

The Treaty of Bucharest and the Unresolved Balkan Issues

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This article is an attempt to analyze the historical processes that created the Balkan nation-states and their national programmes in the course of the late 19th century until the Treaty of Bucharest (1913), using an overview of the historiography. The consequences from this Treaty are still present on the Balkan Peninsula. The emphasis is placed on the Macedonian and the Kosovo issues, because the problems related to them dates exactly from the above-mentioned Treaty. Due to the provisions of this Treaty, the Balkan states spread their domination on different populations and by that, the ethnic diversity of the states increased. Namely, Ottoman Kosovo and Ottoman Macedonia during the Balkan Wars were conquered by, and the latter one divided among, the Balkan allies. However, the Balkan historiographies (Serbian, Bulgarian and Greek) even today still claim that these two regions were liberated from the Ottoman rule. This is, as a matter of fact, the main and still current problem that burdens the relations among the Balkan countries.

The long prelude of the Balkan Wars

In the 19th century, Macedonia was a territory within the Ottoman Empire that formally did not exist as an administrative Ottoman entity.¹ It was surrounded by the newly created states: Greece in the south, Serbia in the north and Bulgaria in the east. At the end of the 19th century, it was in the focus of their expansionistic ambitions. In order to explain the historical /political context of the Macedonian question in this period, first one should be familiar with the Ottoman social-political system.

¹ Macedonia was part of three vilayets: Kosovo (Skopje after 1888), Bitola and Thessaloniki.

The Balkan Peninsula was a part of the Ottoman Empire, which was a multi-ethnic and multi-confessional country. In other words, the Ottoman state was a non-national empire with strong medieval elements, where the bureaucracy seems to have been the only common institution linking, but not unifying, all the populace.²

With the creation of the Bulgarian Exarchate in 1870 that was approved by the Sultan, a division of the Orthodox Christians within the Ottoman Empire emerged. If until then every orthodox subject to the Sultan belonged to the Constantinople Patriarchy and in confessional sense was a "Greek", with the creation of the Exarchate a possibility to have an option was given. Population's opportunity to decide or choose between the Greek Patriarchy and the Bulgarian Exarchate Church was still not a decision in a national identity context, but in certain way, it was channelizing the direction for the nation creation. Since the schools were also under the protectorate of the churches and with their influence in the socialization processes in Ottoman society, they could also influence the building of certain national consciousness among the population. Hence, with the creation of the Exarchate a church and cultural struggle emerged among the neighbouring Balkan countries on the Macedonian territory. Apart from the Patriarchy and the Exarchate churches, the two autonomous churches of Greece and Serbia also tried to influence the Macedonian population.³

The new national and nation-state structure of the Balkans opened many unresolved identity issues. In the initial phase, in the first place were the language and religion as the collective criteria for belonging. Using of a "Christian" i.e. "European" language (Greek or South-Slavic) and belonging to Orthodoxy seemed to be sufficient criteria to belong to the Greek or the Serbian nations. However, with the strengthening of the competitive movements both criteria proved to be inefficient or incapable to achieve national consensus. In the areas where the religious and linguistic differences were clearly distinctive (between the Christians and the Muslims, on one side or the Greek, South-Slavic and Albanian languages, on the other) determining whom they belonged to at a first sight seemed relatively easy. However, the question is: where did the meaning of these criteria become a problem? As a response, the German historian Holm Sundhaussen finds it in the fluid

² TODOROVA, 2009: 163.

³ ЗВНАХАВЦЕВ, 2009: 149.

transitions between the South-Slavic languages and at the same time poses the linguistic dilemma: where does the “Serbian language” begin, where does the “Bulgarian”, and let alone, where does the “Macedonian”?⁴

In this historical context, I would like to point out that Macedonia, at the end of the 19th century, became a peripheral Ottoman province in the Balkans. The neighbouring Balkan states: Serbia, Greece and Bulgaria were given independence at the Berlin Congress. At the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, they also managed through exoduses and through their state institutions to ethnically homogenise their population up to a certain level. Thus, their perception of Ottoman Macedonia happened simply in that nationalistic recourse, where the population was still divided according to the religious and church affiliation, i.e. the Ottoman custom: religion and, later on, the church depicted the nation. Namely, Macedonia was the last Ottoman province in the Balkans apart from Albania and Thrace, and consequently it was still an Ottoman-Balkan collage of different ethnics. “In some sense” as Sir Charles Eliot wrote in 1900 in his book “Turkey in Europe”, “in Macedonia the race is only a political party”.⁵ The struggle for loyalty of the Slavic Orthodox peasantry was among the Greek, Serbian and Bulgarian propaganda. All three of them opened schools in order to propagate their national ideals; they formed churches loyal to “their” bishops; made maps and ethnographies to justify their demands, and when the more peaceful methods did not guarantee success, they financed armed groups in order to recruit supporters for their cause among the peasants. The ethnic issue was as much a consequence as it was a reason for this unrest; the violence produced national affiliation and it was produced by them.⁶

