White House. He explains Secretary Clinton's support for the Special Envoy, which turned out to be ineffectual against the opposition of the President's manipulative advisers. In the end, the processes Holbrooke initiated either died out or withered away, leaving the US with no choice but to prepare for withdrawal from Afghanistan. A certain minus of the book is the author's disregard of Holbrooke's personal agenda. Lionised in this book, Holbrooke was known to have overplayed his hand in Washington, and was finally left out in the cold. I remember attending a meeting with him back in February 2010 when he looked disappointed and concerned not only about Afghanistan, but also about his personal prospects in the administration. Nasr thinks he was up for the job till to the end.

Dissatisfied by Obama's approach, Nasr moves on to propose alternate

policy stances on Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran, Iraq and the Arab Spring. His case for "what ifs" is powerful as he excels at writing an insider's account. Having organic links with regional countries, he has a distinctive appeal to the US policy makers in Washington. His commandment of both enables him to seek a Venn diagram rather than build on particularistic interests. Erudite in the complex web of relations in the Middle East and Southeast Asia, he warns against sectarianism in the former and security dilemmas in the latter.

Nasr's magic formula for the region-President Obama says he lacks one for Syria- is economic development and the formation of a middle class. In that, he concentrates on the Turkish model, which was actually the gist of his earlier book, *The Forces of Fortune*. Turkey has been able to accommodate a democratic regime and best practices in the market economy with local values, making it an epitome of Muslim modernism. Nasr sharply contrasts this with the anachronistic polities all around the region. He particularly detests the Gulf monarchies, which, for him, have received undeserved attention and support from Washington. He criticises Iraq's downhill slide to sectarian strife with Maliki, Pakistan's and Egypt's securitisation under military rule, Iran's obsolete Third Worldism and the overall US inability to insist on a democratic

and prosperous Middle East. He calls on Washington to invest economically and advocate its political ideals to reclaim its indispensable role. Yet his posture takes into account the dictates of regional dynamics, which are implied to take precedence over the tenets of US unilateralism. His message is to work out diplomatic solutions with the regimes in power in order to have them integrated into the global system in the long haul, a case defended principally by Ankara.

Nasr believes that the locus of power in the Middle East has shifted from the Arab core to the northern and southern wings, namely Turkey and Iran. Here he disregards Israel and its unique role in the Middle East while magnifying the largely underestimated dynamics of regional power rivalries. Although the author does not describe what specific route Iran will take to sustain its claim as a regional powerhouse, he hints at its leadership of the Shia bloc. This automatically assigns Turkey a similar role among the Sunnis and Nasr acknowledges his support for Turkish leadership. Overall, the implication is not polarisation. Rather the expectation is that Turkey's economic success story will either persuade others to economically integrate and become more interdependent, or this will lead to national decay, which in the case of the Gulf monarchies is seen as a depressing possibility.

Nasr's commercial peace theory for the greater Middle East runs the risk of Chinese economic prevalence at a time of US disengagement. The author makes his case against the latter in order to stem the looming regional integration with China. He explains the growing economic ties of world's second economic power, particularly with Turkey, Pakistan, and Iran. He underlines that China views the greater Middle East region as "West Asia" and evaluates it as an integral part of its natural sphere of influence. Thus he points to the undercurrent that while the US is pivoting to Asia, China is enlarging the definition of Asia. Nasr argues that to have a sustainable policy in Asia, the US needs to act in accordance with this Chinese approach.

*The Dispensable Nation* fills an important gap in understanding American foreign policy in the greater Middle East, which has lately oscillated from engagement to leading from behind, and now pretends to disengage. The lesson for US and regional policymakers is it takes engagement and dialogue with all possible parties to realise foreign policy objectives in an ever complex battleground of power rivalries.

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## Rusya ve Polonya'da Din, Kimlik, Siyaset (Religion, Identity, Politics in Russia and Poland)

*By Sevinç Alkan Özcan*

Istanbul: Küre Yayınları, 2012, 334 pages, ISBN: 9786055383176.

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One of the most important consequences of the collapse of communism in the countries of Eastern Europe has been the resurgence of the church as a major political and social actor, after having been kept under strict pressure for decades by the Marxist-Leninist ideology. The revival of the Catholic Church in Poland and the Orthodox Church in Russia have been particular cases due to their traditionally powerful influence in these countries on politics as well as the definition of national identity. It is very meaningful, for instance, that Pope John Paul II became a leading figure in the ending of communist rule in his native Poland, while Patriarch Alexy had built a very close and special relationship between the church and state in Russia until his death in 2008.

