

## THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE BALKANS SINCE THE OTTOMAN ERA

### THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA BALKAN CONFERENCE

Under the sponsorship of the University of California and its Center for Slavic and East European Studies, there was held in Berkeley, California, in June, 1960, the first Conference of Balkan Studies which has ever been held in this country, or as far as we know, abroad.

Chairman of the committee arranging the conference was Professor Charles Jelavich of the University of California, assisted by Professor Wayne Vucinich of Stanford University and Professor Jozo Tomasevich of San Francisco State College (California). The University of California and the committee should be congratulated on the arrangements made for the visiting scholars. Accommodations were excellent and the organization and mechanics of the conference itself were well handled.

An area of such wide scope as "Balkan Studies" must of necessity have some limitations drawn for a conference of this type. The organizers thus limited the conference chronologically to the post-Ottoman period.

The specific (one should really say *general*) subject of the conference was *The Transformation of the Balkans since The Turkish Era*. Invited to attend were most American scholars concerned with the teaching of East European or Balkan history, in addition to a small number from abroad.

No papers were read at the conference. Scholars were assigned their topics in advance; submitted their manuscripts in advance, and the University of California distributed them weeks before the conference to the many scholars who were to attend the conference. Each session of the conference consisted of two or three critiques on two papers; then a rebuttal by the authors of the papers, followed by general discussion by the entire assemblage. It is only regretted that some of the papers did not circulate long enough in advance for careful study by those attending the sessions.

Two criticisms might be made at this point, before a discussion of the papers is given.

One is that the general topic of the conference itself was too broad and too ambitious. As a result, some of the specific topics assigned to

scholars to fit within the subject of Transformation of the Balkans since the Turkish Era were themselves too sweeping in scope to be summarized in one paper. Case papers on specific countries were avoided<sup>1</sup>. This tended to compound the problem, for the specialist in Rumanian History, for example, would have to relate his paper to all the other Balkan countries and try to give them equal weight.

The second criticism is that the scholarly level of the papers (and as a result, some of the discussion) was very uneven. This may have been the result, in part, of the wide scope of the conference itself. Some of the papers were mere essays without citations.

As a final note, one might add the wish that any future conference on Balkan Studies, and we hope for them periodically, might circumscribe more tightly the scope of the entire meeting. This will tend toward more solid contributions.

Scholars participating in the three day conference were:

George Arnakis, University of Texas; Ann Arpajoglou, U. S. Army Language School; Alexander Bajt, University of Ljubljana, Yugoslavia; C. E. Black, Princeton University; T. C. Balisdell, Jr., University of California; James Brennan, University of California; Robert Byrnes, Indiana University; John C. Campbell, Council on Foreign Relations, New York; David Cattell, University of California, Los Angeles; Peter Christoff, San Francisco State College; James Clarke, University of Pittsburgh; Velid Dag, Army Language School; D. Delivanis, University of Thessalonike, Greece; M. Drachkovitch, University of California; Alex Dragnich, Naval War College; Fischer-Galati, Wayne State University; H. H. Fisher, San Francisco State College; Sydney Fisher, Ohio State University; Eillen Shaw Grampp, University of California; Charles Gullick, University of California; J. Halpern, University of California, Los Angeles; George W. Hoffman, University of Texas; Peter Horn, Army Language School; Charles Jelavich, University of California; Boris Jordan, Army Language School; Ante Kadic, Indiana University; Fred Kellog, University of California; Harold Kirkpatrick, University of California; Erick Klinkmuller, University of Free Berlin, Germany; Zica Kovacavic, University of Belgrade, Yugoslavia; H. Louis Kostanick, University of California, Los Angeles; Boris Kremenliev, University of California, Los Angeles; Basil Laourdas, Institute for Balkan Studies, Greece; Ivo Ledever,

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1. With the exception of Prof. Gerschenkron's paper on Some Aspects of Industrialization in Bulgaria, 1878 - 1939.