Nonetheless, when MRO (1893) appeared on the political stage in Ottoman Macedonia, agitation among the population began under the single slogan: “Macedonia to the Macedonians”. MRO’s national programme differs from the neighbouring Balkan national programmes. The Organisation being familiar with the situation in the field was trying to unite under the Macedonian identity all the confessional groups in Ottoman Macedonia. However, after the failed Ilinden Uprising (1903) it was divided up by facti-

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ During that period there was confusion in the use of the notions of race, nation, nationality, religion, church.

⁶ SIR ELIOT, 1900: 271.

ons and failed to achieve its goal: autonomy for Macedonia. It should be credited for the creation of the proto-Macedonian nationalism, which represented the uniting core of the population in Ottoman Macedonia at the time, nationalism that was different and particular compared to the neighboring nationalisms.

After the failed Ilinden Uprising, the Russian King Nicholas II and the Austrian Emperor Franz Joseph managed for the last time to agree on a reform programme for Macedonia.⁷ The Mürzsteg reforms (October 1903) were the last real cooperation between the two Great Powers in the Balkans. The Mürzsteg reform programme resulted from the terrible internal situation in Ottoman Macedonia after the Ilinden Uprising. The real goal of the reform programme officialised with the intention to help improve the situation of the population and to calm down the rebellious province, was to establish an unofficial protectorate of the Great Powers. In that sense the reform programme of Austria-Hungary and Russia was qualified by the Serbian envoy to Constantinople, Jovan Hristic, as “a condominium of the Anglo-French type in Egypt.”⁸ The programme also had a clause that envisaged for Macedonia to be divided in areas according to the “ethnic” composition. This provision simply caused new fights among the Balkan paramilitary formations, since everyone was trying to ensure control in certain areas.⁹ The reforms did not resolve the problems in Ottoman Macedonia. Nor this was achieved with the armed repression. Until 1908, the Ottoman authorities concentrated most of its army in the region. Its failure to control the situation only showed the Ottoman military officers the evident incapability of Abdul Hamid II to rule.

In July 1908 a group of reform-oriented military officers in Macedonia, unsatisfied because of the Ottoman weakness and the continued western intervention started an uprising against the Porte.¹⁰ The Young Turk Revolution started in Thessaloniki and it was carried out by the Ottoman

⁷ ТОДОРОВСКИ, 1984: 5-51; and ПОПОВ, 1974: 52-71.

⁸ МИНОСКИ, 1987: 53.

⁹ ХРИСТОВ & ДОНЕВ, 1994: Док. 23, 149-152.

¹⁰ The rival, i.e. Anglo-Russian reform project for Macedonia from June 1908 was one of the many factors for the Young Turk movement to accelerate its preparations for a revolution to overthrow the Sultan's regime, see ДОНЕВ, 1994: 149.

Third Macedonian Army.¹¹ This revolution challenged the Great European powers and Balkan states with completely new issues that needed to be solved.

Very important was the issue how the interested Balkan cabinets would act towards the Young Turk tendencies and what they would do about the changes that happened in the European part of the Ottoman Empire, i.e. Macedonia.¹² While the Kingdom of Serbia, Montenegro and Greece took a position of waiting, the Great Powers with the exception of Austria-Hungary,¹³ were surprised with the sudden change and the fast developments in the Ottoman state remaining for some time only as observers.¹⁴

The most important reaction on the international political stage was the declaration of complete independence by Bulgaria and the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina by Austria-Hungary, which happened in a coordinated and simultaneous manner on the 5 and 6 October 1908.¹⁵ On 6 October, the island of Crete also declared its annexation to Greece.¹⁶ This is how a new diplomatic crisis, known as the “Balkan Annexation Crisis” began.

¹¹ Apart from the fight for establishing the 1876 Constitution and civil democracy an additional motive that stimulated the actions of the Young Turks against the Abdul Hamid II regime, were the efforts for keeping the integrity of the Ottoman Empire. In the 1907 declaration on the Sultan’s foreign policy the Young Turks will remark that: “... That defeating policy... resulted in territorial reduction of the Empire. If that policy continues other regions, such as Albania and Macedonia, Arabia and Armenia will soon and unavoidably break free from the Empire...” see ПЕТРОСЯН, 1971: 172.

¹² ЂОРОВИЋ, 1936: 131.

