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# NATIONALISM IN THE BALKANS

*An Annotated Bibliography*

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# INTRODUCTION: IN DEFENSE OF BALKAN NATIONALISM

Gale Stokes

Balkan nationalism is notorious. In the public mind of Western Europe and North America "balkanization" means division into petty, squabbling political units and implies that the participants in an emotional struggle have lost their ability to achieve statesmanlike solutions to their essentially parochial problems. This sense that the Balkans is something of a historical side show extends even into the academic community, where Balkan specialists tend to joke about their field to their academic colleagues.

These popular and learned attitudes are understandable. Unquestionably, Balkan politics has seen its share of pettiness, its quota of chauvinistic excess, and its portion of human frailty. Furthermore, Balkan states are new, small lands. Until recently, all Balkan peoples lived under either the Ottoman or the Habsburg Empires and had the Russians breathing down their necks as well. When they finally created their own countries on the principles of national sovereignty, they were too weak to resist strong neighbors, too proud to compromise with weak ones, and too underdeveloped to produce the economic progress their situations demanded. No wonder that during the several generations of their existence they have played only a supporting, albeit sometimes momentarily significant, role in European politics.

Scholars investigating the transformation of these not-long-ago inarticulate ethnic groups into nation-states have not always agreed on the balance between endogenous and exogenous

forces in the nation-building process, but most have concluded that political innovations came to the Balkans in the nineteenth century before the advent of social and economic change. This inconvenient transformation of the superstructure before the base has made the Balkan case a difficult one not only for doctrinaire Marxists, but for all those who analyze modernization in terms of economic and social change. Soviet Marxists have explained the change from feudalism to capitalism in the Balkans in terms of the rallying of the masses to national liberation movements, but outside the Balkans this explanation has not been prevalent. To non-Marxists, nationalism in Eastern Europe is a special type of two main variants of nationalism, one associated with France, the other with Germany. The first variant occurred in a country already well-formed before the arrival of national consciousness and involved a "subjective" choice by the citizens to associate themselves with the territorial state. The second variant occurred when the peoples of one ethnic and cultural group consolidated themselves by forming a state, Germany, and justified the result in terms of culture and language, which they understood to be "objective" criteria of national membership. The Eastern European case is considered an extension of the latter variant. As Balkan peoples became self-conscious, they developed their cultures and languages in opposition to the great empires in which they lived, thus creating the unifying elements around which a state was formed.

The establishment of European-style states by this process, with constitutions, bureaucracies, and legislatures, did not significantly change Balkan social or economic relations. Consequently, West European historians with an interest in socio-economic modes of explanation have taken little notice of the Balkans, and Balkan historians, with the exception of those interested in diplomatic history, have made few efforts to enrich the broader issues of European history. A moment's reflection, however, suggests that the Balkan case may shed considerable light on major issues of modern historiography precisely because of the mainly political nature of Southeastern Europe's transformation in the nineteenth century.

It is widely assumed, and in good measure correctly so, that nationalism is a product, in the broadest sense, of the French

Revolution, the dominant interpretation of which is that it was a bourgeois revolution that prepared the way for capitalism. The difficulty with this implied linkage between nationalism and capitalism is that the former is irrational in terms of the latter. Capitalism draws more and more elements of society into an ever more interdependent web of economic relationships, whereas nationalism creates more or less hostile political units, which often conceive their own interests in terms of preventing the full operation of the international division of labor. Even though nationalism seems almost indigenous to modern capitalism, in principle it stands in contradiction to it. One possible explanation for this paradox, suggested by the case of Southeastern Europe, is that the origins of capitalism and nationalism were distinct, although more or less simultaneous.

The view that the process of Balkan nation-formation lacks interest because of its "merely" political dimension needs to be inverted. The fact that Balkan nationalism is comprehensible in ideological and political terms should not encourage its dismissal but rather should prompt a search for its generative structural elements. Two such elements constituted the framework within which nation-formation occurred in Southeastern Europe. Since they were connected only peripherally with the industrial revolution and the coming of capitalism, albeit the French Revolution was important to each of them, they suggest a solution to the paradox of interdependence. These two elements were the state-system, and the appearance of the ideal of equity.

One of the basic organizing principles of all societies is hierarchy. Only with the Enlightenment and the French Revolution did a competing principle, the ideal of equity, gain widespread currency. Not just in medieval Europe, but in most agriculturally-based societies, persons were born to positions rigorously defined by law and custom. That rank and status were the certain ingredients of a well-ordered society was a principle considered ordained by God himself. Rulers might also grant special rights and privileges to groups or individuals for their own purposes, a practice that over the centuries created all sorts of corporate groups operating under their own rules, regulations, and rights. The vital contribution of the French Revolution was to shatter this corporate society of legally protected

privilege and rank. The French revolutionaries insisted that neither birth nor royal privilege should create the intermediate buffers between citizen and state. They therefore abolished not only the aristocracy, they also eliminated the guilds and forbade the creation of working-men's and producers' associations on the grounds that they splintered society into special groups.

