

BOOK REPORT

„FROM MILLET TO NATION, Creating Nations and Nationalisms in the Balkans“ Author: Strashko Stojanovski, University „Goce Delchev“ – Shtip, Faculty of law, Shtip, 2016.

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The creation of modern states was preceded by a long historical path, each state is created within the context of specific elements such as, the geographical region, the rulers that preceded the creation of the modern state, and the method of creation, which can change with the conditions. One specific historical story is the creation of nations in the Balkans, a historically long process for each nation within the region, full of obstacles, conflict of ideologies, religions, identities. Within the borders of the modern state there exists several ethnic groups with, special feelings for the creation of the state and with unique attitudes toward others.

The general author's hypothesis of this research is precisely this process of transformation, which due to the penetration of Western ideas of modernity the character was changed from religious to ethno - linguistic and thus acquires the ability to serve as a basis for the formation of Balkan national identities. More specifically, because all of the Balkan nations that were under the Ottoman Empire, which religion is strictly and only Islam, had different religion but Islam, because of that the religions of the people on the Balkan were the beginnings of the process of creating Balkan national identities.

The first part of the book refers to the concepts of the nation-state and the national ideology and the importance of the sovereignty that nations wish to acquire. The importance of promoting national ideology has a key role in redefining Balkan identities. They develop new standards for defining the difference from the rest as a condition for construction of borders and groups. National project starts from the religious structure in the late Ottoman Empire and conflict models of building national ideology that has its roots in Western Europe as a manufacturer of Balkan national discourse. Nationalism appears first as an expression of resistance to alien (culture, language, religion, etc.). Second euphoria that lasts for some time after the creation of the state but after setting the institutional system the question "who are we, what we did with this?" And third, creating the experience of "we" thereby performing definition of language as a problem in the very definition of the nation. The nation as an individual group is the culmination of a long history of

challenges, sacrifices and penance. Of all the religious cult of the ancestors is legitimate because their ancestors made the "we" what we are now, the heroic past, great men of glory and so on. A collective memory of the national community through harden highlighting of historical moments of suffering and sacrifice in the name of the group. The memory of hard times is used by political parties of national presence.

An especially important element in the formation of nations in the Ottoman Empire as a millet system¹ performance and the functioning of the entire administration in the Empire itself. Millet system was the socio-cultural and municipal utility arm that was originally based on religion, and later of the ethnic group that was later reflected by linguistic differences. These differences allow divisions within each of the two Christian millets². Regarding administration it comes to a mixed political structure based on the unity of the state and society. A relative bureaucratic empire has a distance between the center and periphery, and this independence of the bodies referred autonomy produces original structural organization. But the ideology of Empire is interesting. The relationship between the ruler and his subjects has absolute power from arising elite on the one hand and ordinary people re'aya³ on the other.

The general assumption is achieved in terms of describing the creation of the Balkan states and their identities. The division of "Turks are" or "Christians are" where this determination is used for territorial and not ethnic determination, gradually transformed into another form of determination which represent a change of the structure which evaluates multiple times. Regarding the awakening of national feelings, affected by two factors, the weakening of the Ottoman Empire and direct external factor where western European countries because of their interest, act for national revival in these countries. This was certainly a "tumultuous time" for the empire, because of changes occurring in the Balkans, where all countries are beginning to

¹The Millet system in the Late Ottoman Empire is the main base for formation of the modern identities in the Balkan. The structure of this system includes confessional divisions of the communities (Stojanovski, Abstract).

²According to Luis, mila (milla) which in Turkish is millet (millet) has aramenian roots and its original meaning is "word", and from this, this word means a group of people that are accepting one religious word or book of the revelation (Stojanovski, 2016: 90, 91).

³Reaya: from old Turkish; the non-Muslim subjects of the Ottoman Empire.

develop their propaganda means national awakening. This national awakening is generated through ethnicity, languages, religion, and building of armed resistance. The findings of author for this period were made objectively. The processes of which the author of the book is talking about are investigated from different perspectives and they are based upon more researches that applies to each state investigated by several different countries.