¹³ The Austro-German diplomacy supported the Young Turk Revolution in 1908 in order to cause the failure of the Anglo-Russian reform action in Macedonia, see ТОДОРОВСКИ, 1984: 314-321; and ДОНЕВ, 1994: 123-141.

¹⁴ ЂОРОВИЋ, 1936: 131.

¹⁵ Soon after the victory of the revolution the Young Turks presented their positions. Via the press and some other means, they put forward the issue about the participation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Eastern Rumelia and Cyprus in the elections, and they even made allusions to Egypt, Tunisia and Algeria. Among the other things this also gave a reason for Austria-Hungary to act in a coordinated manner against the Young Turks efforts in the given areas, see СТЕФАНОВА, 1958: 311-312.

¹⁶ At the same time the Greek population of Crete made an attempt to overthrow the vassal status and to join Greece but they came across resistance on the

Bosnia and Herzegovina's annexation was a bitter blow for the Kingdom of Serbia, which after Petar Karadjordjevic came to the throne, broke off the close relations with Vienna. Regardless of the fact that the Habsburg government took over the rule of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Serbian nationalists still hoped that someday, somehow they would be able to get what they considered their "national" territory. The annexation distanced that opportunity even more. The Serbian leaders turned to Russia for support, and the Habsburg Empire expected help from Berlin. Still the Russian government was not in a situation to help its Balkan ally.¹⁷ Its defeat by Japan in 1905 and the internal problems caused by the revolution that same year weakened the position of the state on the international level. Therefore, Serbia, faced with the Austro-Hungarian ultimatum had to change its initial position concerning the annexation and to give assurance that the state would "change the current policy towards Austria-Hungary and... from now on they would live in good neighbourly relations."¹⁸ This episode was humiliating not only for the Serbian Government but also for Russia. The strategy of cooperation with the Habsburg Monarchy concerning the Balkans issues was harshly interrupted. Russia from that moment onwards was ready to come to an agreement and to support a policy, which actually meant reopening of the "Eastern Question".

side of Turkey and the Great Powers, since they had enormous control on the island. The Crete issue was resolved in 1912. This kept Turkey and Greece in constant tension and this also had a negative impact on the internal-political life in Macedonia, see ДОНЕВ, 1994: 153.

¹⁷ The Russians also opposed the annexation especially because they knew that the Austrians wanted to build a railway on the South up to the Aegean. A British diplomat commented that the fight between Austria and Russia in the Balkans was obviously just starting. Both Russia and Serbia also demanded compensation from the Austrians, but none of them got it. The Serbs were so sure in the Russian support that they were ready to declare war to Austria. "Everybody thinks about revenge that could only be carried out with the help of the Russians", reported the Austrian Ambassador from Belgrade. However, the Russians pulled back when the Germans warned them that they would also mobilise themselves to support Vienna. "Russia is still not ready in terms of its army and right now it cannot afford to be in a war", with these words the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs informed the Serbs, see SCHMITT, 1937: 67.

¹⁸ JELAVICH, 1974: 265-266.

The map of the Balkans at that moment was drastically changed with the almost complete collapse of the Ottoman power in Europe. The Young Turk Revolution, instead of reconciling the Balkan subjects with the Ottoman state, had hastened the empire's disintegration. As the Habsburg Empire was also to find out, nationalism dissolved the old imperial bonds.¹⁹ The Turkish nationalism that gave the revolutionaries from the Unification and Progress Committee grounds to hope that they would modernise the Empire only increased the Christian antagonism. In 1911, there were already numerous paramilitaries that operated in Macedonia and the perspectives were darker than earlier.

More specifically, the efforts of the Young Turk authorities to modernise the Ottoman state only pushed back the people, who were traditionally loyal to the Empire: the Albanians. Most of them being Muslims, they served the Sultan as paramilitaries and bodyguards and their loyalty was ensured with the readiness of the Porte to allow them to have arms and a high level of autonomy or anarchy?²⁰ As an observer, Edith Durham describes villages which inhabitants "when called on for military service... will often declare themselves Christians and exempt, and afterwards repel with guns the men sent to collect the army tax on the grounds that they are Muslims and not liable."²¹ In 1910 an uprising in Northern Albania was only defeated with the aid of 20,000 Ottoman troops. In addition, the next year – as Italy went to war with the Ottoman Empire in Libya and contemplated an invasion of Albania – an even larger revolt saw the rebels call for the first time for the recognition of Albania as a separate nation and for self-government. "The formation of a commission at Dibra to consider a demand for the recognition of Albanians in official registers as 'Albanians' and not as 'Muslims' or 'non-Muslims' is especially significant", noted the British Ambassador in Constantinople.²² "The notables forming the commission are apparently themselves Muslims and that they should even consider a proposal to demand a national instead of a religious status is an entirely new and very remarkable development"²³

¹⁹ MAZOWER, 2000: 97.