Closely connected with the attack on hierarchy was the idea of popular sovereignty, consisting of two main elements. The first challenged the sovereignty of the king's God-like position atop the social and political hierarchy. The worldwide adoption of the idea of popular sovereignty since the French Revolution terminated monarchy as a valid political force. As a rule, this evolution has been seen as a political transformation, or as an acceleration of the secularization of politics, but it can also be viewed as the removal of the linchpin of a hierarchical system. This is how the Girondins thought of it when they demanded that Louis XVI be tried as an ordinary citizen.

The second aspect of popular sovereignty was its implication that only an equitable method of political participation would insure a truly representative government. At one extreme, conservatives limited the franchise to those whose ownership of property gave them a stake in the decisions of society, whereas at the other extreme radicals advocated universal suffrage. But all sides sought definitions of political participation that would satisfy demands for equity. This quest in turn triggered socialist proposals to extend equity from the political to the economic sphere.

Nonetheless, the creation of the ideal of equity was not an event involving economic variables, although it did have some roots in economic theory. The highly successful English economy and Adam Smith's free market theory influenced many French revolutionaries. But the ideal of equity embodied a mental transformation, not an economic one, particularly in the way more and more people approached social relations. Today equity has so thoroughly penetrated our understanding of what justifies a modern society that even states organized on the basis of special privilege must pay lip service to the proposition that the state is organized for the good of the people, all of whom are theoretically treated as equals.

These ideals of the French Revolution occasionally entered Eastern Europe in the form of social protests, in 1848, for example. But the main way the principle of equity was translated into Balkan terms was as freedom from domination by other ethnic or religious groups. Traditionally, élite positions in the Ottoman and Austrian Empires had been open to men of talent as long as they were prepared to adopt the dominant culture. In the Ottoman world this entailed conversion to Islam and profession of loyalty to the Sultan, whereas in the Habsburg environment it meant a rise to command in the German-speaking army or administration. But when the idea of popular sovereignty intruded, many imperial subjects began to consider assimilation as an unwarranted barrier separating their people from political power. The French Revolution proclaimed the citizen's right to be in direct contact with his state, but in neither of the two empires could most Southeast Europeans accomplish this. Cultural values and religious differences obstructed them. Two alternatives presented themselves. In the Habsburg lands, national leaders sought to reform the empire in order to gain recognition for their national groups. Only the Hungarians and to a lesser extent the Croats succeeded. In the Ottoman Empire, independence became the national goal. In an autonomous national state each citizen would theoretically enjoy the relationship with his government the principle of equity required.

If the first shaping condition of Balkan nationalism was an idea, the second was a structure. Nationalism may be seen as a transformation of certain ideals involving equity into a political reality within a functioning system of states. The state and its system of interaction grew out of long European experience. By the sixteenth century the protostates of modern Europe began to emerge in the New Monarchies, and by the end of the Thirty Years' War in 1648, a system embodying a balance of power among theoretically equal sovereign elements achieved its first foothold in European politics. Through the use of diplomatic conventions invented in the Italian city states, the European politics began practicing "foreign affairs." Over the next two centuries, the system of international relations developed that today dominates world politics.

When the notion of equity arrived in the Balkans, the Euro-

pean state system already existed. National leaders in the weak Ottoman Empire found, therefore, that the most effective way to achieve the direct relationship with the polity they sought was to create a state and gain its recognition. The largely political goal, which stamped the character of nation-formation in Southeast Europe, was set by the existence of the state system.

The truism that the creation of the Southeastern European states on the nationality principle occurred before any of them experienced the impact of the industrial revolution, or even, with the exception of Greece, the economic penetration of the modernizing capitalist states, can be explained by the circumstance that the two forming elements of nationalism, the state system and the idea of equity, converged simultaneously in Southeast Europe. Since neither of these two forces related directly to economic change, economic transformation was superfluous for the growth of nationalism in the Balkans. An extension of this argument to other parts of the world might show that the contradiction between nationalism and capitalism was a product of their separate, if parallel, development.

In one way or another, the post-World War II literature of Balkan nationalism has acknowledged these two shaping frameworks, although most such writings have been neither analytical nor synthetic. Many authors have stressed state-formation, or in some cases, such as the Croatian instance, incipient efforts to achieve national unity. Others have tried to achieve equity by identifying and clarifying the special differentiating marks that distinguish their own people. At its best, this effort to elaborate the unique characteristics of a people has been the way by which the ideal of equity has been translated into specific political terms, a bringing of the French Revolution to the Balkans. At its worst, of course, exaggerated claims of uniqueness have led to vicious ethnic struggles and the shedding of considerable blood.

