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### I International Symposium on Culture of Remembrance

### Bosnia and Herzegovina



INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SARAJEVO



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### “Culture of Remembrance: Twilight or New Awakening”



International University of Sarajevo  
12—13 April, 2014 Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina

**CULTURE OF REMEMBRANCE**

*Book of proceedings*

**I INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM**

*“Bosnia and Herzegovina – Culture of remembrance:  
Twilight or new Awakening“*

*Editors*

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*“Bosnia and Herzegovina – Culture of remembrance:  
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**I MEĐUNARODNI SIMPOZIJ  
KULTURA SJEĆANJA**

*„Bosna i Hercegovina – Kultura sjećanja:  
Sumrak ili Novo buđenje“*

**И МЕЂУНАРОДНИ СИМПОЗИЈ  
КУЛТУРА СЈЕЋАЊА**

*„Босна и Херцеговина – Култура сјећања:  
Сумрак или Ново буђење“*

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## Remembrance for the Future: 1914-2014

(*Bosnian angle*)

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### Abstract

The paper aims to approach the issue of the Balkan Wars (1912-1913) in its complexity and stratification. As such, the issue demands a multi-disciplinary analysis. The roots and consequences of the Balkan Wars are not only political and military, but also cultural, socio psychological, religious and primarily nationalistic. The failure in providing a synthetically relevant explication entailed in both ideological contentions and theoretical controversies. In order to contribute, the author intends to open following topics: 1. 'Eastern Question' as the root of the Balkan Wars; 2. Where have the Balkan Wars actually started: in Bosnia or Berlin?; 3. Did Bosnia transformed the 'Eastern Question' into a "Western Question"?; 4. The Balkan Wars/the Great War: the End of Multi-ethnic state and the Triumph of Nation State? 5. The Balkan Wars: Clash of Civilizations or Clash of Nationalisms? 6. Quite a Theoretical Dilemma: Liberation vs. Occupation, or vice versa? The answers provided by the paper might shed light on modern history of Europe. It also pretends to point out the Europe's current embarrassments with its own values on the basis of lessons from the Balkan Wars. The culture of remembrance, and the part of which also history is, is a precious means for the culture of moulding future eschewing the mistakes of the past.

**Key words: Balkan wars, multi-ethnic state, nation state, nationalism, occupation, liberation**

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“A spectre is haunting Western culture – the spectre of the Balkans.”

Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*

### Introduction

It is commonly believed that the waves, or winds, of French revolution, i.e. of freedom, dashed against the rest of Europe. Even as metaphors, both waves and winds, however, are ambiguous. What Europe got after 1789 was the *idea* of freedom, but also the *reality* of terror and Napoleon.

Although the Balkan wars from the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century took place more than 100 years later, one maintains that the liberation of Balkan peoples from the Ottoman rule was an echo of this principle of French revolution. One also forgets that freedom, as well as liberation, is ambiguous. Nobody can deny that the reality of Robespierre and Mara's terror, let alone the awful reality of

Napoleon's wars against Europe, were the outcome of the idea of freedom too.<sup>51</sup> Such an idea of freedom, ambiguous in its conceit, became one of the fundamental values of Europe. (That is what also makes the Balkan wars ambiguous.)

Converse attitudes on the nature of Balkan wars ensue as much as from their ambiguous reality so, or even more, from the incapacity of science to define fundamental concepts. Let us leave aside 'freedom' this time, for I have probed the ambiguity of freedom at another place.<sup>52</sup> I will remind of those concepts without which an exact perception of the Balkan wars is possible neither. These lacking concepts are: war and occupation. That is where hence the inevitable - fundamentally theoretical, which is to say independent from the specific topic of Balkan wars - questions come from: What are the war and occupation?

Due to the lack of answer to these fundamental questions, one should inevitably raise the following ones as well: 1. Whether the Balkan wars were the wars of *liberation* the goal of which was the ending of Ottomans' *occupation*? 2. Were the Balkan wars a clash of civilizations, accordingly the conflicts having sprung from cultural and religious distinctions, or conflicts of nationalisms, both the Balkan's and European ones? 3. Whether the Balkan wars represented a turning-point in political history of Europe, i.e. the end of multi-ethnic states and triumph of nation state? 4. Have the Balkan wars actually opened "Western question" by "resolving" "Eastern question"? 5. Did the Balkan wars started in Europe (Berlin) and in Bosnia as the first "solution" of "Eastern question"? 6. Where is the root of Balkan wars: in so-called "Eastern question" or European nationalism? In order to provide the inductive character of our method of research, the answers to these questions will be following in the row which is reverse to the one they were raised.

Before the answers, I will put two hypotheses which are to be either confirmed or rejected by the answers. 1. Balkan wars were liberation wars of Balkan peoples, mainly south Slaves ones, from the Ottoman Empire. However, the Balkan wars were also – crimes, thus the outcome of freedom in its negative form. 2. Balkan wars were aiming against Ottoman authority and state, which was perceived and presented as occupying one. However, the Balkan wars terminated in new occupations, thus ended in the freedom which was denied to Turkey by victor states.

Both hypotheses open thus the question of legitimacy of the Balkan wars. The legitimacy of the Balkan wars, however, does not depend on whether the hypotheses will be confirmed, but also on the ultimate outcome of the wars: have the Balkans, namely, become something better without Turks? This question in fact contains the quintessence of the question which have been absorbing the attention of European public and which is still the dilemma of European statesmen: "They recognized the degeneration of the Ottoman Empire, but they could not answer the question of what should take its place. This is the essence of what came to be known as 'the Eastern Question'."<sup>53</sup>

## 6. The essence of "the Eastern Question": Nationalism

"The Eastern Question", i.e. the question of the position of non-Turkish peoples in European part of Turkey, is the question Europe has rightly raised, but from a very unprincipled standpoint. Namely, it opened the question of European Turkey's disintegration, although European powers decided after the Crimean War, on March 30, 1856 in Paris, (The Treaty of Paris) to respect and guarantee the independence and territorial integrity of Ottoman Empire.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> G.W.F. Hegel, *Osnovne crte filozofije prava*, biblioteka Logos, Sarajevo 1989, p. 40.

<sup>52</sup> Džemal Sokolović, *Hegel o Bushu i ben Ladenu*, "Zarez", Zagreb, br. 178., 20.04. 2006; Džemal Sokolović, "Challenges of Freedom – Europe at Crossroad: from a Champion of Cosmopolitanism to Mega-nationalism", europe-from-the-champion-of-cosmopolitanism-to-european-nationalism.

<sup>53</sup> L.S. Stavrianos, *The BALKANS since 1453*, Hurst & Company, London 2000, p. 286-7.

<sup>54</sup> L.S. Stavrianos, p. 336.



French revolution, with all its immediate consequences, brought changes to Europe. The novelty founded by the Revolution was nationalism. In place of unavoidable and resistant religious diversity, which could have been erased by the hundred year's war neither, the national uniformity was established. On political level nation state was meant to replace aristocratic-theocratic state. Political form which would have to provide the change should have been democracy. This could have been achieved in two ways only. 1. Either by abolition of ethnic diversity through repressive moulding of national uniformity. 2. Or, by the disintegration of aristocratic-theocratic states through ethnic seams, through aggressive secessionist, *alias* liberation movements, which had, however, to also count on repressive response of central state. Both ways of establishing nation state came to serious confrontation with basic principle of democracy, which rests on the citizen, i.e. the individual, and not on any collectivity, including national one. First France, and then Germany are paradigms of the first one, while Hapsburgs Monarchy and Ottoman Empire are the paradigms of second way of establishing nation state.

From this, unprincipled standpoint - the principle of nationalism and nation state, the European "question of the East" has been raised.

*Ambivalent, controversial and ambiguous* character of nationalism, nation state respectively, is what makes so-called "Istocno pitanje" ambivalent, controversial and ambiguous as well. "Eastern question" was not opened from the standpoint of principles and values of Europe, therefore from the standpoint of liberation of European peoples within Turkey and democratization, but from the standpoint of interests of European nationalisms. That is what brings into question the legitimacy of "the Eastern question".

*Ambivalent* character of nationalism comprises in the fact that it did not grip only minority, subjugated peoples, but also dominant, ruling people. The wave, or wind, of nationalism griped also the Balkans, but not only non-Turkish or non-Austrian peoples, but Turkish, respectively Austrian and Hungarian people too. The immediate cause of the Balkan wars hence was not only nationalism of Serbian, Bulgarian, Montenegrin, Rumanian and Greek people, but that of growing Turkish nationalism in the shape of Young Turks movement as well. Both had their causes, and paragons, in Europe. Both so-called national awakenings emerged in tune with the national reality of Europe.

*Controversial* character of nationalism stems from its ambivalent character. Both will the nation state. Dominant people, now already nation, will nation state instead of aristocratic state retaining territorial integrity and establishing national sovereignty. Minority and subordinated peoples will secession (liberation) and building their own nation states. That is what put these two types of nationalism into an irreconcilable, hostile position.