²⁰ STAVRIJANOS, 2005: 478.

²¹ MAZOWER, 2000: 97.

²² LOWTHER & GREY, 2 Oct. 1912, in DESTANI, 1999: 292. Taken from MAZOWER, 2000: 98.

²³ *Ibid.*

The Albanian uprising announced the radical changes in the balance of powers in the Balkans. It showed that the armed uprising against the Ottoman authorities could be successful, stimulating the Balkan states to go forward with their own demands for the Ottoman territory. That marked the appearance of the organised and militant Albanian nationalism and alerted Serbia and Greece, which had territorial aspirations where significant Albanian population were present. The Albanian uprising encouraged Austria-Hungary and Italy to take a diplomatic action to secure their strong points in this part of Southeast Europe that alarmed the Balkan states even more.²⁴

Because of that and with active help from the Russian diplomatic representatives, the Balkan governments signed series of documents that in fact represented alliances aimed against the Ottoman Empire. The first agreement between Bulgaria and Serbia was signed in March 1912. The relations between the two governments after 1903 were better but they still had difficulties reaching agreement on the territorial division of Ottoman Macedonia. The Bulgarian representatives in these negotiations supported the creation of an independent Macedonian state hoping that at the end it would be annexed to Bulgaria. Opposite that, Serbia preferred an agreement for division. The agreement that was signed then was only superficially a joint defence pact.²⁵

The Agreement had a Secret Annex that regulated the future destiny of Macedonia.²⁶ Article 2 of the Secret Annex regulated the future joint coordinated actions against the Ottoman state and the resolution of all problems that would have resulted from that joint action. The agreeing parties established that all the territorial gains from the war with the Ottoman state would be under joint rule (condominium) of the two parties of the agreement. The liquidation of the condominium would happen immediately (or within three months at the latest) after signing the peace agreement. That would have been carried out based on the right of Bulgaria to the territory east of the Rhodope Mountains and the Struma River and of Serbia to the territories north and west of the Shara Mountain. In regard to the territories between the Shara Mountain and Rhodope Mountains and the Aegean Sea

²⁴ ПАВЛОВИЋ, 2001: 288.

²⁵ ДОНЕВ, 1988: 55.

²⁶ СКОКО, 1968: 106-109; ГЕШОВ, 1915: 77-80; *Сборник договоров России с другими государствами 1865-1917*, 1952: 113-117; ХРИСТОВ & ДОНЕВ, 1994: 164-166; СТОЈАНОВ, 1979: 75-77.

and Lake Ohrid, i.e. Macedonia, the agreement envisaged: if both parties are convinced in the inability to give autonomy to that area, and given the general interests of the Serbian and Bulgarian governments, the question about this territory will be resolved with a precise diagonal line. The new border was drawn from Golem Vrv near Kriva Palanka to the Gabovci Monastery on Lake Ohrid. This demarcated the supposed future Serbian-Bulgarian border in Macedonia. This borderline in the course of the First Balkan War against the Ottoman state became the main problem between the two allies.

The war convention that was added to the Agreement contained mutual obligations in case of an Austro-Hungarian attack against the Kingdom of Serbia, or a Romanian attack against Bulgaria. At the same time, the necessary troops that the two countries were supposed to provide in the war against the Ottoman Empire were agreed.²⁷

The conclusion of the Serbian-Bulgarian Agreement opened a possibility for the Bulgarian diplomacy to start negotiations for concluding a similar agreement with Greece. In fact, with Greece the Bulgarian government had to apply the same attitude they it applied with the Kingdom of Serbia. One could not have expected Serbian-Greek rapprochement without having the Serbian-Bulgarian relations regulated first. "The attempts that were made then in order to come to an agreement with Greece, and the demarcation of the Serbian-Greek spheres of influence in Macedonia and Albania", wrote Serbian Minister of Foreign Affairs Milovan Milovanovic, "only provided new evidence that for Serbia an accord with Greece could have had practical value, after previously the Serbian-Bulgarian community was established. The Bulgarians among others had the same experiences in their attempts to come to an agreement with Greece. The reason on one hand was the geographic position that connected Serbia and Bulgaria and tied their hands in regulating the relations with Greece, at least not before regulating their own relations."²⁸

The agreement signed between Bulgaria and Greece on 29 May 1912 showed that there was a big clash between them on the issue of the division of Ottoman Macedonia. It was bigger even than the one between Bulgaria and Serbia. The division of Ottoman Macedonia was not mentio-

²⁷ *Први балкански рат 1912-1913*, 1959: 113-117.