Yale University; John Letiche, University of California; Albert Lord, Harvard University; Stephen Lukashevich, University of California; David MacKenzie, Princeton University; Bernice Madison, San Francisco State College; Paul G. Manolis, University of California; Michael Marku, Army Language School; Oleg Maslenikov, University of California; Forrest Miller, University of California; Fred W. Neal, Claremont College; Traian Ocneanu, Army Language School; C. Bickford 'Brien, University of California; Adam Pepelasis, University of California; Marin Pundeff, San Fernando State College; Nicholas Riasanovsky, University of California; Henry L. Roberts, The Russian Institute, New York; Henry Rosovsky, University of California; Joseph Rothschild, Columbia University; Irwin T. Sanders, Boston University; Cornelius van Schoonfeldt, Stanford University; Stanford J. Shaw, Harvard University; Stavro Skendi, Columbia University; Nicolas Spulber, Indiana University; Leften Staurianos, Northwestern University; Traian Stoianovich, Rutgers University; Marin Stude, Army Language School; Peter Sugar, University of Washington; Paul S. Taylor, University of California; Jozo Tomasevich, San Francisco State College; George Vid Tomashevich, Elmira College; Julian Towster, University of California; C. A. Trypanis, Oxford University; K. G. Tucker, University of California; William Vettes, Wisconsin State College; Speros Vryonis, Harvard University; Alex Vucinich, San Jose State College; Benjamin Ward, University of California; Francis J. Whitfield, University of California; Robert Lee Wolff, Harvard University; Stephen G. Xydis, Columbia University; William Barnsdale, Department of State; Sergius Yakobson, Library of Congress; Stephen Kertesz, Notre Dame University; George Soulis, Dumbarton Oaks Research Library; Wayne Vucinich, Stanford University.

The papers prepared for the conference were as follows:

1. *The Legacy of the Turks in the Balkans* by Wayne Vucinich, Stanford University.

Professor Vucinich, after a survey of various aspects of life in the Balkans (religious, social, art, music, linguistic, etc.), attempts to show the extent of Ottoman influence which survives today. He asserts that these influences have been so thoroughly blended with the total native cultural behaviour that the two have become virtually inseparable; and that material culture which the Ottomans superimposed upon the layers of Balkan civilizations, though still visible, began to disappear with the Ottoman recession into Asia. He attempts to show that the non-material culture showed more resilience, and that Ottoman and Western values and institutions amalgamated to produce modern cultures of the Balkan peoples.

2. *The Ottoman View of the Balkans* by Stanford J. Shaw, Harvard University.

After a preliminary examination of the Ottoman view of government and society as a whole, Professor Shaw shows that the Balkans were regarded by the Ottomans according to the class and rank of the Ottoman and the time involved. Fourteenth century Turkish aristocrats considered the Balkans as the source of their power; those of the fifteenth century and thereafter saw them as the source of the Devshirme power which was gradually replacing them in control of the Ottoman ruling class. He asserts that "the descendents of the Balkan ruling houses who were absorbed into the Ottoman system saw the Balkans first as a stronghold of their opponents, later as the main source of their financial and political power. Within the Ottoman administrative structure and the Ottoman mind as a whole, the Balkans evolved from a position where they provided the Empire with administrative and military service . . . . to one where they provided the Ottoman system not with service but with a degenerate Devshirme class . . . To the Ottoman reformers, it was to the Balkans that reforms had to be applied as the primary and most essential means of restoring the strength of the Empire".

3. *The Influence of the West on the Balkans* by L. S. Stavrianos, Northwestern University.

Professor Stavrianos discusses five phases of Balkan and Western relations and influences: Anti-Westernism of Balkan Orthodoxy, Origins and Patterns of the Westernization Process, Western Influence during the Ottoman Period, Western Influence during the National Period, and Balkan Westernization in World Perspective. He shows how westernization in the Balkans replaces the isolation, ignorance and acquiescence of "traditionalism"<sup>2</sup>. He concludes that westernization is undermining traditional society in the Balkans today more rapidly than at any time in the past.

4. *Russia and the Modernization of Southeastern Europe* by C. E. Black, Princeton University.