*Ambiguous* (or even *hypocritical*) character of nationalism, at last, comprises in that that both nationalisms, that of dominant and that of minority groups, seemingly aim to emancipation, and in fact the national domination of one group. Dominant group will *emancipation from* monarchy and autocracy, while minority groups will *emancipation from* dominant group. The principle of freedom is thereby faked, and the liberation of own group achieves at the expense of subjugation of other peoples' groups. Nationalism of dominant group will assimilation of other ethnic groups into one national, and the establishment of nation state on that basis, without secessionism or autonomy. Contrary to that, secessionist nationalisms will *liberation from* both dominant ethnic/national group and from its state. (As it is noticeable both nationalisms rest on Fromm's notion of *freedom from*, i.e. negative freedom, and not on *freedom for*, i.e. positive freedom.<sup>55</sup>) Their goal is also nation state, thus the state of predominantly one group, i.e. political form which neglects or negates similar

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<sup>55</sup> Erich Fromm, *Begstvo od slobode*, Nolit, Beograd 1978.

or identical interests of other ethnic groups, at times even that of groups which are not minorities. (The cases of Macedonians and Albanians are paradigmatic. Macedonians were “liberated” by Serbia, Greece and Bulgaria. No need to be mentioned the fate of small peoples or minority peoples’ groups, as their position in new emerged states is apparent. Vlachs, for example.) The principle of freedom is not only faked, but it perverts into new repression and non-freedom of other peoples, sometimes worse than in previous regimes. In short, that is what nationalism in the case of the Balkan wars make ambiguous and hypocritical.

It is indicative that one of first of those who supported the process of liberation of Balkan peoples in 1860 ies, was Napoleon, “the champion of nationality principle”<sup>56</sup>, therefore the sovereign of the country which established its national integrity by repressing ethnic diversity. It is also indicative that Austro-Hungary, as an aristocratic state and multiethnic society, “was the great opponent of revolution and change in the Balkans”.<sup>57</sup>

However, it does not mean that Austro-Hungary (1867) did not already act from the standpoint of nationalism. In fact, Austro-Hungary acted from the standpoint of both Austrian and Hungarian nationalism even when was opposing “the Eastern question” and territorial partition of European Turkey. In the same way as when she started, as the first one, to “solve” the question. Either when Austria supported territorial integrity of Turkey, or when she took part in negation of the integrity, Austro-Hungary was always doing that from the standpoint of its own, admittedly specific nationalism. The specificity consists of the fact that Austrians and Hungarians had both specific and different reasons to oppose, and afterwards to support so-called solution of “the Eastern question” and, of course, the Balkan wars.

First of all, the transformation of Habsburgs Monarchy, thus an aristocratic state *par excellence*, into a double, k. u. k. Austro-Hungarian monarchy, thus a bi-nation state of Austrians and Hungarians, did not take into account a considerable, though multiethnic, Slav element within monarchy. It was prevented establishing a three-nation Austro-Hungaro-Slav state<sup>58</sup>, which would also include Slave multiethnic element satisfying Slave national pretensions within Monarchy. Hungarians opposed to that in particular.<sup>59</sup> If there were understanding for Slav requires, it could perhaps have recognized the multiethnic character of state and avoided the future development of events.

Moreover, one can say the transformation of Habsburgs Monarchy, thus an aristocratic state, into a bi-national state, which did not fully recognize the political subjectivity of other, and particularly Slav, ethnic groups, opened the question of position of non-Austrian and non- Hungarian peoples, alike the one called “the Eastern Question”. Therefore, here is the seed of what we will be able later on, after the occupation and annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina, to call “the Western Question”.

The opposition of Austrian and Hungarian nationalism to secessionist nationalisms within Turkey was unprincipled, just as it was unprincipled their inclusion into the territorial partition of European Turkey on a later stage. Such an unprincipled view rested on a double fear, i.e. national paranoia. First, Austro-Hungarian nationalism, and Hungarian in particular, opposed to any annexation of Bosnia in order to eschew the enlargement of Slav element and, consequently, the inclusion of Slav element into tree-national state. The imperilment of territorial integrity of Turkey was a direct threat to national integrity of Austro-Hungary. Second, Austro-Hungarian nationalism opposed to the territorial partition of Turkey for fear of the establishment of a great Slav state, which was the

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<sup>56</sup> L.S. Stavrianos, p. 395.

<sup>57</sup> L.S. Stavrianos, p. 395.

<sup>58</sup> L.S. Stavrianos, p. 399.

<sup>59</sup> L.S. Stavrianos, p. 399.

interest of Serbian, as well as Russian nationalism. This national paranoia did not rest as much on the fear of such a state, as on the fear from such a Slav state on the Balkans could have induced on Slav nationalism within Austro-Hungary, secessionism, and eventually, the unification of all Slavs from both sides of Austro-Hungarian – Turkish border. The care for the territorial integrity of Turkey was actually the fear for its own. Which of these solutions of “the Eastern Question” Austro-Hungary will decide for, it depended on which of these threats to Austro-Hungary was more dangerous. None principles, or the care for Christian peoples neither, was in question. That is what makes Austrian, as well as Hungarian, nationalism controversial and hypocritical.

Therefore, it seems obvious that “the Eastern Question” has headed directly towards the Balkan wars. What I insist, and what is not so obvious, is that “the Eastern Question” was just the consequence of a more fundamental cause, which is growing nationalism in Europe.

### **5. Starting point of the Balkan wars: Bosnia or Europe?**

Where and when, in fact, started the Balkan wars? One should not point to the date when Balkan states declared the war to Turkey and where the armies of Montenegro, Serbia, Greece and Bulgaria crossed the border of Turkey. One should take into account the causes of these wars and former political solutions which have made the wars unavoidable. Thus, whether the beginning was in Nevesinje, Herzegovina (“Bosnian revolt”, “Nevesinjska puska”, 1875) or in Berlin, at the Congress of European powers (1878)? Instead of a phenomenal answer one needs to offer a response of mind. If we consider that the Balkan Wars were supposed to resolve “the Eastern Question”, which is to say the removal of Turkey from Europe, than the time and the place should be searched where the process started: in Bosnia, with the revolt of Orthodox peasants, and in Berlin, with the decisions of the Congress of European aristocratic, though already nation states’ diplomats. Assumptions for the Balkan Wars to begin were created by the decision to occupy Bosnia-Herzegovina and deliver it to be administered by Austro-Hungary.

If the essence of the Balkan wars is the solution of “the Eastern question”, and if, as I said, the essence of “the Eastern question” is European nationalism, as well as its Balkan version, then the Balkan wars were the wars of nation states, and as such, by their nature, nationalist wars. That is only way to realize the atrocities committed by these states, against Turks, but also against non-Turkish population, both Muslims and Christians. Likewise, that is only way to explain the politics of non-interventionism and indifference of European nationalisms towards these crimes. This is standpoint from which, with many reasons, one can bring into question the legitimacy of these wars.

Balkan nationalisms are the consequence of European ones. The establishment of the *Dreikaiserbunda*, the League of three emperors of Germany, Austria and Russia, thus an aristocratic attempt of European integration, was welcomed neither in France nor in Great Britain. Nationalism overwhelmed political mentality of European states while these sates were aristocratic, and theocratic. Therefore, it was nationalism that separated Western Europe from Central and Eastern Europe. However, nationalism will prove to be as an impediment to Kaisers League too. Although both Austria and Russia were denying any expansionist pretensions towards the Balkans, it came up very soon that, in the words of Bismarck, the Balkans is “Achilles heel” of the League.<sup>60</sup> One can say today more precisely: Achilles heel was Bosnia, not only of the League but of Europe as well.

First nationalism which drew the eye on Bosnia was Serbian. In fact, Bosnia was targeted by a wider Balkan alliance which Serbian prince Michael Obrenovic was trying to establish along with

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<sup>60</sup> L.S. Stavrianos, p. 394.

other Orthodox countries (Romania, Montenegro, Bulgaria and Greece) having been recently liberated from Turkey. The Serbian-Greek pact (26. august 1867) allocated Bosnia to Serbia, and Thessaly and Epirus to Greece. The states signatories immediately started with propaganda and, as Orthodox states, with the armament of Christian (Orthodox) population of European Turkey. Simultaneously, they oppose any annexation of Balkan territory by foreign great powers. "A coordinated Balkan revolt against the Turks was planned for March, 1868."<sup>61</sup> It was thus the plan of five Balkan states, some ones which will make the plan into reality many years afterwards and take part in the Balkan wars. Two causes linked these states: first, the enmity towards Turkey, and second, all were Orthodox. I point to the fact that these states were Orthodox not in order to indicate Orthodoxy as responsible for their enmity towards Turkey, but quite the reverse, in order to emphasize that neither Orthodoxy was an obstacle enough to eschew their mutual conflict in a later faze of development. The fact that two countries, Romania and Greece, were not Slav was not an obstacle to the alliance. But not for a long time. Why this plan did not keep together "civilizationally" kin countries will be considered later on, in chapter 5, while responding to the question about "civilizational" character of the Balkan wars.