In Romania, these two themes take the form of an emphasis on the continuity and unity of the Romanian experience. Continuity is central to the Romanian understanding of national uniqueness, closely linked with the Romanian claim of having lived in the Balkans since Roman times. Romanians contrast the antiquity of their presence with the relatively recent arrival of Slavs and Hungarians through archeological studies devoted to

Dacian artifacts and the study of place names, as well as through research attempting to bridge the thousand-year hiatus in sources. Unity, the second main Romanian theme, emphasizes state-building by suggesting that a Romanian people, including those in Transylvania, always needed and sought a unified state. The claim that Romanians always wanted to be united has achieved particular importance as a legitimizing device of the Communist regime, which presents itself as the true successor to all previous state-forming efforts among Romanians.

The increasing obsession with both these themes that Professor Michelson points out may be explained by an analysis echoing Romania's nineteenth-century experience. First, Romanians are under considerable pressure from their Soviet neighbor, and therefore feel compelled to define their own identity as sharply as possible. Secondly, the emphasis on unity which implies the primacy of the state over the individual is needed internally in Romania to legitimate a government hard-pressed to meet the economic needs of its population. This phenomenon resembles Romania's nineteenth-century efforts at legitimation functionally, though not specifically. In the nineteenth century, élites used rationalism to legitimate the state, as well as to justify their own right to dominate the state apparatus. The state was not expected to provide the population with positive economic benefits, but it did need a justification to rule that was modern. The claim that the state represented the people directly provided this justification. Since World War II, the awareness that the industrial revolution might ameliorate poverty has spread throughout the world. Now every government must bring the benefits of modern economic power to its people. Indeed, nationalism is often used as a device to create economic benefits. Many ethnic struggles are in fact struggles over economic issues. But in Romania, the regime registers ever more extravagant nationalist claims because it has failed to provide the economic benefits a modern population demands. In other words, whereas in the nineteenth century state building required a nationalist ideology, today state maintenance demands it.

The Greeks face a completely different situation than the Romanians regarding the continuity of their national character. There is no lack of data on classical Greece, nor is there any

doubt that the Byzantine and even the Ottoman Empires facilitated the transmission of Greek culture into the modern world. Continuity poses no problem for the Greeks. As Professor Augustinos points out, the Greek problem was to create an ordinary nation-state under the burden of a grand imperial tradition. Instead of inflating a relatively modest group of sources into a national tradition, the Greeks have had to deflate a distinguished tradition into a reasonable national aim. This effort was complicated by the dispersion of ethnic Greeks throughout the eastern Mediterranean, the diversity of the Greek social structure, and by the strength of European influences in Greece. Perhaps it was the combined pressures of all these problems that encouraged the Greeks to create aggressive national goals in the nineteenth century. Only after the collapse of the Anatolian adventure in 1922 did the Greeks realistically assess their position as a nation-state. Today, Greek leaders excite public opinion by citing the Turkish threat and the American presence, but in fact, Greece has reconciled her classical past with her national present with some degree of success.

Irredentist claims were important in the development of Greek and Romanian nationalism. The Romanians coveted and finally gained Transylvania, whereas Greece successfully expanded northward into Macedonia and Thrace, obtained Crete, and today struggles over Cyprus. Territorial claims played an even larger role in the development of Bulgarian national consciousness. One of the last Balkan peoples to become nationally aware, the Bulgars expanded their influence into Macedonia through the Bulgarian exarchate even before founding a state. But precisely at the moment of their greatest success, the achievement of statehood in 1878, the Great Powers drew the Bulgarian border to exclude Macedonia. Thus the very creation of the Bulgarian nation state is associated in the minds of Bulgarian nationalists with an irreparable loss. Consequently, Macedonia remains the neuralgic point of Bulgarian nationalism to this day. Bulgarians are interested in ethnogenesis, as are the Romanians, and have devoted increasing attention to it recently. They have also devoted much attention to the creation of the Bulgarian national movement and the establishment of the Bulgarian state in the nineteenth century. These issues have not

driven the Bulgarians to the same extremes of nationalist conceptualization as the Romanians, because the Bulgars see themselves as members of an extended Slavic family in a way the Romanians definitely do not. Some Bulgarians might dislike Russian dominance, but publicly the Bulgars appear content in their role as junior partners in the Russian sphere of influence, especially because the Russians permit them to be as cantankerous as they wish, at least verbally, in their feud with Yugoslavia over Macedonia.