In her book, Sevinç Alkan Özcan analyses and compares the dynamics of this new relationship between the church and the state in post-communist Russia and Poland. The book includes a detailed

analysis of the major dynamics that have facilitated the revival of the church as a political and social actor in these two countries. However, this is not an easy comparison when one considers that the historical evolution of religion, as well as its relationship with politics, has been quite different in Russia and Poland. Whereas Russia has been influenced by the Byzantium tradition in which the church is almost identified with the state, the Catholic Church in Poland has retained its relatively independent power despite its historical political struggle with the secular authorities. It is also important to note that when compared with Poland, religion was subject to much more direct control during the communist period in Russia. As also indicated by Özcan, the Russian church was forced to cooperate with the communist regime in order to keep its unity, although this choice eventually turned it into an instrument – or even an agent – of the communist state, unlike the Polish case where the church

became a “proto-civil society” due to its opposition to communist rule (p. 15).

At the same time, however, the author highlights a very significant similarity between Poland and Russia in the post-communist period: the churches in both countries have refused to remain within the limits defined by theories of modernisation and secularisation, which tend to regard religion as a thing of the marginal and private sphere (p. 17). In order to understand the dynamics that shape this process, Özcan begins by providing a historical and philosophical survey of the evolution of Christianity in Europe. Although the chapter touches upon some very interesting details in European religious history, and also includes an extensive discussion on the relationship between the church and state before and after the Reformation period with references to the ideas of philosophers including Dante, Machiavelli, Bodin, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau and Marx, it sometimes comes across as a bit too detailed. When the author finally starts to discuss the historical and philosophical evolution of Catholicism in Poland and Orthodoxy in Russia, she tries to show how the church in Poland has remained unaffected by the rise of secularism in the Catholic world and eventually continued to maintain its autonomy from the state. In Russia,

on the other hand, the strong influence of Byzantium Orthodoxy as well as the reforms of Peter the Great seems to have resulted in a much more powerful state control over the church.

The second chapter of the book provides a theoretical framework that focuses on the process of secularisation and especially its influence on the relationship between the public sphere, civil society and religion. Here, the author discusses various concepts that are intrinsically linked with secularisation and how they can be comparatively analysed in the context of Poland and Russia. To this end, she makes significant reference to the works of well-known sociologists of religion like Martin, Madeley, Ramet and Casanova. A major argument here is that secularisation, which has never been a uniform or linear process, followed a completely different course in Russia and Poland compared with in Western Europe (p. 124). The chapter also touches upon the complex relationship between religion and civil society in these two countries in light of the processes of modernisation, nationalism and communism.

In the following two chapters, Özcan analyses the contemporary relationship between the church and state in Poland and Russia. In the case of Poland, the

Catholic Church seems to have become quite influential on constitutional debates as well as on issues like religious education, anti-abortion laws, Christian values in the media and anti-semitism. For Özcan, this strong influence blurs the line between a “state church” and a “church state” in the post-communist period (p. 204). In Russia, she argues that the relationship between the church and state evolved from “cooperation and mutual support” during the Yeltsin years into an outright “alliance” under the rule of Putin (p. 254).

At a time when issues related to culture and religion are on the rise in contemporary international relations studies, Özcan’s book is a very timely and valuable contribution to the field. This is most probably the first book in Turkish that explores and compares the Polish and Russian cases in terms of the relationship between religion and politics. It is also based on very arduous

and meticulous research. However, general readers might find the book a little difficult to read. Apart from the academic language that prevails in the book, this is also mainly because the chapters on European religious history and secularisation theories are too detailed and perhaps require a sort of reorganisation in order to eliminate the doctoral thesis feel. Also, the book would also have benefited from a greater number of Polish and Russian-language sources in terms of authenticity. All in all, however, Özcan’s study is a very valuable source, particularly for the students and scholars in Turkey and abroad who are interested in the relationship between religion and politics in post-communist countries.

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## Trials of Europeanisation: Turkish Political Culture and the European Union

*By Ioannis N. Grigoriadis*

New York: Palgrave Macmillian, 2009, 231 pages, ISBN: 9780230612150.

