

Conferences

Meeting of the Directors of the Balkan Institutes and Specialists in the History and Culture of the Balkan peoples

Belgrade, 9-12 May 1996

Fourteen years have passed since September 1982, when outstanding Balkanologists first came together in Belgrade to discuss the aims and the plans by which research should be guided. The meeting was attended by forty scholars from nine European countries and the United States of America, all major names in the various areas of Balkan research, ranging from archaeologists, historians, ethnologists, and art historians to specialists in languages, literature, law, and philosophy. Academicians Vasa Čubrilović and Radovan Samardžić, the heads of the Balkan Institute of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, which was hosting the meeting, together with the representatives of the foreign institutes, reported on the progress of Balkan studies in their various countries to date and offered suggestions as to the directions they should take in future. Many of those scholars are no longer alive; but their thoughts and proposals on that occasion may be found in a small book titled *Conférence internationale des balkanologues: Belgrade, 7-8 septembre 1982*, Belgrade 1982.

Exactly ten years after that first conference in Belgrade, the Institute for Balkan Studies held the second meeting of Balkanologists (Thessaloniki, 20-21 October 1992). It was another opportunity for an extensive discussion of how Balkanologists could work together, and if this was not possible at an international level, then at least it could be done between the Balkan Institutes of south-eastern Europe. This meeting—which examined some important subjects and reached some significant conclusions—was attended by representatives (presidents, directors, and research associates) from Albania, Bulgaria, Romania, Serbia, and, of course, the Institute for Balkan Studies, which was hosting the event. They were: *Kristag Prifti*, Director of the Albanian Academy of Sciences' Institute for Historic Studies in Tirana; *Nikolai Todorov*, President of the International Association of South-east European Studies and President of the International Balkan Documentation Centre in Sofia; *Alexandru Dușu*, Director of the Institute for South-east European Studies in

Bucharest; *Nikola Tasić*, President of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts' Institute for Balkan Studies in Belgrade; *Anthony-Emil Tachiaos*, Corresponding Member of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts and President of the Thessaloniki Institute for Balkan Studies; and *Basil Kondis*, Director of the Thessaloniki Institute for Balkan Studies.

The discussions at the Thessaloniki meeting centred on the prospects for collaboration, ranging from the exchange of publications and specialists to the organising of symposia and conferences, and for joint projects on such major themes as migratory movements in the Balkans, for instance. It was also pointed out that collaboration ought to extend to the publication of historical sources, particularly from the time of Ottoman domination, and comparative research into Balkan literature, linguistics, philosophy, and so on. For further details of the decisions taken at the meeting, see B. Kondis, "Collaboration with Scholarly Institutions in Other Countries: 1. Meeting of the Directors of Balkan Institutes", *Balkan Studies*, vol. 33, No. 2 (1992), 342-3.

Sad to say, neither time nor the ensuing political events in some Balkan countries helped to achieve the joint goals that had been set. However, the seventh AIESEE conference in Thessaloniki in 1994 encouraged the notion of another meeting of representatives of the Balkan Institutes, when it was decided that it was well worth continuing the efforts, as far as circumstances permitted, to keep Balkan studies from being neglected and to prepare more far-reaching projects for the years ahead. As a result of this, and the fact that the longed-for peace gradually prevailed in the Balkans, the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts' Balkan Institute and the National Committee for Balkan Studies decided to host the third Balkanologists' meeting in Belgrade on 9-11 May 1996.

The heart and soul of the meeting was the Director of the Balkan Institute, Academician Nikola Tasić, who, assisted by a select band of associates, organised the proceedings with an efficiency that was beyond reproach. This important meeting was attended by representatives (presidents, directors, and research associates) of institutes concerned with issues relating to the material and spiritual culture of the Balkan peoples and the relations between them, from Bulgaria, Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro), Greece, FYROM, Romania, and Turkey. Representatives from Albania were invited, but none came. Those attending the meeting were:

From Bulgaria: *Aleksander Fol*, Academician and Thracian expert; *Kiril Jordanov*, Director of the Sofia Institute for Thracian Studies; *Mark Stefanovich*, Professor at the American Institute in Blagoevgrad.

From Yugoslavia: *Milutin Garasānin*, Academician and Chairman of the

National Committee for Balkan Studies; *Miomir Dašić*, Full Member of the Montenegrin Academy of Sciences and Arts (Podgorica, Montenegro); *Nikola Tasić*, Academician and Director of the Belgrade Balkan Institute; *Dragoslav Antonijević*, Corresponding Member of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts and Secretary of the National Committee for Balkan Studies; *Miodrag Stojanović*, Professor in the School of Philology, Belgrade University; *Dinko Davidov*, Scientific Advisor to the Belgrade Balkan Institute; *Aleksander Palavestra*, *Milan Protić*, *Dusán Bataković*, and *Ljubodrag Ristić*, Associates of the Belgrade Balkan Institute.

From Greece: *Anthony-Emil Tachiaos*, Corresponding Member of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts and President of the Thessaloniki Institute for Balkan Studies; *Haralambos Papastathis*, Professor in the School of Law, Thessaloniki University; *Ioannis Papadrianos*, Associate Professor of Balkan History at the Democritus University of Thrace.

From FYROM: *Olivera Jasār-Nasteva*, Academician and President of the National Committee for Balkan Studies; *Vera Bitrakova-Grozdanović*, Professor of Archaeology in the School of Philosophy, Skopje University; *Eleonora Petrova*, Director of the Skopje Archaeological Institute.

From Romania: *Alexandru Dușu*, Director of the Bucharest Institute for South-east European Studies; *Ioan Opreș*, Representative of the Bucharest Institute for Thracian Studies.

From Turkey: *Gencer Özcan*, Professor of International Relations at the University of Marmara and Member of the Governing Board of the Istanbul Institute for the Middle East and Balkan Studies.

The meeting began on the morning of 9 May with addresses by representatives of the host institute and the corresponding members of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts (Anthony-Emil Tachiaos and Aleksander Fol). In the evening and throughout the next day, the papers were read (having already been published by the Organising Committee for the benefit of those attending) in the following order and languages. Milutin Gorašanin, "Origine, formation et évolution des peuples paléobalkaniques"; Boško I. Bojović, "La littérature autochtone sud-slave: transmission de la mémoire collective et formation de la pensée historique: histoire des textes et textes de l'histoire"; Milan Protić and Dusán Bataković, "Political Ideas and Political Elite in the Balkans (19th and 20th Centuries)"; Milan Protić and Ljubodrag Ristić, "Major World Powers and the Balkans (19th and 20th Centuries)"; Dragoslav Antonijević, "Migrations in Balkan History"; Miodrag Stojanović, "L'héritage linguistique et littéraire hellénique, byzantin et néohellénique chez les peuples balkaniques"; Dinko Davidov, "L'iconographie de la peinture murale

postbyzantine dans les Balkans (XVe-XVIIIe ss.)”.

After the papers, a number of conference members took the floor, offering further comments and suggesting other areas in which non-Balkan Balkanologists could take part in research. This third meeting in the Serbian capital was brought to a close by Nikola Tasić, who noted in his summation that the meeting had belied the most pessimistic forecasts and that the Balkanologists had a bounden duty not only to continue their efforts but also to co-ordinate even more closely their activities on behalf of the progress of scholarship and the good of the people of the sensitive Balkan region.

On 11 May, the conference members visited Topola-Oplenac, the home of the Karadjordjević dynasty, where they enjoyed a guided tour and a taste of warm Serbian hospitality.

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