²⁸ МИЛОВАНОВИЋ, 1979: 23-24.

ned at all and it was postponed for after the end of the war with the Ottoman state.²⁹

The negotiations between Serbia and Greece started on 14 August 1912 and were not finalised by the beginning of the war. The Greek unpreparedness to help Serbia in case of attack by Austria-Hungary as well as the mistrust that Serbia and Bulgaria created with their ally by not wanting to inform it about their agreement for alliance, made the reaching of the agreement impossible. Apart from that between Serbia and Greece an allied relation and determination existed to jointly resolve the Balkan issue.³⁰

Montenegro was the last one to join the allies. In mid-September, there were some oral discussions between Montenegro and Bulgaria. The agreement between the Kingdom of Serbia and Montenegro was signed on 6 October 1912 in Lucerne only two days before the beginning of the war.³¹ These agreements did not regulate the issue of the division of the “liberated” territories.

The alliance between Serbia and Bulgaria, as well as of the other Balkan states originated from the open and deep political crisis in the Otto-

²⁹ On the negotiations with Greece see: СКОКО, 1968: 94-95. Looking at this issue Stojan Danev states: “As a matter of fact we had two problems that we could not overcome. The first one was the need of time for something like that... In order to come to an agreement with Serbia I told you that we negotiated for months. There was no reason to think that it was going to be easier when resolving these issues with Greece... Secondly, we more or less felt that the border demarcation between us and the Greeks was possible only if we gave up Thessaloniki. At the time the Bulgarian government had no desire with a political act to state that it was giving up Thessaloniki...” – head of the Progressive-Liberal Party (since December 1899), president of the 15th Ordinary National Assembly (1911-1913), Minister-President (1-4 July 1913), see ДОНЕВ, 1988: 59.

³⁰ СКОКО, 1968: 95-97; and *Први балкански рат 1912-1913*, 1959: 131-132.

³¹ Until the first half of 1912, Serbia and Bulgaria refused to start negotiations with Montenegro. The reason for this attitude was, according to them, the pro-Austrian policy of King Nikola. After the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina by Austria-Hungary the Cetinje Government started to improve its relations with Austria-Hungary, which brought about certain cooling down of its relations with Russia. For these reasons exactly, Russia did not agree for Montenegro to join the Balkan Alliance. For more see: БАТОВСКИ, 1957: 47-60.

man state at the beginning of 1912, and it represented a basis for the realisation of their interests. However, the relations among the allied Balkan states were also not sufficient to get to war. The Balkan states could not afford to go to war and to be depicted as those who violated the peace, led only by their own interests. They needed to fight for goals that could have been and should have been verified as deeply justified. Parallel to the negotiations and the signing of the agreements for the foundation of the Balkan Alliance in all the Balkan states actions were undertaken to prepare the public opinion for the upcoming war.

The Balkan Wars: conquests and treaties

The Great Powers were familiar, maybe not to the smallest detail, with these negotiations and they were becoming increasingly worried. They did not want another Eastern Crisis. On 8 October, Russia and Austria-Hungary warned the Balkan states on behalf of all the Great Powers. The intervention came too late.³² The very same day Montenegro attacked the Ottoman Empire. The Balkan allies immediately joined it. Hence, Greece, Bulgaria and Montenegro for the first time were allied in a Balkan Alliance and fought together against the Ottoman Empire.

The victory against the Turkish troops was easy. The Balkan forces had about 700,000 troops while their opponent had only 320,000. The Ottoman military forces were weakened by internal political clashes and financial problems, so the army was left without modern weapons. Apart from that, during the war the Greek fleet controlled the sea, so it was impossible for them to bring in troops from Anatolia to Macedonia by the fastest and shortest way. The Ottoman government was afraid of such a Balkan conflict and in preparing for the contingency in September signed a treaty with the Albanians and in October with Italy.³³ The Italian government not only got Tripoli and Cyrenaica, but they also used the Balkan Wars as an excuse

³² "Russia is trying to stop it", noted the French Prime Minister Raymond Poincaré, "and it is the one that turned on the engine". "For the first time in the history of the Eastern issue", noted another French diplomat "small states are in a position of having such a big independence from the great powers that they feel capable of acting completely independently and to even drag them in". See STAVRIJANOS, 2005: 510.