This book is a comprehensive and informative study that has a strong potential to demonstrate transforming power of regional and/or global actors on domestic politics. Its objective is to assess the impact of Turkey's EU accession process on Turkish political culture between 1999-2004 when Turkish authorities had to meet the EU's Copenhagen Criteria before starting accession negotiations. The author insists that "notwithstanding the impact of Turkey's economic situation, the Cyprus question, Greek-Turkish disputes, Turkey's illiberal political system has so far been the biggest domestic obstacle to its membership in the European Union" (p. 4). To the author, illiberal values and concerns have shaped Turkish political culture regarding state-society relations, civil society, public position of religion (secularism) and national identity formations. Political liberalisation is hence expected to remove the most serious obstacle for Turkey's EU membership by bringing its authoritarian, state-centred

and monolithic political culture closer to European standards.

Political culture in the volume is understood as "a set of citizens' orientations toward political objects based on their knowledge, beliefs, opinions, and emotions" (p. 15). Borrowing from Almand and Verba, liberalisation is viewed as a gradual shift from a *subject political culture*, in which citizens are treated by political authorities as passive objects, to a *participant political culture*, where active and effective popular involvement in political organisations and processes are desired and promoted. The introductory chapter grounds this liberal transformation on theories of Europeanisation. While the *two-level game model* uses the interactive nature of Turkey's EU accession process in which negotiations take place among and between actors at both the EU and the domestic levels, the *path-dependence theory* is employed to explain the step-by-step liberalisation in Turkish political culture under the constraints

of the accession process. The third theory, *historical institutionalism*, puts the emphasis on the capacity of EU institutions in setting and enforcing policies within and outside the EU independent of member state concerns. Since it is related to the EU's law-based institutional procedures rather than member state positions, the latter seems to be significant in the context to assess the continuity of accession process.

Chapter two outlines the historical evolution of Turkish political culture by associating it with a strong state tradition and subject political culture that was inherited from the Ottoman past. To deploy the legacy of this illiberal political culture, the author states that republican modernisation and nation-building processes have kept this authoritarian political culture intact and reproduced it by enforcing a top-down modernisation project under the complete control of a single party, the Republican People's Party (RPP), which held political and social monopoly up until the end of the Second World War. The author observes that despite Turkish politics opened to democratic competition with the post-War international situation, Turkey could not have gone beyond a procedural democracy which relegated democratic processes to periodic free elections. What is more is that the civilian-military

bureaucracy periodically re-established its firm control over state and society through military coups in 1960, 1971 and 1980, which constitutionally institutionalised elite control and military tutelage on the one hand, and put severe restrictions on civil liberties on the other. To show the impact of the EU process, the author argues that the authoritarian characteristics of Turkish political culture came to be reduced in the 1990s as the EU put its emphasis on liberal political standards in its relations with the prospective member states, strengthening the position of social groups in Turkey in their search for a new definition of state, national identity, secularism and state-society relations.

Chapter three elaborates the impacts of improving Turkish-EU relations on Turkish civil society. Since it promotes active citizenship participation in social and political processes, the author takes civil society as an integral component of a participant political culture. The lack of an effective civil society in Turkey is accordingly regarded as one of the reasons for Turkey's illiberal democracy and political culture. To the author, the republican regime, following the Ottoman legacy of all-controlling state, incorporated corporatist policies which obliged civilian actors and associations to follow a state-defined political and

social agenda. Military coups have expanded the state at the expense of civil society. The EU accession process is therefore expected to enlarge the scope of rights and liberties concerning the organisational and operational capacities of Turkish civil society. In this sense, the 1990s is seen as a turning point in that Turkish civil society started to grow relatively stronger as the post-Cold War liberal hegemony has been accompanied internally by ethnic and religious revivals with effective channels and networks at societal level. The author also takes the Manisa and Susurluk incidents, the 1999 earthquake and the 2000-2001 economic crisis, events which deeply shook public image of the state, as catalysts in the rise of a participant civil society. To the author, it has been in this vein that the EU accession process has actively promoted the development of Turkish civil society by providing financial resources to civil society associations and activities, and by initiating legislative reform as a part of the political conditionality principle.