Schools in the empire were of three types: public schools depend on the Ministry of Education, private schools which this two are opened by the Ottoman authorities and millet schools (schools of one nation's language/schools on the language of one particular nation) or communities under the control of religious communities. The creation of a school system deliberately propagated a sense of identity development. Reorganization of millet leads to the emergence of schools under local control, especially in the compact Slavic areas in Bulgaria and Macedonia. This process leads to a halt of hellenization to Christian elements, which in that period is booming. Obtaining the status of a special millet within the Empire is a prerequisite for successful formation of the nation. With legalized culture and language through the concept of nationalism, Slavs could be targeted to be released without fear of condemnation or isolation. It became important for all nations to create their own dictionaries to translate the most important literary works, and produce generations of intellectuals who should create their nations, because education has a crucial impact on the collective and national commitment and an impact of the destruction of traditional religious relations underlying millet, emphasizing the new collective criterium - language.

Late Ottoman society is no longer a monolithic nation-state. It is the basis for the functioning of international relations in such a society. Multiculturalism means freedom to organize, but also in the same time lack of strategy which is one of the reasons why it didn't succeed. Presumption why multiculturalism has failed; not having successfully conductible and affordable ideology that would unite all subjects and at the same time oppose the west produced ideologies. Different ideologies will result in a desire to create one's own statehood but access resources and urges will provoke all of them to go their separate ways.

This results in a desire to create one's own statehood where everybody think about armed struggle and secret organizations are the result of discrimination coming from the Empire that was becoming unbearable. Newly formed Balkan nation-states perform armed coercion in order to change the status and character of the Christian population in parts of the empire in the

Balkans. The practice of doing this leads to the field of Macedonia to crash with one another, armed propaganda of Greece, Bulgaria and Serbia, who along with autonomous trends of the Macedonian revolutionary movement creates a complex picture of confrontation and riots. The inability to maintain the empire is more difficult because of the many people fighting against as a common enemy. Big role in this also has the Young Turk movement whose participants has mostly studied at universities in Western Europe, and the debts of the Empire especially after the Crimean War were increased, the situation significantly worsened and finances were under direct western control.

The part concerning the Macedonian issue has three main elements: the territory of Macedonia, of which country does it belong, and what is the nationality of Macedonian inhabitants?. The geography of Macedonia, is primarily represent by general administrative areas such as Thessaloniki and Bitola and Skopje Vilayet Sanjak of Kosovo Vilayet.

The political meaning of the term Macedonian arising from the activities undertaken by the MPO⁴ which through political mobilization and building loyalty system promotes Macedonian identity. Ethnic importance is perceived as ethno-linguistic affiliation with a particular group with similar cultural characteristics which are based on Slavic origin and largely Orthodox religion. The geographical meaning is seen as an assumption that originated in Bulgaria, and that is represent only by territory and not including any of characteristic of one nation such as language. Historical significance used as an argument of origin population that favors the great Greece idea that speaks of slavophone, bulgarian fonsk population where the language and culture of the population are assumed as historically imposed. The most important objective reasons on which appears, develops and is based on, the struggle for separation to the Macedonian statehood was the territory in its historically natural boundaries, internally linking certain regions, money exchange, communications and crafts and trade.

Education, because of the setup of the Ottoman administrative system, has been associated with the institution of the church. Political conditions rather than religious instincts of the peasant explain his passionate connection to his own church. The Church is essentially a national organization. It reminds people of the glorious past and arouses national feelings.

⁴Macedonian Revolutionary Organization

As the result of all the conditions of that time, Macedonian issue is becoming popular with the activity of secret organizations whose act main goal is to remove the Ottoman authorities. The secret organizations in Macedonia intensify its armed activity as in the same time the Empire is weakening as the result of its war fares on several fields in Europe. Parallel to act with MRO are other organizations like Slavo-Macedonian Scientific Society with its activity and an office in St. Petersburg. The author in the book also talks about Missirkov⁵ and his national separatism. The Missirkov`s national separatism is dating from before the Ilinden Uprising, according to him distinctive Macedonian scars are Macedonian church-school communities, language, folklore, ethnic origin and independent individual political development throughout history. In the period after the Balkan wars Cupovski and Missirkov proposed in relation to Macedonia to form a separate nation. These trends Marinov evaluates as the (self-) identification and national separatism. Macedonian peasants as non-Bulgarians and non-Serbs can ascertain their own particular ethnic group.

⁵Krste Petkov Missirkov was a philologist, slavist, historian and ethnographer. A survey conducted in the Republic of Macedonia found Misirkov to be "the most significant Macedonian of the 20th century". For his efforts to codify a standard Macedonian language, he is often considered "the founder of the modern Macedonian literary language".