³³ In 1911 Italy went to war with the Ottoman Empire for Tripoli.

to keep the Dodecanese Islands that they previously occupied. Regardless of these actions, the Young Turk regime was not prepared for war. Even though in the previous years the Ottoman armies managed to defeat the Balkan military forces, this time the combination was too powerful.³⁴

Among the Balkan states, the Bulgarian army fought the biggest battles with the main Turkish forces in Thrace. The Bulgarian command was forced to concentrate all its efforts there. In the meantime, the Serbian and the Greek allies advanced towards the Albanian and Macedonian territories. Montenegro advanced towards Lake Skadar and the Greek army tried to conquer Ioannina. Both the Greek and the Bulgarian armies were rushing towards Thessaloniki. On 8 November the Greeks got there first depriving Bulgaria of the most important Macedonian city.³⁵

With this evident collapse of the Ottoman reign, the European powers hurried to intervene. In May 1913, they forced the warring states to stop the battles and to negotiate conditions for the London peace agreement. This agreement determined the Enos-Midia line demarcating the Ottoman properties in Europe that were brought down to Constantinople and some territories in its surrounding. Bulgaria was given Edirne; Crete was finally given to Greece. The big problem with the division of Ottoman Macedonia remained. In that regard another problem appeared, one that the Balkan allies had not predicted. In their preliminary agreements, they set off from the premise that they would divide the Albanian territory between them. Instead of that, they discovered that the Great Powers insisted on the foundation of an independent Albanian state.³⁶

The main supporters of independent Albania were Italy and Austria-Hungary. On the other hand, Russia supported the demands of the Balkan states. One of the fundamental Serbian goals during the war was to get a port at the Adriatic Sea, if possible Durres. As before, the Habsburg Empire, supported by Italy, opposed the spreading of Serbia towards the Adriatic Sea. Both powers were firmly determined to ensure the creation of Albania with firm national borders that would serve as a barrier from the neighbouring Slavic states. Given that with this act both Serbia and Greece were de-

³⁴ ЖЕЛАВИЧ, 1999: 112.

³⁵ On the course and the results from the Balkan Wars see: CHRISTIAN, 1938 (repr. New York 1969); and RICHARD, 2000.

³⁶ ЗУНАХАВСЕИ, 2009: 235.

prived of territories that they expected to annex as a compensation they demanded part of the Macedonian territory that still was not allocated. The question about the national character of the territory in question was not asked, they were more interested in the balance of power between the Balkan allies.³⁷ Once again fearing Bulgaria as the biggest rival, this time Serbia and Greece signed a Secret Agreement for territory division and mutual assistance in case of a new war.³⁸ These two states were also constantly in touch with Romania, Montenegro and even the Ottoman Empire.

In the meantime, Sofia became more and more aware of the situation. Bulgaria was not only the reason for envy and animosity among its former allies, but it also did not have the support of any of the Great Powers. Wrongly assessing the situation, convinced that it could bring them military victory on the night between 29 and 30 June 1913, Bulgaria attacked both Greece and Serbia. The attack was a catastrophic mistake. The Romanian, Montenegrin and Ottoman troops united in the fight against the Bulgarian army. The Second Balkan War resulted in a complete defeat of Bulgaria.³⁹ On 31 July, a truce was signed.

With the Treaty of Bucharest, signed in August 1913, Ottoman Macedonia was divided and independent Albania was created. Thus, Serbia and Greece became victorious. By getting the Macedonian and Kosovo territories Serbia almost doubled in size. Montenegro and Serbia divided Novi Pazar Sanjak that the Habsburg Monarchy returned after annexing Bosnia and Herzegovina. By that, the two countries got a common border. Greece got Southern Macedonia and part of Epirus with the town of Ioannina. The Greek border on the east was expanded and it included Kavala. Regardless of the defeat, Bulgaria got the territory around the valley of the River Struma and 128 km of the Aegean coast, including the port of Alexandroupolis. The Ottoman Empire and Romania also got some territories: the Porte got back Edirne, and Romania got Southern Dobrudza. The final agreement was evidently an enormous step backwards for Bulgaria and the Ottoman Empire.⁴⁰

³⁷ ПАВЛОВИЋ, 2001: 291.

³⁸ СТАВРИЈАНОС, 2005: 513.

³⁹ БОЗЕВА-АБАЗИ, 2007: 220.

⁴⁰ ЈЕЛЛВИЧ, 1999: 116.

Thus, the Balkan Wars put an end to the Ottoman ruling on the Peninsula, with the exception of the area of Thrace and Constantinople. The Young Turk regime was not able to stop the further deterioration of the Empire.⁴¹

Conclusion: unfinished historical processes

The 1912 and 1913 Balkan Wars, which happened in a very short interval of less than a year, left severe consequences for the Balkan nations. For Turkey, these wars represent the biggest trauma in its modern history, loss of its most western and most developed European provinces. This trauma in the Turkish historiography and in the history textbooks is ignored, but it is important “yeast” for the modern nationalism in the country.