The transformation of the peoples of the Balkans from subject of the Ottoman Empire to citizenship in independent national states was discussed in the well documented paper by Prof. Black. He first discusses the

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2. Stavrianos uses the terms *modernism* and *westernism* interchangeably. He points out, however, that in dealing with the 20th century, *modernism* is preferable to *westernism*, since the West frequently is equated with Europe.

general area of Southeastern Europe, Russia, and the West, then the Politics of Power, the Ideologies of Modernization; Economic Growth; Culture and Institutions and the extent and nature of Russian influence. He shows how the extent and nature of Russian influence has depended on the balance of power, and that Russia's own delayed modernization deprived her of much of the influence which she could otherwise have exerted. Independent of the obvious political influences, he also includes literature and the arts, education, science and technology as well as economic relations. He concludes that the prospect for long-term Russian influence in the Balkans, apart from that which can be imposed by force, lies in the ability of the Soviet system to evolve original solutions to the myriad of problems confronted by societies undergoing modernization.

5. *Balkan Politics and Politicians* by Henry Roberts, Columbia University.

Professor Roberts limits his paper to the question of the influence of the Balkan states' position as "small powers" upon the structure and operation of their domestic political systems and upon the style and attitudes of the politicians themselves. In his short discussion he concludes that the principal effect upon domestic Balkan politics of being a small power has been to create, especially in times of crisis, a certain polarization between those who adopt the politics of impotence and those who rage at the impotence of politics. He suggest we should not consider Balkan politics as "abnormal"—using some of the great powers as norms—but that Balkan politics must be judged in the Balkan setting.

6. *The Dynamics of Balkan Classes* by Traian Stoianovich, Rutgers University.

Dividing his paper into a number of sections, Professor Stoianovich discusses first the Estate or Traditional Society, the Political Classes and *Dvoevlastie*, The Social Classes, and finally Class Styles and Values. He concludes that in the Balkans the social order has been changed twice in the last two hundred and fifty years and that class, nation, and culture are different manifestations of the same or similar phenomena. He thus identifies the Serbian nation with "heroic culture" and a type of "classless society;" the Greek nation with "ingenuity culture" and the mentality of traders; and the Bulgarian (and he leaves room for doubt here) with *ra-bota*—culture and the substructure of a serf-like mentality. He points out that the Balkan states have moved (like the rest of the world) from the estate to the multiclass society and are now tending toward a "classless" society.

7. *The Role of Religion in the Development of the Balkans* by George Arnakis, University of Texas.

Professor Arnakis, in his general survey of the role of religion, attempts to show how religion (more specifically the Eastern Orthodox Church), until the twentieth century played the role of "foster mother" to nationality and that was its most important historical role during the period of Ottoman domination. He discusses the Islamization that took place during the Ottoman rule and the role of the Eastern Orthodox Church as preserver of nationality, through the Universalism of the Patriarchate of Constantinople. With the emergence of the independent states, the first and most serious challenge to this Universalism came, strangely enough, from Greece when that nation became independent. Adherence to the Orthodox faith was the one unifying factor for the various ethnic and linguistic groups in the Balkans during and after Ottoman rule.

8. *Nationalism and the Muses in Balkan Slavic Literature in the Modern Period* by Albert B. Lord, Harvard University.

Professor Lord's paper, one of the best papers presented, showed how nationalism, as a rebellious force, brought in folk language, folk poetry as models, patriotic, nationalistic themes, patriotic papers and magazines and patriotic literary societies in opposition to a kind of classicism that had become or was trying to become traditional. While nationalism was important and necessary in helping to foster the use of the everyday language and in giving a new start to literature, it soon became banal, empty and unworthy in the intellectual growth of the Balkan people. He shows that the Balkan Slavs have produced literatures that can be truly called by that name, and that these literatures are separated from those of Western Europe and Russia chiefly, perhaps even solely, by language.

9. *Education and National Consciousness* by James F. Clarke, Pittsburgh University.