The menace to the territorial integrity of Turkey by Balkan Orthodox states had to also lead towards the shift of Austro-Hungary's view to the territorial integrity of Turkey. Very soon, feared by Serbia's expansion, as well as an imminent pan-Slav state, Bosnia becomes Austria's political goal. Paranoia which always pursues nationalism required its rationalization. It was found naturally in "the Eastern Question", i.e. in the alleged European, civizational care for Bosnia, as a matter of fact in nationalist interest opposed not as much to Turkey as to Slav political strengthening. Growing Austrian nationalism was rightly afraid of Serbian nationalism and the piedmont role of Serbia. The fear from South Slav unification, which threatened not only to the territorial integrity of Turkey but that of Austro-Hungary as well, alleviated also Hungarian resistance to the inclusion of new Slav element into Austro-Hungary. Austrian nationalism, lead by Austrian militarism, succeeded to convince Francis Jeseoph "to spend a month travelling in Dalmatia in the spring of 1875. During his journey the emperor received many petitions from the Christians of Bosnia-Herzegovina complaining of Turkish oppression and asking him for protection...Francis Joseph's tour was to a considerable degree responsible for the conflagration that began in Herzegovina in July, 1875."<sup>62</sup>

The fire had thus been prepared by Serbian nationalism and was kindled on the Austrian aristocratic ship. The revolt of Christian population in Bosnia (Nevesinje) in 1875 was the outcome of two entirely contending and irreconcilable nationalisms: Serbian and Austrian. That is what their support to Christian insurgents in neighbouring country Bosnia, respectively Turkey, makes unprincipled. Both countries have namely same, but mutually exclusive goal: the occupation of Bosnia.

Although concerned for their Christian brethren in Bosnia, aristocratic *Dreikaiserbund* was against intervention in principle. Instead of that a Berlin Memorandum was prepared in May 1876 which suggested extended reforms in Bosnia. It was offered to European powers France, Italy and Great Britain. "But the British refused to follow the others, and in doing so they ended the possibility of an early and peaceful settlement of the crisis."<sup>63</sup> British refused it not because of Turks or Bosnian Christians, but because of fear from growing German nationalism and new role of Prussia in Europe. Faced with the request to sign Memorandum in two days, Disraeli, Conservative Prime Minister, "sarcastically observed that Britain was being treated as though she were

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<sup>61</sup> L.S. Stavrianos, p. 395.

<sup>62</sup> L.S. Stavrianos, p. 399.

<sup>63</sup> L.S. Stavrianos, p. 400-1.

Montenegro or Bosnia”.<sup>64</sup> So it turned to be that Bosnia became the victim of Austria’s national paranoia, but of British national vanity as well.

Great Serbian nationalist sentiment could not have missed the chance provided by the peasants’ revolt in Nevesinje. The fact that Christian serfs were joined by Muslim serfs too had no meaning for historiography, but is crucial for a cultural analysis. This neglected fact also indicates that the revolt was both class and nationalist, but not civilizational clash. British consul in Belgrade reports his government about Serbian political leaders’ appetite, irrespective of their political orientation, to achieve Serbia’s enlargement.<sup>65</sup> Serbia declares war to Turkey on June 30, 1876, and Montenegro joins to it. Still incapable to cope with diplomatic games of great powers, Serbia overlooks Russia’s promise to leave over Bosnia to Austria. Serbia suffers unexpected and catastrophic defeat in the war with Turkey on the front in Bosnia. “Before the fighting ended Serbia mobilized one sixth of her total population, of which one tenth were killed or wounded.”<sup>66</sup>

Therefore, the Balkan war started – although without Greece, Bulgaria and Romania, long before the Balkan wars, and it started in Bosnia.

The defeat of two Balkan countries, and Turkey’s victory, reflects to the relations among great powers. Once again, confronted with Russia, Britain appears as the protector of Turkey, while misunderstandings between Russia and Austria also increase, for they do not agree how to divide Bosnia in the case of both scenarios – the victory or defeat of Serbia and Montenegro.<sup>67</sup> In order to ensure its intent to begin the war against Turkey, Russia had to give concessions to Austria. It happened on January 15, 1877, when two powers signed so-called Budapest Convention, which obliged Austria to remain neutral in the case of Russia’s war with Turkey, while she would get right to annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Two powers agree again that a large state in the Balkans will not be allowed to be created in any case.

Russia declares the war to Turkey on April 24, 1877, but Balkan states do not join her immediately, after the unexpectedly strong resistance of Turkish troops at Plevna. Serbia again enters the war against Turkey only two days after the fall of Plevna, while Greece tries same but remains neutral. Russians advance towards south and arrive close to the capital of Turkey. And again, Britain rescues Constantinople. Not for the sake of Constantinople, of course, but because of Russia’s eventual reaching of the Straits and Mediterranean. Although before Constantinople, at San Stefano, Russians must stop under the threat of British warships.

The Treaty of San Stefano, signed on March 3, 1878 between Turks and Russians, confirms once again the entire lack of principality of the politics and wars waged from nationalist standpoint. There was nothing of the liberation of Balkan peoples, or the care for Christians, nor democracy, nor avoiding to establish a large, and Slav state on the Balkans in particular, and not to mention the Turkey’s territorial integrity formerly guaranteed. Bosnia was promised earlier envisaged reforms by the Treaty of San Stefano. Bulgaria was transformed into a great Bulgaria stretching from Danube to Aegean Sea, and from the Black Sea to Lake Ohrid and beyond. Nearly entire territory “liberated” from Turks by Russians belongs to Bulgaria, even territories conquered by Serbia. So it happened that Russia eventually revealed which Slav and Orthodox state on the Balkans is her foreign politics favourite. As well as the reasons of her engagement in solving “the Eastern Question”.

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<sup>64</sup> L.S. Stavrianos, p. 401.

<sup>65</sup> L.S. Stavrianos, p. 402.

<sup>66</sup> L.S. Stavrianos, p. 403.

<sup>67</sup> L.S. Stavrianos, p. 404-5.

The Treaty of San Stefano provisions provoke dissatisfaction on many sides. Both Austria and Britain oppose to the formation of great Bulgaria. Greece and Serbia oppose strongly to the provisions from San Stefano. Serbia even more. After protesting to St. Petersburg, Serbs eventually receive a clear response about the nature of Russian pan-Slavism on the Balkan. Russia, whose main goal is the approach to Aegean Sea, something she gets with Bulgaria's approach, informs Serbs that the interest of Russia comes first, Bulgaria's second, and the last one that of Serbia.<sup>68</sup> The interests of other, truly politically rightless peoples on the Balkans, such as Macedonians, Albanians, and many others, was mentioned neither. The Treaty of San Stefano approaches the interests of Austria and Britain. The peace the purpose of which was not peace, that of San Stefano, had to result in either new wars or new negotiations of European diplomats. Congress in Berlin convened on June 13, 1878. And lasts one month.

The Congress in Berlin was the gathering of Europe's great powers representatives. Delegates from Turkey and Balkan countries were also present. The representatives of Balkan states "were at least politely heard before being ignored. But the Turks were both ignored and insulted".<sup>69</sup>

Great Bulgaria, the principle reason for the Congress to be gathered, was partitioned into three parts. "Bosnia and Herzegovina, where the crisis originated, were handed over to Austria to occupy and administer though not to annex."<sup>70</sup> In order to be secured from any Slav national unification, Austria was given right to deploy a garrison in Novi Bazaar in Sandzak, which would separate Serbia from Montenegro. Everything Russia had gained at battle field, she lost in Berlin. From the standpoint of Great Britain, it has even been achieved the success larger than the Russia's removal from Mediterranean: the breakdown of the League of three great European empires. In the words of Disraeli: "I maintain there never was a great diplomatic result more completely effected."<sup>71</sup> So it happened that the basic political principle of Europe, founded on nation state, has successfully been drilled on the Balkans.

L.S. Stavrianos concludes this part of his book titled, by the way, "The age of nationalism: 1815-1878", by these words: "For the Balkan peoples, then, the Berlin Treaty meant not peace with honour but rather frustration of national aspirations and future wars. The direct and logical outcome of the Berlin settlement was the Serbian-Bulgarian war of 1885, the Bosnian crisis of 1908, the two Balkan wars of 1912-1913, and the murder of Archduke Francis Ferdinand in 1914."<sup>72</sup>

#### **4. Bosnia: "the Eastern Question" transformed into a "Western Question"?**

Why was Bosnia the point where modern, regrettably tragic and bloody as well, history of the Balkan, Europe and the World began? It must be something what makes Bosnia exceptional and what makes it, such as it is, inappropriate to both the East and West. Although the part of "the Eastern Question", while having been the integral part of Turkey, Bosnia transforms, immediately after the occupation in 1878, and even before the annexation in 1908, into "the Western Question", i.e. the question of the position of non-Austrian and non-Hungarian peoples within the bi-national Austro-Hungarian state. Actually, Bosnia raised the question of nation-state, thus the fundamental political concept of Europe. As a multi-ethnic society, Bosnia will than begin to test not only Austria-Hungary, but the principles of entire Europe and the West. Bosnia was, namely, only European multi-ethnic society in which none of ethnic or religious groups had absolute majority. That is what makes Bosnia unique. That is, however, just what makes it contending to European

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<sup>68</sup> L.S. Stavrianos, p. 409.