In the case of Bulgaria, the trauma was even greater. These developments have been experienced and until this very day interpreted as a division of the “Bulgarian national tissue”, as treason by the allies, primarily by Serbia, which according to that logic took half of the “Bulgarian territory” and divided the Bulgarian people (referring to the Macedonians). This is a source of permanent dissatisfaction and national frustration in Bulgaria.

The Albanians after the Balkan Wars felt a great change. At the London peace conference an independent Albanian state was created. However, with the decisions of the Great Powers at the conference the Kosovo territory went into the hands of the Kingdom of Serbia. This move created deep frustration within the Albanian national movement, and today the history textbooks in both Kosovo and Albania say that with an unjust decision of the Great Powers, the Albanian people in 1913 was divided in two. This was the foundation of the tendency of the Albanian people for separation from Serbia and unification with the homeland in the course of 20th century, which at the same time burdened the relation between the two nations.

The Balkan Wars have a particularly painful and frustrating role in the historical memory of the Macedonians. They are seen as the best proof of the greediness of the neighbouring nations whose “national interests” were formulated to the disadvantage of the Macedonian territory. The Second Balkan War was fought exclusively for the division of the Macedonian territory. And it ended with the Bucharest Peace Agreement that sanctioned

⁴¹ ПАВЛОВИЋ, 2004: 292.

the division of Macedonia into Vardar, Pirin and Aegean Macedonia between Serbia, Bulgaria and Greece.⁴²

With the political division of Macedonia in 1913, the Slavic Macedonian ethnic period ended and the period of *de-Slavicisation* and *de-Macedonisation* on the Macedonian ethnic-historical space started. The process of *de-Slavicisation* and *de-Macedonisation* is noticeable in the Aegean part of Macedonia, processes of *de-Macedonisation* but with *Slavicisation* of another (Serbian) ethnic element were evident in the Vardar part of Macedonia and the processes of colonisation were noticeable in the Pirin part of Macedonia. The intensity and the proportions of these developments and processes were different in the Aegean, Vardar and Pirin parts of Macedonia.⁴³

After the Treaty of Bucharest, the Greek state, from being an almost ethnically homogenous state, became a multinational state. Most of the population that lived in the Aegean part of Macedonia after the Balkan Wars was with non-Greek origin. According to the languages spoken at home i.e. within the family 370,371 or 35.20% Macedonians, 274,052 or 25.05% Turks, 236,755 or 22.50% Greeks, 68,206 or 6.49% Jews, 44,414 or 4.22% Vlachs, etc. lived in that part of Macedonia. Meaning out of the total of 1,052,227 inhabitants, 77.50% were non-Greek and only 236,755 or 22.50% were Greeks according to their origin and mother tongue.⁴⁴

However, by laying in the foundations of its statehood the principle “where we are, there is no place for anyone else”, immediately after 1913 the Greek state started implementing the policy of creating one nation, one language state. For that reason after the Treaty of Bucharest, Greece started to implement the policy of expelling the Macedonian population and colonising the non-Slavic population in order to change the traditional Macedonian ethnic-historical appearance of the Aegean part of Macedonia.⁴⁵

After the Balkan Wars the Greek state, regardless of the fact that it took the biggest part of the Macedonian territory, was not satisfied because of the division of the Thrace region with Bulgaria and the fact that Northern Epirus, with dominant Greek population, became part of independent Albania.

⁴² On this see: КИСЕЛИНОВСКИ, 2000: 29.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ КЪНЧОВ, 1900: 289.

⁴⁵ КИСЕЛИНОВСКИ, 2000: 30.

Consequently, one unavoidably concludes that the Balkan Wars were a matrix for national frustrations among the Balkan nations who participated in them. This painful experience of the Balkan nations showed that nobody was satisfied with the state borders won in the wars; especially since that reality was rather far from the imagined state borders that were based on the "historic rights" concept. Namely, every Balkan nation linked its national dream with the Middle Ages, when their states reached the maximum size. Equally unrealistic was the concept of those who referred to the "ethnic principle". Specifically, in the ethnically mixed Balkan space, especially in a situation when all the nations were not established in a definite way, it was impossible to draw a line that would have satisfied all and which later on would not have caused dissatisfaction and irredentism.

Hence, every war in the Balkans leads towards a new war and every division towards a new division. It is a case of a completely logical and only possible consequence in the attempt to create clean ethnic states in an ethnically mixed area. Hence, as long as this logic is applied and the state programme follows it (as today in Serbia the issue of the separation of Republika Srpska from Bosnia and the attempt to divide Kosovo are still current issues), the breaking up of the space will continue, and instead of countries becoming bigger following the state dream, they will become smaller and smaller.