Chapter four examines how the EU accession process has affected the position of the state in Turkish society. In doing this, the study finds a continuity between the Ottoman and republican understandings of state. The author argues that the republican authorities retained a transcendental understanding

of the state that was inherited from the Ottoman past which finds socio-political dissidence and opposition incompatible with the long-term interests of the state and society. Democratic political processes and popular participation in political life have therefore invoked a deep distrust among state elites, prominently military and judicial bureaucracy, who have kept a firm control over civil society and politics through a series of constitutional modifications following military coups. The National Security Council (NSC), State Security Courts (SSC) and constitutional prerogatives granted to civilian-military bureaucracy are presented in the volume as examples of the manifestations of this persisting strong state control. The reform process which took place in the period under the guidance of the EU Commission reports as a result has focussed on the tutelary role of civilian-military bureaucracy. To this end, the volume addresses that military personnel was eliminated from civilian public institutions, the role and composition of NSC was amended, and the NSC General Secretariat was relegated to the position of a consultative body and its secretariat was civilised. Concerning the judicial system, the supremacy of international treaties was recognised and a series of constitutional and legislative amendments were

adopted with an intention to liberalise human rights policies. Most significantly, the SSCs were abolished in 2004 to meet EU and the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) standards in the Turkish judicial system. The author at this point concedes that while such reforms have weakened tutelary role of Turkish bureaucracy, he also points out the position of the general society, intellectuals and of political leaders who have played very crucial roles in liberalising Turkish political culture concerning its state tradition.

Chapter five discusses the emergence of a small movement in republican secularism towards a more liberal treatment of religion and religious groups. In doing this, the author moves his analysis to a distinction between secularism and laicism. While a secular state is identified with rights and freedoms conducive to expressing religious beliefs and practices, a laicist state is associated with effective and restrictive state control over religion. Notwithstanding the fact that Turkish laicism advanced at the expense of social and political manifestations of religion, it is argued that Islam has often been employed by the state as an instrument of social integration and an integral element of national identity so long as it remained subjected to the control of a public institution, the Directorate

of Religious Affairs (DRA), and was based on Sunni Islam. Consequently, the author argues that the public sphere was closed to religious beliefs, practices and associations outside the Sunni-based DRA. In this context, the author points out that the EU has been critical not about secularism itself but about such restrictive interpretations and practices of secularism in Turkey. Though very limited steps have been taken in the period to liberalise Turkish secularism, and without underestimating the effect of the EU process, the study claims that the liberal turn in Turkish secularism came from within the country in the aftermath of the “soft” coup of 28 February 1997, as Islamist intellectuals and political parties, particularly the AKP, ceased to be critical of Western civilisation and started to employ Western liberal values to open a free room for Islamic life and practices. The author hence hopes to see an ongoing process of liberalisation in Turkish secularism under AKP rule.

Chapter six draws attention to the pluralisation of Turkish national identity under the EU accession process. In doing this, the author first outlines the policies and practices that shaped Turkish identity formations until the 1990s. On the basis of the grand categories of German ethnic and French territorial nationalisms, the Turkish case was seen to represent an amalgamation of the

two policies. It is argued that though a civic and territorial national formation, defined on the basis of common citizenship, has constitutionally been formulated and promoted, Turkish state discourse and practices have made latent references to Turkish ethnicity and Islam as the building blocks of Turkish national identity. Consequently, the public visibility and official recognition of minority groups have been conceived of a threat to the unity and integrity of the Turkish nation and have accordingly been suppressed. It was only in the 1990s that the Kurdish question, Alevi sectarian claims and political Islam at the domestic level, and the emergence of a liberal conjuncture in the post-Cold War world at the global level, came to pose challenges to monist definition of Turkish national identity. In this vein, the EU accession process, with its pluralist framework in the Copenhagen Criteria, is seen to have intensified pressures on Turkish governments to take measures for a more inclusive definition of Turkish national identity. Apart from the rights and liberties granted in the process to linguistic groups, particularly to the Turkish citizens of Kurdish origin, the rise of an official concern about non-Muslim minorities are presented in the book as examples of the attempts deemed to redefine Turkish national identity in a more inclusive way by removing its ethnic connotations.

The concluding chapter draws attention to elements of continuity and change in Turkish political culture. Here, the author argues that Turkey has seen the gradual replacement of a subject culture with a more participant political culture as citizens have come to take a more active stance against political institutions and processes during and after the reform process. This is not to say, for the author, that Turkish political culture has fundamentally and essentially been transformed, or that many authoritarian practices and attitudes have continued. Despite this, depending on the predictive precepts of the path-dependence theory, the author takes an optimistic position regarding the future of liberalisation in Turkish political culture. The volume clearly and plausibly concludes that accession process reforms opened the “Pandora’s Box” in Turkey that would not have been achieved without the EU’s incentive. Yet the author concedes that since it eventually has created its own social and political forces, liberalisation will continue to determine Turkish social and political life independent of the EU process.