<sup>69</sup> L.S. Stavrianos, p. 410.

<sup>70</sup> L.S. Stavrianos, p. 411.

<sup>71</sup> L.S. Stavrianos, p. 412.

<sup>72</sup> L.S. Stavrianos, p. 412.

reality. But, *alas*, that is what makes only Bosnia compatible and congruent to proclaimed principles, values and ideals of Europe. Society without majority is *eo ipso* a society without minorities. No man's land is everybody's land. Bosnia was, thus, only society without prospects to function within or as nation state. That is why nationalisms in Bosnia were not autochthonic then, as well as today, but imported, sparked and manipulated from outside.

One should say that Bosnia was not the cause of the developments, those before and that ones in the wake of the Congress in Berlin, but Bosnia appeared to be "Achilles heel" of modern political history of Europe being split between the reality of ethnic diversity and political ideal of nation state. Bosnia was namely the most suitable point of nationalist goals of neighbours and European powers. As such, such as a fresh-water lake within enormous salted ocean of European nationalism, Bosnia became the weakest point of nationalist Europe. And that of the Balkans, of course. However, just as such, Bosnia became the only hope, chance, and paragon for Europe – and the Balkans, of course.

As soon as Bosnia was annexed it became the challenge for Austro-Hungary. Despite all Austria's endeavours (large investments in Bosnia, religious tolerance, Muslims in particular, and, above all, keeping local Bosniak/Muslim landlords' aristocracy) Bosnia demonstrated to Austria that nationalism can not be a political solution. Austria's attempt to spark creating a common Bosnian national identity, particularly through setting up Bosnian language, confirmed that that is not possible not only in Bosnia, but in Austro-Hungary as bi-nation state neither.

However, Bosnia did open "the Western Question", raising it to Austria, but as a Slav country she not only increased Slav element in new state, exciting thereby secessionist nationalism of Slav peoples within the Empire, but she also sparked Serbia's nationalist aspirations. "The question to Austria" was: either a multiethnic state, which would include Slavs as well, or dissolution of the country in ethnic lines. The question raised to Austria then, Bosnia also asks today to Europe and the West. Bosnia is thus still "the Western Question".

Equal-rightness of peoples, i.e. a truly multiethnic society can namely emerge only in a political arrangement which is indifferent (tolerant) towards the diversity of peoples' identities. Such a political formation can be either monarchic or aristocratic or civil (democratic), or their combination. What matters is that the state does not undertake any sort of intentional assimilation or erasing peoples' identities. It is also very important that the state does not undertake any "diversity management" politics. Nation state is hypocritical faking social equality. In other words, a truly multiethnic society can emerge only in the state of equal rights citizens. Equal-rightness of peoples' groups which does not guarantee the equal-rightness of citizens, i.e. equal-rightness on individual level, is an abstract equal-rightness. There is no concretely general equal-rightness as long as it is not the equal-rightness on the level of individual, citizen. Europe is still to learn about that - concretely the general, from G.W.F. Hegel, the thinker of civil society.<sup>73</sup>

Bosnia knew that before Hegel. Multi-ethnic and multi-religious society there emerged through the melting process of peoples, faiths, cultures. None "diversity management" was needed. When one tried to apply it, it appeared to be unproductive. Bosnia was multicultural and multi-religious society before Turks. Catholic and Orthodox churches were active along with the autochthonous Bosnian Church. Bosnian Christians were not imperilled with the arrival of Islam, but by other Christian churches acting on its soil. Turks' arrival simply enriched the multicultural character of Bosnia's society. Arrival of Islam enhanced religious tolerance. Not only that islamization of parts of local population of all confessions has no forced character, for it is one of Islam's theological principles, but new religious (Islamic) state formally guarantees faith freedom to all loyal subjects.

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<sup>73</sup> G.W.F. Hegel, *Osnovne crte filozofije prava*, preveo Danko Grlić, "Veselin Masleša" – "Svjetlost", Sarajevo 1989.

The case of Ahdnama, the document still deposited in Franciscan monastery (Fojnica) in Bosnia, by virtue of which Sultan Mehmed II Fatih in 1463 guarantees religious freedom, undoubtedly confirms that. Alike as he guaranteed the freedom of faith and exemption from any tax to the Patriarch of Orthodox Church by similar Ahdnama, ten years earlier, in the wake of the conquest of Constantinople.<sup>74</sup>

All this was taking place in Bosnia long before the Peace of Westphalia, 1648, and Thirty years war (1618-1648) among Christians and on the soil of Europe.

Because of that one can conclude that so-called “the Eastern Question” has not been raised in a legitimate way, i.e. from the standpoint of interests of non-Turkish (and non-Muslim), as well as Turkish (and Muslim) population in the Ottoman Empire, but from the standpoint which was not in line with European principles and values. This standpoint was the standpoint of European powers nationalism, Austrian and Hungarian nationalism, nationalism of Balkan states, and at last, standpoint of young Turks movement nationalism. First “solution” of “the Eastern Question” – the occupation of Bosnia, had to be transformed into “the Western Question”, i.e. in the test of European values and political principles in this occidental region of oriental Turkey. In fact, the occidental occupation of oriental Bosnia has just uncovered that both the West and East, both European states (democratic and autocratic ones) and Turkey, encounter with the same growing political problem – state becoming more and more national.

Moreover, the principle of nation state, by becoming now not only western but eastern principle of political organization of society too, opens the fundamental contradiction of modern political life: the incompatibility of nation state and democracy. This contradiction thus opens a frightening political question: is democracy possible in multi-ethnic society? Bosnia raised the question already than, in 1878, as soon as it was occupied. In doing so, Bosnia brought into question the mere political basis of Europe – nation state. The response retaliated by Bosnia read: As long as political Europe rests on nation state, the integration of Europe at any shape is elusive. It was given then, and holds today. This response concerns herself: if multiethnic society is not possible in democracy, then nationalism is our curse, and the breakdown of EU, as well as the breakdown of many European states – threateningly imminent.

### **3. The Balkan Wars/the Great War: the End of Multi-ethnic state and the Triumph of Nation State?**

The occupation of Bosnia in 1878, as well as the annexation in 1908, still did not mean the end of multiethnic society in Europe. Both the Habsburgs and Ottoman monarchy retained its multiethnic character. Aristocratic states have never had a strong politics of assimilation. As a matter of fact, one can say that aristocracy in Europe was only social stratum which was multiethnic. As such aristocracy was indifferent towards the ethnic identity of its subjects too.

The final faze of multiethnic societies dissolution and establishment of nation states started with the Balkan wars. With World War I, and the formation of Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia, this faze was finally completed. Balkan wars and World War I were thus the end of multiethnic states and triumph of nation state.

Austria-Hungary became, as well Turkey, nation state in the course of the second half of 19<sup>th</sup> century. Balkan states eventually confirmed as such in the wake of Balkan wars, subjugating other

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<sup>74</sup> See: [http://www.ghbibl.com.ba/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=80&Itemid=1](http://www.ghbibl.com.ba/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=80&Itemid=1)



peoples, while Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia were the fruit of World War I and final breakdown of Austro-Hungary.

**Although multiethnic states by its name both Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia (originally State of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes) were actually a hypocritical attempt of forming bi- and tri-nation state. Their formation was based on Lenin-W. Wilson's concept of self-determination of peoples, but on the true will of some of these peoples to live in common multiethnic state as well.**<sup>75</sup> In both cases, it turned soon out that the idea and the will were betrayed. In both cases, it turned out that the state was, more or less, state of one of these peoples. So, the principle of peoples' self-determination was defrauded. Recent breakdown of Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia as nominally multiethnic states opened, however, just the reverse question. It goes without saying that multiethnic society is incongruent with nation state. After all, it is *contradictio in adiecto*, apart from the vocabulary of CNN. However, it is also apparent that nation state is not political solution fitting to Europe. Whereas all states in Europe, except Island and Portugal, have multiethnic societies, nation state can head either to their dissolution or to repression over minority groups and their assimilation. Current state of affairs in Belgium, Great Britain, Spain, as well as in other European nation states demonstrates that such a scenario is not far from being realistic.

**Consequences of the Balkan wars, however, are far-reaching. Balkan wars did not open only the question of many ethnic identities survival, i.e. that of multiethnic society, or conversely the question of nation states survival in the case of minority ethnic groups' resistance. They actually opened the question of any political integration of Europe.** If multiethnic society is not possible within nation state, than the integration of nation states in whichever form result in the emergence of multiethnic societies as their contrariety.