During the Balkan Wars, massive crimes were committed against the civilian population. Namely, for the first time in history these wars were also covered by the media. Journalists joined the troops and reported about the situation on the fronts. Reports of massive crimes against the civilian population soon spread around the world. As a reaction to that information, the Carnegie Foundation sent a special Commission on the Balkans to investigate the crimes and wrote more than a hundred pages long report on that. Thus, the Carnegie Commission established that 80% of the Muslim villages were burned down by the Balkan armies. Not even the Christian population in Ottoman Macedonia was spared from those methods. There were cases when the armies would go into the villages, separate the men from the women and children and finally kill only one of the two groups or both. Usually this was done by the joint troops of the allied Balkan states. One should especially point out the case in Strumica, where a Serbian Major together with three Bulgarian officers went from house to house with a witness that confirmed "the guilt" of the future victims. And according to the

Carnegie Commission Report, it is believed that in this way between 3 and 4 thousand people in the Strumica region were killed.⁴⁶

The initial goal of the Balkan wars was to expand the borders of the national states to the disadvantage of the Ottoman Empire and, together with the old state, the Muslim population in the Balkans to leave. This empiric, as a matter of fact was part of the previous military experiences of the Balkan countries. Namely, after the Great Eastern Crisis when Serbia had experienced a huge territorial expansion southward, about 70,000 Muslims, most of them Albanians, left those territories.⁴⁷ The majority of the Albanians populated the Kosovo territory where they took revenge against the local Serbs for their exile from the territories that were given to Serbia. In 1913 when Kosovo was annexed to the Serbian state, this backlashed. The German Historian Holm Sundhaussen wrote that the vicious circle of mutual prosecution started marking the Serbian-Albanian relations in the next century.⁴⁸ After the Balkan Wars Serbia became a multi-ethnic state and it increased its territory for about 81%, receiving about 1.3-1.4 million new inhabitants. Kosovo had approximately 600,000 and Macedonia about 800,000 inhabitants. In both cases, the Serbs were a minority. Almost three fourths of the population in Kosovo spoke Albanian.⁴⁹ After the military conflicts, it is believed that 20,000 Albanians lost their lives, and about 60,000 Muslims fled.⁵⁰ The relations between the Serbian and the Albanian population were permanently damaged, and the trust was never restored. Because of that, the historical memory was an important factor in the clashes in Kosovo in the course of the 1990s.

The national anxiety from the Balkan Wars today burdens the Greek-Macedonian relations. The problem with the Greek refusal to recognise the name of the Macedonian state actually originates from the Treaty of Bucharest. Through its state institutions, the Greek state managed to create an almost ethnically homogenous state. Actually, the problem with the recognition of the Macedonian minority in the Republic of Greece has been latently present in disputing the name of the Republic of Macedonia by the Greek

⁴⁶ *Извештај на Карнегиевата балканска комисија*, 2000: 106.

⁴⁷ ЗВИДХАУСЕН, 2009: 156.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*: 155.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*: 236.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*: 238.

state. This problem in fact is of essential importance for the solution of the problem between the two states.⁵¹ Furthermore, the Turkish-Greek relations remain problematic, especially because of the Cyprus issue. Additionally, one needs to emphasise the complex Serbian-Albanian relations in the Balkans after the creation of the Kosovar independent state as well as the new relations between Albania, Macedonia, Serbia and Kosovo.

As the historian Maria Todorova states: “practically nobody, however, emphasized the fact that it was not ethnic complexity per se but ethnic complexity in the framework of the idealised nation-state that leads to ethnic homogeneity, inducing ethnic conflicts.”⁵² And really, the issue of the minorities has always been part of the development of the national states, and especially in Southeast Europe. Moreover, it is appropriate to emphasise the fact that the national revolutions in the Balkans represented an expression of the influence of the national movements in Central and Western Europe. Therefore, the model of one nation-one state in the Balkans is reflected under the influence of the Western ideology. Europe has passed to the Balkans the categories that its nations use to define themselves, and also it has given them the ideological weapon – primarily in a form of modern romantic nationalism that has continuously been causing mutual disrespect, suspicions, fears, conflicts and destruction. Consequently, the process of nation building is of later date and is more compressed in the Balkans, ethnic nationalism becomes stronger, and the civil traditions more fragile.

Hence, at the very end, we could underline the following as a conclusion: the only historical perspective for the Balkans in the 21st century in overcoming the historical trauma and prejudices is to develop civil society and economic prosperity as a commonly inter-related region, on all levels of communication.

⁵¹ On this see: *Спорот за името меѓу Грција и Македонија*, (гл. редактори: Светомир Шкарик, Димитар Апасиев, Владимир Патчев), Скопје 2008.

⁵² TODOROVA, 2009: 128.

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