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## Migration Around Turkey: Old Phenomena, New Research

*By Ahmet İduygu, Deniz Ykseker and Damla B. Aksel (eds.)*

Istanbul: The Isis Press, 2013, 476 pages, ISBN: 9789754284744.

## Countries of Migrants, Cities of Migrants: Italy, Spain, Turkey

*By Marcello Balbo, Ahmet İduygu and Julio Prez Serrano (eds.)*

Istanbul: The Isis Press, 2013, 270 pages, ISBN: 9789754284744.

## Borders under Stress: The Cases of Turkey-EU and Mexico-USA Borders

*By Ahmet İduygu and Deniz Sert (eds.)*

Istanbul: The Isis Press, 2012, 192 pages, ISBN: 9789754284690.

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The literature on migration has evolved rapidly in recent decades as a result of the diversification and growing extent of migration flows and the new patterns and types in various parts of the world. The magnitude and increasing complexity of migration in today's world necessitate a multi-dimensional analytical approach and a comparative perspective. In line with the need to improve the understanding of the complexities of migration along this line, three recent books published by the Migration Research Center at Ko University (MiReKoc) constitute a comprehensive and illuminative assessment of the

migratory kaleidoscope of Turkey and its position in the international migration scene. With its sending, receiving and transiting roles in international migratory regimes and high rates of internal migration, Turkey provides an interesting setting for migration studies. These three books, *Migration Around Turkey: Old Phenomena, New Research*, *Countries of Migrants, Cities of Migrants* and *Borders Under Stress*, highlight the distinct migratory characteristics of Turkey in a comparative manner and present an extensive overview of Turkey's position in the migration scene.

The novelty of *Migration Around Turkey: Old Phenomena, New Research*, edited by Ahmet İçduygu, Deniz Yüksek and Damla B. Aksel, lies in its integrated perception of internal migration and emigration in Turkey which have traditionally been assessed as two distinct types of “migration traditions” with incomparable features and patterns. For a more complete understanding of migration in Turkey, the book suggests bridging the divide between internal migration and emigration, and it offers an overview of migration in the country through the discovery of conceptual and empirical links between these mobilities. With this aim, the first part of the volume concentrates on different aspects of internal migratory flows in Turkey, such as the relationship between migration and unemployment, the return of internally displaced people, the effects of the Europeanisation of Turkish agricultural policy on the internal migration dynamics of agricultural labour and the impact of internal migration on natives’ educational and labour market outcomes. The second part of the volume turns to the topic of emigration from Turkey and concentrates on various topics, such as Turkish migrants’ claim-making in Austria and Germany, marital strategies of Turkish families in France, intercultural relations among Turkish migrant youth in Belgium and

identity and citizenship among Turkish immigrants in Northern Cyprus. The introduction and conclusion compare the dynamics of internal migration and emigration and point to possible linkages between the two processes. Within this framework, the significance of remittances, informality in employment and migrant networks and the questioned concept of cultural integration are highlighted as some of the comparable components of both internal migration and emigration. While the reader may expect to find a more detailed assessment of these intersection points between internal and international scales, the book still illuminates the pathway for an integrated perspective for future research.

Taking a step back to view the bigger picture of migration patterns in the region, *Countries of Migrants, Cities of Migrants: Italy, Spain, Turkey*, edited by Marcello Balbo, Ahmet İçduygu and Julio Pérez Serrano, concentrates on the Mediterranean region, which operates as a gate for immigration flows to the European core. The book uses extensive data obtained from the “Managing International Urban Migration: Turkey, Italy, Spain” project, which was implemented in order to combine the expertise of Turkish and European universities for a comprehensive analysis of irregular migration flows in the