At last, the triumph of nation state, as the dominant political form, and unavailability of multiethnic character of society, as Europe's social reality, open the question of authenticity or hypocrisy of democracy as well. Is democracy going to be based on consensus or the principle of majority depends on whether our societies will be multiethnic or impersonally national.<sup>76</sup>

## **2. The Balkan Wars: Clash of Civilizations or Clash of Nationalisms?**

Whether the Balkan wars were the final solution of "the Eastern Question", i.e. the question of position of Christian peoples within Ottoman Empire and, consequently, the solution to the presence of Muslim Turkey on European soil, shortly the clash of two civilizations - or something else?

First Balkan war was the war of Balkan Christian (Orthodox) states against Muslim Turkey. On the basis of this simple, empirical fact, one draws simple, empirical, but also conclusion of a biased historiography, that it was the clash of two civilizations. Second Balkan war, which was the war of Balkan Christian (Orthodox) states against Christian (Orthodox) Bulgaria - joined admittedly by Muslim Turkey on a later stage, was a necessary, logical and natural consequence of the First one. It undoubtedly corroborates that the genuine nature of these wars was something quite else.

Balkan wars can be explained neither by "the Eastern Question", i.e. by civilizational concern of European powers for their Christian brethren, nor by civilizational concern of Balkan states for their ethnic brethren. Nothing civilizational and nothing brethren was in these wars.

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<sup>75</sup> Dr. Enver Hasani, *Self-determination, territorial integrity and international stability: the case of Yugoslavia*, Buzuku, Vienna/Prishtinë, 2003.

<sup>76</sup> Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1997, p. 175.

(Comrade Lenin maintained, however, that these two wars could have been not only causally separated, but that the second war essentially differs from the First Balkan war. Second Balkan war was, namely, according to the Comrade, conquering, and consequently unjust war, while the First one was the war of liberation, and therefore a just war. War against “infidels” is thus, according to the opinion of an internationalist, justifiable, while the war among orthodox ones is unacceptable. Killing Turks, because they are intruders and Muslims, is allowable, while killing Slavs, for they are indigenous and Christians, even right ones, is not permissible.)

Balkan wars were a clash of nationalisms. “The Eastern Question” was just the evasion for some strategic, conquering and nationalist goals, and the Balkan wars just a hypocritical solution of the question. The proof is not phenomenal and can be found only in a profound analysis of Balkan nationalisms having preceded Balkan wars 1912-1913, and having been sparked by European nationalisms of great powers which peaked at Berlin Treaty in 1878.

1. Analysis will begin with nationalism which is, presumably, the least directly responsible for wars – *Turkish* one.

The inducement for Balkan wars and partition of European Turkey can also be found in internal collision between monarchy, which was becoming less and less aristocratic, and emerging Young Turks movement infected by the complex of inferiority of Europeanism, which was more and more becoming nationalistic. The more Europe tried to push out Turkey from Europe, the more Turkish nationalism was endeavouring to prove as European.<sup>77</sup>

It is indicative that Young Turks movement had two visions of Turkey without the sultan, thus of Turkish nation state. The only Young Turks, refugees in Paris, shared in common was their dissatisfaction with the sultan. One group, led by Ahmet Riza, “stood for Turkish predominance and centralized rule”, while another group, lead by the prince Sabaheddin, the sultan’s cousin, “favoured a decentralized empire in which the subject people should have full autonomy”.<sup>78</sup>

It is indicative, even more, how Young Turks, the group Saloniki, imagined the political goal of their movement: “They frequently stated that they wished all citizens of the empire to become Ottomans in the same manner that all citizens of France were Frenchmen.”<sup>79</sup> Indeed, in July 1908 Muslims and Christians were embracing each others in the streets. However, it turned out very soon what means becoming Turks French way. “The Young Turks leader, Enver Pasha, exclaimed: ‘There are no longer Bulgars, Greeks, Rumans, Jews, Mussulmans. We are all brothers beneath the same blue sky. We are all equal, we glory in being Ottoman.’ This euphoric atmosphere did not last long.”<sup>80</sup>

Turkification policy, performed by Young Turks after 1908, contributed to the rapprochement of Balkan states and formation of Balkan League. “Turkification policy” of Young Turks “as disciples of Western nationalism, attempted to enforce centralization and Turkish hegemony upon their polyglot empire...The outcome of Turkification was not unity but rather discontent and revolt.”<sup>81</sup>

Once more Turkish nationalism appeared unproductive. When the coup d’état was carried out, after the hard defeats in the First Balkan war, the power was seized by “Enver Bey, leader of the

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<sup>77</sup> Umut Özkirimli, Spiros A. Sofos, *Tormented by History, Nationalism in Greece and Turkey*, Hurst & Company, London 2008, p. 17

<sup>78</sup> L.S. Stavrianos, p. 525.

<sup>79</sup> L.S. Stavrianos, p. 527.

<sup>80</sup> L.S. Stavrianos, p. 526.

<sup>81</sup> L.S. Stavrianos, p. 532.

extreme nationalist Young Turks”.<sup>82</sup> By continuing the war Turkey lost two out of only four remaining cities in Europe, Yanina and Edirne. What remained of European Turkey were just Constantinople and Scutari, far away in Albania. The partition of European Turkey is indeed the consequence of European and Balkan nationalism. However, Turkish nationalism did contribute by its unoriginality.

2. Nationalism of *European* nation states has far more decisively determined the character of the Balkan wars.

The attitude of European powers toward the wars of Balkan states was seemingly determined by their relation to “the Eastern Question”, i.e. the existence of an Empire of distinctive civilization within Christian civilization in Europe. However, what determined the relationship of European states towards “the Eastern Question”, and the Balkan wars as a “solution” of the question, had been springing from the interest of these states as nation states. Even less, “The Eastern Question” was determined by the care of European powers for Christian peoples within Turkey as their civilizational brethren. The relationship of Europe and Balkan states toward Turkey hence did not rest on civilizational motives but on nationalism. That is what connected these states, but also put into different, often contending, and eventually into mutually hostile position.

Originally, the attitude of European powers toward the territorial integrity of European Turkey was positive. After Crimean war Turkey was recognized as European country. “The Treaty of Paris admitted the empire into the European concert of nations and explicitly guaranteed its integrity and independence.”<sup>83</sup> The unanimous positive attitude of European powers towards the integrity of Turkey did not ensue from the unity of their interests, but rather from mutual fear of prevailing one of these countries interest, Russia in particular. The domination of any of these countries interest could have disorder the balance which existed as long as Turkey was present in Europe and the Balkans. The weak, and yet integral, Turkey was the interest of European nationalisms confronted with Russian expansionist plans towards Mediterranean. Different strategic interests of European nation states, however, brought themselves into contending and conflictual relationship. From such a mutually nationalist relation, and not from civilizational animosity, a different attitude towards the territorial integrity of Turkey had been developed. The collision of Austria’s and Russia’s interests as nation states also entailed the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina as the immediate cause of the Balkan (states) League creation, and consequently the beginning of the Balkan wars.

At last, the introduction of money economy or capitalism on the Balkans is the outcome of European nationalism. New emerging Balkan capitalism entailed in Balkan nationalism. As Balkan nationalism was not equivalent to European one, so too Balkan capitalism was something quite different from its European variant.<sup>84</sup>

a) Russia

The ultimate strategic and national goal of Russia on the Balkans was the approach to Mediterranean. That was determining in Russia’s attitude towards “the Eastern Question”, towards other European powers and towards Balkan states. And eventually, it determined Russian attitude towards the Balkan wars.

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<sup>82</sup> L.S. Stavrianos, p. 537.

<sup>83</sup> L.S. Stavrianos, p. 393.

<sup>84</sup> L.S. Stavrianos, p. 423.

In many occasions, Russia made itself accountable to Austria in respecting the territorial integrity of Turkey.<sup>85</sup> Same relationship of two Christian European powers did not stem from civilizational tolerance of Muslim Turkey, but from mutual nationalist paranoia, i.e. from one another's fear, thus from the two civilizational close ones, and yet enough distinctive ones (Catholicism/Orthodoxy). The care for the territorial integrity of Turkey sprung from the necessity for nationalist balance among civilizational close ones.

Yet, Russian nationalism, under the guise of pan-slavism, i.e. liberation of Slavs from Austria and Turkey, dreams on the piedmont role of Russia and Constantinopolis as the capital.<sup>86</sup>

When Russia decided to give up from its promises to Austria, the war against Turkey aimed none solution of "the Eastern Question", i.e. the question of distinctive Turkey presence in Europe and position of Orthodox brethren. The interest of Russia was to approach Mediterranean. That Turkey stood on the road was only the combination of circumstances, while Bulgaria was the most suitable device for the aim to be achieved.