Professor Clarke, stressing that education might provide a key to Balkan history, discusses the intellectual development and culture, education and enlightenment in the Balkans as related to independence and unification. He discusses a number of the common and uncommon trends which either came before or paralleled the intellectual and the political emergence of the new states. Clarke shows that education was the main factor which brought about the end of Ottoman rule, and that in these countries education tended from the ecclesiastical to the cosmopolitan and to the national, and from conservative to radical and back to conservative.

10. *A Survey of Historical Studies in the Balkans in Modern Times* by George C. Soulis, Dumbarton Oaks Research Library.

Mr. Soulis' paper covers a topic of wide range in a limited space. Covering all the Balkan countries, Soulis shows the development of historical studies in each country which accompanied the rise of nationalism as each successive country was liberated from Ottoman domination. He points out the contribution of many Balkan historians despite the difficulties under which they labor, particularly the inadequate library and research facilities.

11. *Changes in the Economic Structures of the Balkan Area 1850-1960* by Nicolas Spulber, Indiana University.

In surveying the transformation of the Balkans since the Turkish era, Professor Spulber analyzes sector by sector the basic characteristics of the economic development of the Balkans in the hundred years from 1860 to 1960. He examines the growth and structural change during the formative period up to 1914, the period between the two world wars, and the postwar years. His conclusion shows the changes that have taken place in industry with respect to employment capacity, pattern of activity and size-groups of plants and how the process of industrialization was accompanied by systematic expansion in state ownership and state economic activity. He shows how the post World War II period was a period of vigorous growth at rates unsurpassed in the past by these countries and that the economies of the Balkan nations have been and still are extremely small. He concludes that political, historical, and nationalistic factors stand in the way of a more efficient allocation of resources in the Balkans through a broad division of labor within the area.

12. *Some Aspects of Industrialization in Bulgaria, 1878-1939* by Alexander Gerschenkron, Harvard University.

Professor Gerschenkron's paper presents the results of some statistical computations with an attempt to place them within a plausible interpretative framework. He shows how poverty and economic backwardness prevented Bulgaria from developing along the pattern of other Western European countries and how the small family farm character became more pronounced in Bulgaria, thus preventing it from serving either as an adequate raw material basis for industry or as a source of effective demand for industrial product. He concludes that increased railroad construction would have provided a wide network of persistent demand for the products of new industries, and that the Bulgarian government did not take advantage of

the fact that German banks were ready to export their accumulated experience in raising industrial enterprises to other areas.

13. *The Balkans: A Geopolitical Mirror* by H.L. Kostanick, University of California (at Los Angeles).

Professor Kostanick shows how the prevailing spheres of influence in the Balkans today, the Soviet Communist and the Western, are creating two different worlds which will bear the imprint of their different ideologies in the future. The Soviets on the one hand are attempting to change traditional patterns of life in terms of land use, collectivization, industrialization, education, religion, political ideology e.t.c., while the Western aid (Marshall Plan, etc.) has brought about changes in agriculture, industry and communication (in Greece and Turkey) without an attempt to introduce a completely different ideology. His main thesis is that the critical factor in foreign intervention in the Balkans has been strategic geographical location and that internal disunity has facilitated direct territorial annexation or creation of zones of influence. This has made the Balkans a "mirror" first of the European power situation and now of the world-wide power struggle, a struggle in which the Balkans represent but a stepping stone in power movements from one major region to another.

14. *The Balkans: Heritage and Continuity* by John S. Campbell, Council on Foreign Relations.

Prof. Campbell's paper is divided into three main segments: The Balkan Future, The Transformation of Society, and Nationalism. While emphasizing that it is impossible at the present time to foretell future conditions in the Balkans, he presents the argument that Greece and Yugoslavia will not be swept into the Soviet block if the West is successful in maintaining and building further its material and political strength. He asserts that Soviet policy will determine the direction in which the present satellites will move and that Greece and Yugoslavia with their Western connections may exert some attractive force. He strongly urges that the West should do everything possible to help these two countries to make their economic and social structure impervious to disruption by Soviet threats.

The University of California plans to publish in one volume the papers prepared for the Conference.