region. Based on the project's results, *Countries of Migrants, Cities of Migrants* highlights the past migratory experiences in the urban cities of Spain and Italy and compares differences and commonalities of European cities in their different national and local contexts with the case of Turkey. Topics such as international migration and its effects on local policies and practices, contrasts in migration policy and practice, changing trajectories of migration, migrants' networks and integration in Italy, Spain and Turkey provide an extensive assessment of the migration situation in the region within a multi-methodological framework. In this light, these three EU border countries, Italy, Spain and Turkey, have undergone similar migratory transformation processes and moved from being countries of origin to countries of transit and destination. While the continuous growth in the migrant inflows from developing nations and the Europeanisation of the discourse on migration management are shared experiences in the three countries, the varied migration policies in Italy, Spain and Turkey provide an opportunity to discuss the structural needs of the Mediterranean region. The policy-related lessons learned through the comparative perspective adopted by the volume towards the three cases, which are at different stages of the

transition process, with Turkey being the most recent, and which may be applicable to future cases of transition. Yet, the significance of the subject matter necessitates more systematic research in this line of thought.

Complementing the areas covered by the former two edited volumes, *Borders Under Stress: The Cases of Turkey-EU and Mexico-USA Borders*, edited by Ahmet İçduygu and Deniz Sert, studies the issue of migration management by exploring the comparable cases of Turkey and Mexico, which as countries of immigration and transit are the most widely known cases of irregular border crossing. The chapters in the book focus on different aspects of migration through the Turkey-EU and Mexico-US borders, including the demographic growth of Mexican cities along the border, the effect of the global economic crisis on migration trends from Mexico to the US, the conflicting border policies of Greece and EU, migration management issues on the Turkish-EU border, commonalities in Turkey's and Mexico's transformation to transit countries and migrant perspectives on crossing a border. The book then offers an expansive comparison of the two cases and underlines interesting similarities and contrasts between the social and political concerns surrounding the migratory patterns in the two cases. A crucial



finding is that while securitisation seems to dominate the Turkey–EU irregular migration debate, the economisation of irregular migration systems similarly shapes the agenda on the Mexico-US border. Moreover, based on empirical findings it is assumed that the security concerns of the migrant-receiving countries make their immigration policies and practices more restrictive, while their economic interests make such policies more selective. Within this context, *Borders under Stress: The Cases of Turkey-EU and Mexico-USA Borders* offers policy recommendations which advocate less securitisation and more economisation. While the findings in the volume open new venues for further research on migration management, the subject requires more parallel research conducted on the two cases.

Overall, all three volumes provide the reader with a thorough insight into

migration-related issues surrounding Turkey, including internal migration, emigration, irregular migration flows and border management. The richness in this collection of three books comes from the juxtaposition of multi-question, multi-theoretical and multi-level perspectives and a mixed methodological approach towards the field of migration. The contributions of distinguished authors from different countries and disciplines add to the richness of the multi-perspective stance. Each of these books, by emphasising a distinct migratory character of Turkey and comparing the country with similar cases where possible, illuminates a different research track for the reader to follow.

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## Arap Baharı (The Arab Spring)

*By Turan Kışlakçı*

Istanbul: İlimyurdu Yayıncılık, 2011, 248 pages, ISBN: 9786055793494.

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History has been a witness to many revolutions that have integrated every society and left an impression on world politics. In the Arab world, society has faced the same challenges under dictatorial regimes. The recent uprisings that have rapidly transformed into revolutions have differentiated the Arab Spring from previous revolutions. There is one common voice coming from all Arab societies, saying such slogans as “The people want the regime to fall” and “The people want the dictators to fall.” The author, Turan Kışlakçı, examines the formation of the Arab World, its societies that are longing for regime change, the atmosphere the streets and the causes of the uprisings.

This book is not written in an academic style, and is more journalistic. Kışlakçı has clearly tapped into his journalist background. He has extensively written analyses on the Arab Spring in Turkish, Arabic and international media. He has included columns by Arab journalists in his book, and has also made use of Turkish publications.

Kışlakçı divided his book into four main parts: the history of rebellions in Arab societies, the background of the revolutions, people’s reflections on the rebellions and the distinctive features of the Arab Spring. Under these four main categories, the book focuses on issues such as the situation of the Arab countries after they seceded from the Ottoman Empire, and how the maps of these countries were drawn.

The author first explains development of revolutions (p. 57). As an example, he argues that the US’s interference in the Arab World during the first Gulf crisis was a reason for the Arab people to have a critical outlook towards their leaders. This made it possible for people to realise that their futures were bleak. However, in the early 2000s, Arab societies re-evaluated and saw in the Second Intifada a potentially brighter future. Then the US invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq squashed these hopes. The Arab people waited for the right time, as if the Gulf crisis and the Second Intifada had never

happened. Hezbollah defeated Israel in 2006, and this victory was followed by Hamas's success against Israel in 2008. Relief workers for Gaza become a beacon of hope in 2010. The world lapsed into silence for a while, but the uprisings demonstrated that Arab societies were willing to take the risk to build "a new world" and that change is possible.