This is only way to also explain Russia's different relation towards Orthodox states on the Balkans – Bulgaria and Serbia. Treaty of San Stefano eventually dispelled the dreams on pan-slavism, pan-Orthodoxy and other civilizational illusions. Russo-Turkish war (1877) meant the renouncement of one more principle of great powers. The foundation of Great Bulgaria, instead of the liberation of Balkan peoples, proved that the Russian war against Turkey was waged exclusively by the interest of Russia as nation state.<sup>87</sup> The war opened not only the cleavage between Bulgaria and other Balkan Orthodox states, but also between these states and Russia. Britain again plays a decisive anti-Russian role in the modification of the decisions from San Stefano and in the partition of Bulgaria into two/three parts in particular. By demanding the re-establishment of broken balance of interests of great powers on the Balkans - Russia and Austria, Britons also back Austrian aspirations towards Bosnia.<sup>88</sup>

#### b) Great Britain

Between Turkey and Christian Russia, Britain chose Muslim Turkey. Therefore there is no trace of civilizational animosity, let alone a clash. It was so from Crimean war (1853-1856) to the Balkan wars 1912-1913. Only exception, though lasting briefly, took place when the news of bashi-bazouks' crimes in Bulgaria in 1876 were arriving. Despite the willingness in Russia and Bismark's urging on the partition of Turkey, Britain again appears as the protector of Ottoman Empire.<sup>89</sup> In Russo-Turkish war, when Russians approached Constantinopolis, Britain sends the fleet to the Sea of Marmora in order to prevent Russians of reaching the Straits and stayed there to the end of war and until the Treaty of San Stefano was signed.

Moreover, one can say that the Treaty of Berlin (June 13 – July 13, 1878) "was indeed a resounding triumph of Britain", while Russia "was humiliated and indignant".<sup>90</sup> So it happened that the strategic interest of Britain was helpful to the survival of European Turkey. The Treaty of Berlin decided the fate of Balkan countries, but it also planted the seeds of future protracted relations among nation states of Europe.

Once again, it turned out that national interest has priority over the "civilizational" one.

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<sup>85</sup> L.S. Stavrianos, p. 394.

<sup>86</sup> L.S. Stavrianos, p. 398.

<sup>87</sup> L.S. Stavrianos, p. 409.

<sup>88</sup> L.S. Stavrianos, p. 410.

<sup>89</sup> L.S. Stavrianos, p. 404.

<sup>90</sup> L.S. Stavrianos, p. 412.

### c) Austro-Hungary

Austrian and Hungarian nationalism had ambiguous relationship toward “the Eastern Question”, the Balkans and Bosnia. Austrians, and Hungarians in particular (Andrassy), feared both Slav element within Hapsburgs Monarchy and a Slav state on the Balkans. For that reason they were prone to both Russian presence on the Balkans, as the priority of pan-slavism, and to the annexation of Bosnia, as an impediment to pan-serbism.

Austro-Hungary pledged to Russia in many occasions to sustain the status quo on the Balkans and respect the territorial integrity of Turkey. She was doing so for the same reason as Russia.

Austria and Russia agreed in one more question (the Reichstadt Agreement, July 8, 1876): both were against a great Slave state on the Balkans.<sup>91</sup> They confirmed their consistence in opposing to Slave state on the Balkans by so-called Budapest Convention as well. (January 15, 1877) What they disagreed about was the question how to divide Bosnia-Herzegovina, if the occupation of it would takes place. Both attitudes were determined by national and not civilizational interests.

The interests of nation states Austro-Hungary and Russia were also decisive in their relationship towards Balkan states. Austria was particularly afraid of Serbia’s expansionism and its piedmont role in creating a great Slave state on the Balkans. Russia’s congruence with Austria, was thus determined by national interest of Russia, but also revealed the hypocritical character of Russian pan-slavism.

Austria’s attitude towards Bosnia, as the part of Ottoman Empire, was ensuing, naturally, from its attitude towards the territorial integrity of Turkey. However, the Austria’s relationship to Bosnia was also determined by the fear from Serbian nationalism or pan-serbism. The chance to get rid of the fear Austria got from the revolt of Young Turks in 1908. It was the incentive for the annexation of Bosnia in October 6, 1908.<sup>92</sup> Yet, the goal of Austria was more to thwart Serbia’s pretensions toward the West. Russia promises not to oppose Austria’s annexation of Bosnia, what was a civilizational cessation, but it requires Austrian support to Russian, which is to say – nationalist, plans with the Straits. (Buchlau Agreement, 16. Septembar 1908)

The formation of the Balkan League (1912), under the influence of Russia, aimed to hinder Austrian impact on the Balkans. It appeared however very soon that the League of Balkan nation states had first of all the pretensions of territorial expansion at the expense of Turkey. When it became apparent already in 1912 that the war is imminent, Austria and Russia come closer once again warning the Balkan states that any territorial annexation will not be allowed even if they defeat Turkey. This apparently confirms the national and not civilizational character of the warning. The fear from a great Balkan state had overwhelmed the “fear” from civilizationally distinctive Turkey.

Russian ambassador in Istanbul, Nicholas Ignatiev, half century before the final clash with Turkey, at the time of the formation of the first Balkan League (1860), with same intentions, had prophetically announced that “nothing stable will be built in the Balkan Peninsula until many years have elapsed”.<sup>93</sup> Many years elapsed, and his words are still sounding prophetically.

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<sup>91</sup> L.S. Stavrianos, p. 405.

<sup>92</sup> L.S. Stavrianos, p. 528-9.

<sup>93</sup> L.S. Stavrianos, p. 535.

### 3. Nationalism of *Balkan states*

The relationship of Balkan nation states was based on national interest, and not on civilizational proximity, solidarity and cooperation. European nation states' backing was needed only in their struggle against Turkey. Balkan states oppose any territorial expansion of European powers at the expense of the Balkans. Serbia and Greece oppose to the annexation of the Balkan's territory to any great power already in 1867.<sup>94</sup>

The Treaty of Berlin proved that European nation states had same relationship towards civilizational close Balkan states and - peoples. In the encounter of two nationalisms, European and Balkan one, it is quite logical to foresee which one is to overcome. "As a result, every one of the Balkan peoples was left thoroughly dissatisfied."<sup>95</sup>

From the very beginning, long before the Balkan wars, and in the course of them in particular, Balkan nation states consider by the "Eastern Question" exclusively their territorial extension at the expense of Turkey. None liberation of "subjugated" civilizational (Christian) brethren was a motive.

In their mutual relations Balkan states also behave as nation states, and not as civilizational solidary ones. The second Balkan war only dismantled the genuine nature of these relations as it used to be from the mere beginning they were established. Serbian-Bulgarian relations are, perhaps, a paradigm.

Nationalist character of the Balkan wars turned to be obvious in the relations of Balkan states towards the peoples they "liberate" from Turks. The fate of Albanians confirms that, although they are only people who succeeded in avoiding the occupation of "liberators". However, the most tragic victim of resolving the "Eastern Question" the Balkan way, which is to say the victim of Balkan states' nationalism, were Macedonians. Their "state of victim" has been lasting by now.

#### a) Serbia:

South Slave peoples have long dreamt about the liberation from Austrian and Turkish rule, thus about Yougoslavhood; what the prince of Serbia, Michael Obrenovich, was dreaming was a national dream on the piedmont role of Serbia.<sup>96</sup> The beginning of the dream was meant to be the annexation of Bosnia<sup>97</sup>.

Instead of Yougoslavhood Serbia dreams on pan-Serbism.<sup>98</sup> Pan-Serbism primarily targets Bosnia, or Orthodox part of Bosnia's population respectively. When Serbia tried, for the first time, to make the dream true in 1876, long before the Balkan wars, neither Greece nor Romania joined her, for Bosnia was not their national interest.<sup>99</sup> It also corroborates that the Balkan states were entering none civilizational clash.

The second, and presumably the first strategic goal of Serbia was the rapprochement to the sea. Anyone. When it was already clear that Bosnia, after the occupation and annexation, is beyond reach, in the first Balkan war Serbia directs its troops towards Aegean Sea, through Macedonia, and

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<sup>94</sup> L.S. Stavrianos, p. 395.

<sup>95</sup> L.S. Stavrianos, p. 412.

<sup>96</sup> L.S. Stavrianos, p. 395.

<sup>97</sup> L.S. Stavrianos, p. 395.

<sup>98</sup> L.S. Stavrianos, p. 397.

<sup>99</sup> L.S. Stavrianos, p. 403.

towards Adriatic sea, over Albania. When Serbia had to yield already conquered territories in Albania, now assigned to a state of Albania, under the warning of Austrian ships, Serbs require a larger portion in Macedonia. And there, they have to encounter, and confront, same interest of Bulgaria and Greece.

b) Greece:

Greece also behaves as a nation state. Cooperation with Slave states is not founded on civilizational proximity, which is apparent. As soon as national interest was imperilled the cooperation with Slaves transforms into animosity. Likewise, the struggle against Turkey has no civilizational character.