It is impossible to elaborate the main points of Yugoslavia's development as with Romania, Greece, and Bulgaria. Yugoslavia is a federation comprising a number of nations and peoples. Its history does not consist of the emergence of a single Yugoslav national consciousness and nation-state, but of the growth of several national consciousnesses and their occasionally strained agglomeration into a multinational state. Serbia provides the most unequivocal example of national development because it became a sovereign nation-state in 1878. But, as Professor Dobos's bibliography shows, Croats, too, were actively creating their own national consciousness and in the nineteenth century considered political alternatives to state formation. In fact, because Croatia did not achieve independent statehood, post-World-War II Croatian historians have considered these early efforts particularly important. Slovene national consciousness also blossomed in the nineteenth century, but only in the twentieth did Slovenes begin to achieve an integrated view of themselves as a people. Slovene historians are still clarifying their historical roots and creating their image of the Slovene people. Even less defined are the Bosnian Moslems, who are presently undergoing national self-discovery. And of course in Macedonia, a vigorous process of official nation-building has been proceeding since 1945.

The problem for Yugoslavia has been that the South Slav state created in 1918 contravened the Balkan ideal of equity, in that it was a multi-national, not a national state. Interwar Serbian domination proved that Yugoslavia would remain unstable unless the issue of equity was squarely faced. The willingness of the Yugoslav Communist Party to do so was a major factor in its victory. Since 1945, it has been less important that Communist

hopes of resolving the nationality question have turned out to be over-optimistic than that the party has taken positive steps to cope with the resurgence of the problem. The particular twists and turns of the issue emerge from Professor Seroka's study. The League of Communists of Yugoslavia continues to search out institutional arrangements that will satisfy demands for national equity. Decentralization, quotas, and cultural pluralism characterize the Yugoslavs' efforts. Their relative success in an extremely volatile ethnic situation suggests that in Southeastern Europe, the French revolutionary promise of equity that the state was designed to provide still is measured in national terms.

The following bibliographies were not designed specifically to illuminate the themes of state-system and equity but to delineate the characteristics of Balkan nationalism. The project originated with Thomas Spira, editor of the *Canadian Review of Studies in Nationalism*, and was designed to provide regional bibliographies of nationalism as research aids for specialists. But gathering so many annotated entries into one volume serves a larger purpose as well. By studying the titles and the annotations, readers can discover what sorts of issues have underlain the phenomenon of Balkan nationalism, particularly from the viewpoint of those who approach the subject as part of their ethnic heritage.

The subject of Balkan nationalism has not inspired many comparative or synthetic studies. The first section of the bibliography does list a few such works, but a deep understanding of Balkan nationalism has yet to be achieved. Much postwar work emphasizes traditional methodology, focussing on the factual details of state-formation or national development. Other works are unabashedly polemical.

In each section, the authors were requested to write representative, not exhaustive, bibliographies of post-World-War II literature relating to nationalism and their country or national group. This autonomy of choice resulted in variations reflecting the differing situations individual peoples have had to face. Each bibliography, therefore, slightly differs in the tone and completeness of the annotations. Authors were asked not to annotate purely historical works that did not concern nationalism as such, but this principle was difficult to observe consistently. Clear dif-

ferentiations simply do not exist between historical works concerning a national group and works about nationalism. For example, Manuela Dobos's contribution on nineteenth-century Croatia and Carole Rogel's on Slovenia emphasize specific historical phenomena, whereas Gerasimos Augustinos chose a selective list of works designed to guide the reader into Greek national history as well as nationalism.

There is no section on Albania, because a suitable specialist to undertake the task could not be found. Our schedule precluded the inclusion of works on the recent Kosovo disturbances, although by the time of publication literature on that subject may have appeared.

Readers might inquire why there are sections on Croatia, Slovenia, the Bosnian Moslems, and the Habsburg South Slavs, who were, of course, Croats, Slovenes, and Bosnians (as well as Serbs). The reply is not one of principle but of practice. We assumed that the contributors' special interests and expertise would complement rather than duplicate each other. This turned out to be true, and Professor Adler's contribution contained only a handful of overlapping items.

Since this volume is organized on the basis of current political boundaries, the section on Macedonia appears under Yugoslavia. However, geographically Macedonia extends into Greece and Bulgaria, and the nationalisms of both countries are closely intertwined with the Macedonian problem. For this reason, items concerning Macedonia will be found in the sections on Greece and Bulgaria, as well as in Duncan Perry's section. A small number of duplications occur.

Finally, occasionally annotations by one author are included in a section primarily written by another. In such cases, the initials of the author of the annotation, who is also the selector of the title, are shown in parenthesis at the end of the entry.