Arab societies sought to explore their identity after the collapse of the Ottoman Caliphate (pp. 63-65). In searching for their identity, educated youths lead the opposition movements and demanded regime changes. This led to the downfall of a number of dictatorships across the Arab world. Kışlakçı's remarks about the background of these revolutions and the period of change offer relevant examples in the second part of the book. These uprisings have been civil rebellions that are seeking a new identity on the basis of Islam. The protests in Egypt and Tunisia initially were met with resistance or repression by their authoritarian leaders. But the protestors pushed back and resisted. In Cairo, Tahrir Square transformed into a tent city, where protestors slept, ate and lived. This created a social foundation to the revolution. All of Egyptian society, including Christians, participated in the Tahrir protests. A spirit of community emerged, which took on a social dimension of its own, as if Tahrir Square

had its own soul (p. 68). A common trait in Tunisia and Egypt was the anger against the opulence and luxury in which these dictators' families lived. The streets' distress came from the gap between the rich and poor, which became untenable for both Tunisian and Egyptian societies. Young university graduates led these revolutions and they used the internet and social media as effective means of organisation and communication during the uprisings (p. 80). The graduates could no longer tolerate the despotism of the political systems of their countries. The organisers and protestors garnered their support from different opposition political parties, civil society, legal and professional trade associations and student groups.

The book depicts the atmosphere and developments of the revolutions, and aims to explain the causes of revolutions, the symbols encouraging all Arabs to rebel and the role of opposition groups in international forums. The book divides the causes of the rebellions into several categories: political, social, economic and extrinsic parameters. Political and social causes include the lack of political participation and disenfranchisement of the younger generations, delayed reforms on the part of new Arab regimes, fraudulent elections, unemployment and the proliferation of bribes and corruption. The economic causes were high taxes and

the high costs of social services. Yet, the author points to the reaction of Turkish Prime Minister Erdoğan at Davos on the Israeli occupation of Gaza as one of the most significant external factors of the Arab Spring (p. 113). The book lists a number of other important factors, such as Islamic movements, blog writers and women's organisations for the revolutions (p. 117).

When it comes to symbols of the Arab Spring, there have been two important symbols. One is when the young Tunisian man Buazizi immolated himself, which then became the symbol and "call to arms" for the Jasmine Revolution in Tunisia. The second was in Egypt when Khalid Said was tortured by the Egyptian authorities and became the symbol of its revolution. The most interesting feature of the Arab Spring is that the rebellions are without a significant leader and an ideology. What's more, they have been attended by all groups and classes. In Tahrir Square, people carried pictures of

Che Guevara, and at the same time they chanted "Allahu Akbar." Kışlakçı argues that the Western powers had no direct influence on the Arab Spring. However, they made many indirect efforts to steer the protestors towards their long-term interests. The book also debates the relationship between Turkey and the Arab World, and possible scenarios about what will happen in the next decade in Libya, Syria and Yemen (pp. 193-218).

Turan Kışlakçı supports a union of Arab societies that would take a common peaceful position against Israel, develop common access to natural resources and draft new constitutions. In his analysis, the author draws a picture of people-centred revolutions and he tends to take an optimistic view of the final outcomes. However, one criticism is that there is also no detailed analysis on the international aspects of the Arab Spring, which would have enriched his analysis.

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## Aiding and Abetting: Foreign Aid Failures and the 0.7% Deception

*By Jonathan Foreman*

Civitas: Institute for the Study of Civil Society, 2012, 249 pages,  
ISBN 9781906837440.

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The amount of foreign aid given by the wealthiest and the most enthusiastic countries is increasing. Since there are many motivations and results of foreign aid, the process which starts from arranging the budget to allocation is controversial. Jonathan Foreman adopts a critical approach in *Aiding and Abetting* and forces us to rethink Britain's foreign aid policies. The standpoint of the author is that there is no correlation between development aid and economic growth due to corruption while the aid is being allocated. Sometimes the aid cannot reach the right places, and sometimes even if it can, it may not promote economic growth. However, though the book is exposing implicit and less well-known obstacles to effective humanitarian aid, as well as the failures of development aid, it never supports the idea of ending all British aid.