Here is a proof for that. Although Orthodox as Slavs, Greeks became anti-Slav as soon as Russia supported the independence of Bulgarian church from the Patriarchate. An anti-Slav society was established in Athens in 1869. Greeks even “advocated the *rapprochement* with the Turks, whom they considered to be ‘less dangerous for the expansion of the Greek spirit than is Slavism’.”<sup>100</sup>

Greeks’ connection to Slav states on the Balkans has naturally a civilizational appearance, but the nationalist background as well. “Natural” character of the alliance evaporates as soon as it faces the national interest of allies for same territory. It proved to be so after the Treaty of San Stefano and formation of Great Bulgaria, then in the course of the First, and in the second Balkan war in particular.

The principal political goal of Greek nationalism is Macedonia, Thessaloniki above all. This is the point for which one can say to be Black Hole of Serbian, Greek and Bulgarian civilizationalism, and Big Bang of Serbian, Greek and Bulgarian nationalism.

c) Bulgaria

Bulgarian nationalism was ambivalent just as were Bulgarian ethnic roots.<sup>101</sup> On the one hand, specific position of Bulgaria in relation to Russia put Bulgaria into a special relationship towards other Slav and Orthodox Balkan countries. On the other hand, being in the vicinity of Turkey put Bulgaria into a particularly vulnerable position, and also nurtured particular territorial appetites toward Turkey, toward the west and Macedonia.

The formation of San Stefano Great Bulgaria eventually opened the cleavage to other Balkan states and awakened national hypnosis.

Political goal of Bulgaria was Macedonia and, in particular, Thessaloniki, and therefore identical to Russia’s national goal of approaching Mediterranean Sea. However, when Bulgarians reached Thessaloniki, in the first Balkan war, only one day after Greeks, they met Greeks in mood which was not that of allies.<sup>102</sup> It was thus already in the first Balkan war that allies came to contending positions. Once again, nationalism surpassed civilizational “interest”, which actually never existed.

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<sup>100</sup> L.S. Stavrianos, p. 396.

<sup>101</sup> Georgije Ostrogorski, *Istorija Vizantije*, Prosveta, Beograd 1993, p. 140.

<sup>102</sup> L.S. Stavrianos, p. 536.

#### d) Montenegro

Although the smallest Balkan state, territorially and in population number (250.000), Montenegro played an especially decisive role in awakening nationalism on the Balkans. So it was before The Treaty of Berlin, in the wake of it and particularly in the course of the Balkan wars.

It was worthy of that. Montenegrin nationalism was directed towards Herzegovina, Sandzak, and Albania in particular. After the end of the wars nation state Montenegro doubled its population, many of whom were not Montenegrins. Montenegro was also among those who gained the most territorially, after Serbia and Greece. Its territory increased for 62% (Serbia + 82, Greece + 68).<sup>103</sup>

#### e) Albania

Albanians experienced terrible crimes, on the one hand, especially when Serbian troops reached Adriatic Sea. On the other hand, it is just this tragedy of Albanian people, as the outcome of Serbian nationalism, which enabled European powers to make decision of halting Serbian expansionism by the establishment of Albanian state.

Only Balkan's people which was politically liberated in the course of the Balkan wars were Albanians. However, the freedom, i.e. autonomous state, was granted to Albanians by foreign powers. Once again, national interest decisively surpassed civilizational one: between predominantly Muslim Albanians and Christian Serbs, Europe chose an independent Albanian state.

Albania was established both as an ethnic state of Albanians, and as the consequence of strategic plans of European nationalisms. This is to say that the state emerged as the expression of people's aspirations of Albanians, as well as the interests of nation states Austria and Italy, which pleaded for an "as large as possible" Albanian state<sup>104</sup> in order to thwart Serbia's approach to Adriatic Sea. Not a few of Albanians remained living outside the state's borders, what later sparked Albanian nationalism on both sides of the border.

It is indicative in many respects that Albanians were victims of Serbian troops, in spite of the fact that Albanians were expressing their willingness to live in a community with Serbs and required support from Serbia before the Balkan wars. It is best to rely on the words of a Serb, social democrat Dragiša Lapčević. In his speech, held in Narodna skupština of Serbia, February 6, 1914, he said:

„Instead of doing everything on its part to ensure freedom for Albanians, Serbia – which was once struggling so long for its own liberation – sent its army to run over Albania, to come out to Adriatic Sea in order to subjugate Albanian people and put it into slavery.“<sup>105</sup>

#### 4. Nationalism of *Balkan peoples*

It goes without saying that not only the Balkan states were nationalistic. People in these states was also caught by nationalism, though shored up by state propaganda and national institutions, such as

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<sup>103</sup> L.S. Stavrianos, p. 540.

<sup>104</sup> L.S. Stavrianos, p. 537.

<sup>105</sup> Dragiša Lapčević, *Izneverene nade i zahtevi arbanaski*, <http://www.e-novine.com/srbija/srbija-licnosti/77450-Izneverene-nade-zahtevi-arbanaki.html>



those intellectual ones. Nationalism does not spring from people, but people is very receptive and suitable material for nationalistic molding.<sup>106</sup>

This proves that not only “liberated” peoples were befooled, but their “liberators” as well. Instead of liberation from Turks the people(s) of the Balkan states got:

modern nation state strengthening bureaucracy and army<sup>107</sup>  
new taxes paid mainly by peasantry (for these societies were peasant)<sup>108</sup>  
states’ indebtedness<sup>109</sup>  
nation state which was more greedy than feudal Turkey<sup>110</sup>  
money economy, i. e. capitalism which chiefly served the interests of European nation states/economies.

Nothing of people’s emancipation occurred after the “solution” of so-called Eastern Question. One could have known that before the Balkan wars too. Serbian people’s song testifies to that:

“The roads will desire Turks, but there will be no more Turks.”

Bulgarian experience corroborates same, in the words of a Bulgarian writer:

“The peasant has but the vaguest idea of our transition from servitude to independent life; for him it matters little whether he pays tax to Akhmed or Ivan. In fact, Ivan is often more distasteful to him than Akhmed, for Akhmed could be more easily fooled or bribed; Akhmed did not take his son off as a soldier whereas Ivan does; Akhmed was naïve and spoke Turkish, while Ivan is to all appearance a Christian like him, speaks Bulgarian, yet exacts more from him than did Akhmed.”<sup>111</sup>

## 5. Bosnia:

One should not say that Bosnia experienced nationalism in this period (1815-1914). Three religious groups – Muslims, Orthodox and Catholics - being slowly moulded into ethnic, actually national groups, had no considerable nationalistic experiences.

Quite the reverse. In spite of aggressive nationalizing propaganda from Serbia and Croatia, through priests and teachers, the feeling of a common root of ethnic and political identity lasted as late as the occupation.<sup>112</sup> With Austrian occupation the sense of common Bosnian identity was excited. In spite of European powers’ decision on occupation and Turkey’s consent, Austrian troops encountered the resistance of Bosnian people. In the beginning it was the resistance of all: Muslims, Orthodox and Catholics. Five companies moved from Sarajevo in order to counter Austrians: three Muslim, one Orthodox and one Catholic. Last resistance to Austrians was given together by Muslims and Orthodox in Glavaticevo.

During Bosnian crisis 1908 once again the resistance to Austrian annexation appears, which now includes only Muslims and Orthodox. Serbs in Sarajevo even require the return of the Sultan’s sovereignty. Bosnian Catholics already perceive Austria as their own state.

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<sup>106</sup> See Damjan Pavlica, *Srpska akademija nauka i umjetnosti*, <http://www.e-novine.com/srbija/srbija-tema/60600-Srpska-akademija-nauka-umetnosti.html>

<sup>107</sup> L.S. Stavrianos, p. 420.

<sup>108</sup> L.S. Stavrianos, p. 423.

<sup>109</sup> L.S. Stavrianos, p. 419.

<sup>110</sup> L.S. Stavrianos, p. 423.

<sup>111</sup> L.S. Stavrianos, p. 423.

<sup>112</sup> Muhamed Hadžijahić, *Od tradicije do identiteta*, IZ Zagreb, 1990.

Bosnian crisis 1908 had very unlucky consequences to the Balkans. None of Bosnian autochthonic nationalisms can be directly accused. However, the process of nationalization from neighbouring states, Serbia in particular, sparked very soon Bosnian nationalism making it extremist and, at the end, terrorist. Instead of the recent Austro-Russian cooperation which hold whatever balance, Russians now work on establishing Balkan League. “Thus the Balkan League and the Balkan Wars that followed may be said to stem directly from the crisis over Bosnia-Herzegovina.”<sup>113</sup>

## 1. Quite a Theoretical Dilemma: Liberation vs. Occupation, or vice versa?

It is not possible to draw a relevant conclusion on the Balkan wars before answering two quite theoretical questions: What is *war* and what is *occupation*? As it is known, different answers are given to both questions. For the sake of that the perceptions of both wars and occupations are diametrically opposed. The need for the conceptualizations hence appears urgent.