The title of the book, *Aiding and Abetting*, shows us the author's bi-directional point of view. The idea behind this title is that in multiple ways a country can hinder the receiving

country while thinking that it is assisting it. This situation and the ambiguity of it have many variables, as seen in the book.

In the first chapter the author argues that the UK is seen as a "development superpower" and that it is also trying to increase the portion of its aid budget to 0.7% of GDP. The expected amount of foreign aid is also increasing from £8 billion to £11 billion in the next three years. However, since the effect of development aid is marginal, which is the main argument of the book, increasing the aid budget makes little sense.

While the 2011 revision of UK's aid regulations removed some residual regulations, there remained some questions that could not be asked regarding the taxes of citizens, the efficiency of aid on the wealth of recipient and the extension of aid. The lack of scrutiny and honesty on aid makes aid vulnerable to corruption and waste. Despite such shortcomings, aid has the ability to make the country giving the aid more prestigious by positively changing the citizens' point of view. Another

criticism of the UK the author makes is in terms of considering their own citizens' wealth in the aid budgeting process. The reasons why aid is not efficiently allocated are indicated in another part of the book: aid undermines the notion of development and governance. Moreover rising inequality is another result of aid. When it comes to the UK, the spread of British aid through Africa and Asia has been for one reason: to reduce the influence of China and Islamist extremism in these regions. However the common reasons lying behind aid are historical links, absolute need, a sense of guilt or obligation, strategic imperatives and political fetishism (p. 143).

Situations that may lead to corruption and negative results can be summarised as follows. Firstly, if the primary financial resource is aid, this causes corruption in the receiving nation. Secondly, if the countries give bribes to get the aid, it decreases the accountability of the country.

Foreman suggests some solutions to the problems of aid he identifies. One solution is a sustainable trade system, which can achieve what development aid wants to achieve: a "fair trade system." With a system like this, regional barriers can directly be eliminated. Closing down the foreign aid and sending remittances can be other solutions to the existing system (pp. 88-90). According

to the author, another shortcoming of development aid is empowerment. Development aid should help poor people build their own capacity. Such capacity building includes infrastructure development as well as governance, education and institutional reform (p. 92).

A lack of checks and balances system also poisons growth and development. A reason why development aid fails is due to the poor planning of the aid. If development aid were designed by researchers rather than planners, it would be more efficient.

Another section of the book looks at the critics of humanitarian aid, or which is sometimes called in the literature "emergency aid". While humanitarian aid seems more valuable and less complicated than development aid, this is not the reality. Actually humanitarian aid is difficult to organise. For instance, giving people inappropriate and not useful materials to protect themselves may cause worse results, such as fire-related casualties, due to the use of nylon material in the tents and for the clothes. To deliver humanitarian aid safely requires aid workers who are educated in this field-the right materials must be in the right place at the time. In order to complete this process properly, aid agencies need leaders. The logic here is straightforward: aid should not

empower the wrong people. However even international organisations cannot prevent this.

India is the largest beneficiary of UK foreign aid. Since India accepts British aid, the UK receives international credit. The areas that India takes foreign aid for are for supplying clean water, education and public health. There are historical, business and diaspora reasons why there are strong ties between India and the UK. However the real objectives of the aid are questionable since the aid is also seen as a justifying the UK's presence in India. In contrast, British aid to Brazil has failed since it could not set up friendly and influential ties. While in Ethiopia only the people who have close ties with ruling party can benefit from any aid.

There are two main chronic problems of foreign aid: the effectiveness of aid cannot generally be evaluated, and when it can be evaluated the methods are often poor. The best implementation of aid requires five criteria: agency transparency, low overhead costs, specialisation of aid, selectivity (countries which have well-designed economic policies) and effective delivery channels.

In conclusion the author maintains that British aid has ideologically conditioned ideas and delusions which still persist. The author further argues that the Foreign Office should have a greater role in the future on aid spending since it considers the Britain's interests more than the Department for International Development, which may take party interests into considerations. The success of foreign aid should not be measured by the amount of money given to the poor countries, and the government should not spend taxes to justify its aid programme.

Foreman concludes his book with suggestions which are quite helpful for the future development of the British aid. In his view, there should be many more realistic regulations on foreign aid policies and he advises us to critically rethink the efficiency and motives of foreign aid.

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