### 1. What is the war? Were the Balkan wars – wars or something else?

I have found the basis for an entirely theoretical answer to this question in Aristotle’s philosophy and offered it at another place. The war is namely determined by its purpose, and the purpose of war is peace. The purpose of peace, on the other side, can not be anything else but again – peace.<sup>114</sup>

The Balkan wars are an immediate outcome of so-called peace settlements and of the Treaty of Berlin in particular. Consequently, one can say that many peace settlements are, actually, just the cause of new wars. The Balkan wars are a paradigm, for they were consequences of certain peace agreements. Whether the Treaty of Berlin, which was supposed to ensure the peace on the Balkans, was an act of peace? Let L. S. Stavrianos answer this question: “For the Balkan peoples, then, the Berlin Treaty meant not peace with honor but rather frustration of national aspirations and future wars. The direct and logical outcome of the Berlin settlement was the Serbian-Bulgarian War of 1885, the Bosnian crisis of 1908, the two Balkan wars of 1912-1913, and the murder of Archduke Francis Ferdinand in 1914.”<sup>115</sup>

Having stemmed from the peace settlements, which were not that, the Balkan wars had peace as the goal neither. The fact that horrible crimes were committed in these “wars” indicates that the wars had to end in the “peace” (The Treaty of Buckarest) which paved the preconditions for new wars. And so in circle – *circulus vitiosus*.

The Report of the International Commission to Inquire into the Causes and Conduct of the Balkan Wars is the document published by Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, in Washington, 1914. Report is full of data about the crimes.<sup>116</sup> I particularly refer a reader to the critical analysis of the Report by Frances Trix titled “Circling Adrianople: The 1913 ICRCBW”, submitted at the International conference held in Istanbul in October, 2012.<sup>117</sup> It is very indicative how close are the Commission’s conclusions on the nature of the wars to the views of comrade Lenin.

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<sup>113</sup> L. S. Stavrianos, str. 531.

<sup>114</sup> Džemal Sokolović, *Kultura rata – od izvora rata do pojma rata*, Odjek, jesen 2009, Sarajevo; Džemal Sokolović, *Culture of War*, <http://isd-bh.org/documents/CULTUREofWAR.bosanski.pdf>

<sup>115</sup> L.S. Stavrianos, p. 412.

<sup>116</sup> See: (<http://archive.org/details/reportofinternat00inteuoft>)

<sup>117</sup> See: ([http://www.icon.hacettepe.edu.tr/eng/4\\_ekim.htm](http://www.icon.hacettepe.edu.tr/eng/4_ekim.htm))

And yet, I will rather allege here the assessment coming from the Balkans. As such the critique of the crime is more valuable. In the words of Serbian politician Dimitrije Tucović (My translation):

“The book by Carlo Pauli is the successful accusation of Balkan governments and armies for their atrocities in Macedonia, Thrace, Epirus and Albania...Moving from page to page, from the first clash on the border up to the siege of Adrianople, horrible pictures come up in front of our eyes, affixing a seal on the face of bourgeois civilization...If one ascribes these horrors to racial and national hatred of Balkan peoples towards Turks, and vice versa, one can not find real truth, but one does enormous injustice towards peoples’ masses, while those guilty hide from responsibility...But the essence lies in a criminal plan made by army and government for the future, namely: Serbs were exterminating Albanians in Old Serbia, and Bulgarians did same to Turks in Thrace convinced that they do a national act, for while removing them from the face of land they are getting rid of enemies who might be unpleasant in the future...”

Confident in success and decisive from the Young Turks overthrow to assimilate and bind to themselves others’ element, Turks of this war had no an exterminating war-cry against Christian population. They were confronting only enemy army and their array of crimes decreases in so far as they did not act against civil population...There are writers who speak readily about the goodness of Turkish race and they will just now maintain that their opinion had been confirmed...Turks did not link their conquest of these land by a system of extermination not due to the goodness of their race but because it did not correspond to feudal and property interests of the sultan and ruling military and bay cast. The masses of Balkan peoples are today guilty to lesser degree for the politics of extermination which is nothing else but the reverse side of patriotism of bourgeoisie...”<sup>118</sup>

Tucovic’s assessment is, thus, much more precise, candid and honest than Lenin’s one we had to listen to for years.

Therefore, the question which immediately arises is: Whether the Balkan wars were wars at all? Or, simply – crimes, just as most of so-called wars?

2. What is the occupation? Consequently, whether the Balkan wars were the wars of liberation?

To the question: Whether the Balkan wars were wars of liberation one can respond only if there is a preliminary consent that these wars have ended the occupation. And, in order to settle dispute that the state authority of Turkey was occupying, it is necessary to come to the agreement about what the occupation actually is. However, there can not be political consent about that, for there is the theoretical one neither. The answer to the question whether the Balkan wars were wars of liberation thus depends entirely on the theoretical concept of occupation.

Since Emerich de Vattel has established the distinction between the notions of occupation and annexation the controversies about applying the concept of occupation do not abate. The case of the Austria-Hungary’s occupation/annexation of Bosnia is perhaps the most conspicuous in political praxis. Theoretical dilemmas are, of course, even more profound.

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<sup>118</sup> Dimitrije Tucović, *Sabrana dela*, Beograd 1980, knjiga 7. Prepared by Damjan Pavlica. Quoted from: <http://www.e-novine.com/srbija/srbija-tema/74560-Ruke-noge-zubi-rade-pomrini.html>

How to hence grasp the occupation? It is not only the matter of *positive* (international) right, but the matter of *natural* right as well, therefore a pure ethical matter. Raised from the standpoint of ethics, the question of occupation reads: is the occupation legitimate or not?

If the occupation as such is namely illegitimate, it logically ensues that the elimination of it, by any means whatsoever, is legitimate. Consequently, the elimination of occupation is – the liberation. Illegitimacy of occupation is thus what the liberation makes legitimate. *If* the five-century presence of the Ottoman state in the Balkans, in Europe, *is* the occupation of that part of Europe and peoples living there, then all wars against the Ottomans, including the Balkan wars (1912-1913), were legitimate. However, this big “if” opens the entire unfoundedness of the division of wars on occupying and liberating ones. Whereas the “liberators” were, even before the arrival of Turks to Europe, and the Balkans, also the occupiers of states and peoples having existed there earlier, then the question of legitimacy of their own “liberating” wars opens as well. And so endlessly, to the past. Up to 30.000 years in the past, when *homo sapiens*, the ancestor of our human species, exterminated the last *homo neanderthalis* from the soil of Europe.

Same ambiguity can be applied to the wars of liberation. Can liberation be “liberation”, thus illegitimate? If the liberation (of territory, people etc.) has no to do with occupation than it is illegitimate, and hence it itself turns to be an occupation. Therefore, *if* the five-century existence of the Ottoman state in Europe, and on the Balkans, *was not* the occupation, than the liberation of territories and peoples under the state was “liberation”, thus illegitimate, than the Balkan wars were not the wars of liberation, than it was actually – the occupation. The fate of two Balkan’s peoples, one of which, Albanian, got its state, and other one, Macedonian, was occupied by several Balkan’s “liberating” states, demonstrates the whole ambiguity of the term – liberation.

Viewed from the *natural right* standpoint the occupation can not be defined. All of us, individually and as social groups, have same right to every piece of territory. Any fencing (walling) is occupation, thus illegitimate.

However, we have to do with fences. And it is *positive right* which deals with them. Positive right endeavours to define the occupation. According to Fourth Geneva Convention (GCIV) the occupation is limited to one year after the end of military operations. Positive right, of course, does not solve the dilemma if dilemma is not previously resolved on the level of natural right. All issues stemming from natural right remain unsolved by positive right. Namely, what does the limitation to one year mean after all?

In short, the duration of an authority for a longer period of time can not be treated as occupation. The authority of the state of Turkey, which lasted some five centuries in the Balkans, was not the occupation. For that reason the war of Balkan states against Turkey was illegitimate from the standpoint of occupation. With this in mind, the Balkan wars were thus not the wars of liberation but conquering wars.

Therefore, even after the positive right answered to the question on occupation, but also in shortage of natural right response, one can say that the dilemma what, actually, the Balkan wars were, remains: the liberation or occupation?

The Balkan wars clearly demonstrated how the “solution” of so-called Eastern question looks like. Current European, as well as Balkan ones, of course, nationalism is also today, after hundred years, faced with the same “question”. The problem is that the today “East” is much further to the “West” than it was before the Balkan wars. In addition to considerable Muslim minorities in all European nation states, there are four states in the Balkans whose societies have bigger or smaller

Muslim majority. All four are waiting to be included into the European community of states. (Albania, Bosnia, Kosovo, Turkey) Therefore, Europe has to grasp that there is no a final solution of “the Eastern question”. I would rather say that it is necessary to open “the Western question”, i.e. the question of incompatibility of nation state with European principles, values and ideals, fundamental one of which is – ethnic diversity.

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