

THE BALKANS IN INTERNATIONAL
RELATIONS

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PUBLIC INTERNATIONAL LAW

The Balkans in International Relations

Branimir M. Janković

*Professor of International Law and Diplomacy
University of Belgrade*

Translated from Serbo-Croatian by
Margot and Boško Milosavljević

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Preface

In presenting this book to the public, both scientific and lay, I feel called upon to make a few points concerning the motivations for its writing and the nature of this effort in relation to existing literature on the Balkans. This literature is truly extensive, containing, as it does, not only works of historical synthesis but also a large number of monographs which cover virtually all the events, relationships and problems concerning the Balkans. However the assessments of the Balkans in reference to international politics reveal a certain amount of bias, especially regarding relations between the Great Powers and the Balkan countries. This bias is then bound to be reflected in theoretical views on international relations, their development, tendencies and precepts.

The material used in writing this book was mainly drawn from my lectures to a foreign public, in an endeavour to present a view of the Balkans from the perspective of an indigenous observer, so that this public might re-examine and revise their beliefs and prejudices. The lectures were designed to supply, on the obverse side of the world image of the Balkans, our own perception of this part of the world. At the same time they suggested how these differences could be surmounted with a little good will, which is never dispensable in any scholarly research into international relations.

The principal difficulty encountered in planning this book was the fact that foreign readers' knowledge about the Balkans is uneven. Their preconceived ideas about the matter are also different. Unless they have had an opportunity to familiarise themselves with the literature on the Balkans in international relations, they have more likely than not become acquainted with the subject from newspaper columns. There is, of course, a growing number of those who have been able to gain their knowledge through their own study of the facts concerning the modern-day Balkans and its troubled history.

These difficulties have induced me to abide by the essential characteristics of the introductory lectures on different problems concerning Balkan studies. I have especially endeavoured to observe historical chronology and to draw conclusions from historical considerations. If the reader does come across certain repetitions, which are inevitable in a series of lectures, it is hoped that he or she

will not be too irritated. Historical epochs and problems tend to overlap at major turning-points in history; one epoch may be on the wane, while a new one is ushered in. Changes in epochs bring on changes in international relations, as they retain old and acquire new forms, changing also their substance.

What is no less important is that as epochs change so do ways of thinking, because they derive from the new relationships in a new world. The new knowledge about the paths of historical development help us to acquire a better understanding, not only of the stages left behind us but also of the essential characteristics of historical progress. This knowledge must be historically validated before it can become a common patrimony. There is no better way of counteracting prejudices, from which science is certainly not exempt, especially when confronted with the diverse interests underlying international politics.

Modest in both its volume and scope, this work is not a historiographic reconstruction, although it has a lot to do with history. Nor is it a political analysis, though it deals with politics, too. Nor is it a source of information concerning diplomatic affairs, albeit many diplomatic moves have been taken into account. It summarises the views taken of the Balkans through the theory and reality of international politics, through different historical configurations. It scrutinises the Balkans as an object and subject of international relations in different historical epochs and different constellations. This historical survey is designed to depict not events but those historical developments which throw light on the genesis, evolution and collapse, and subsequent re-emergence and transformation, of new political structures, of new socioeconomic relationships.

A full acquaintance with the sequence of events should make history a treasure-store of theory, one that is capable of comprehending the character of the evolution of international relations and those relations by which they are determined themselves. The contemporary changes in international relations, as seen in a thoroughly altered political world map, reveal how distant and deep lie the roots of the upheavals of which we are witnesses. In their own history, the Balkans likewise underwent many changes and fought for changes which, while often amounting only to a substitution of conquerors, also represented strides toward independence. The conquerors, to be sure, succeeded one another over a long period of time, but eventually they all vanished from the

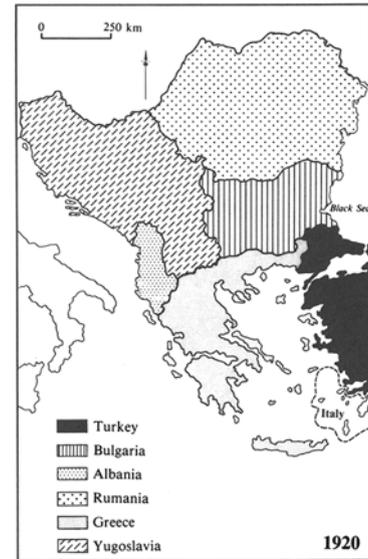
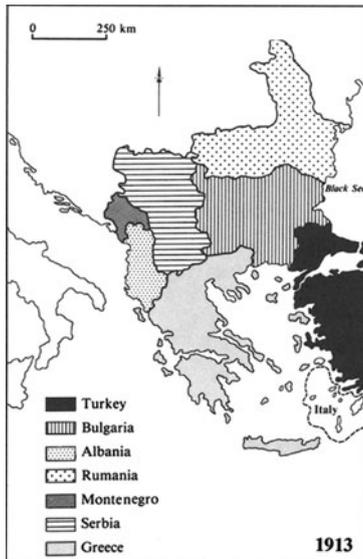
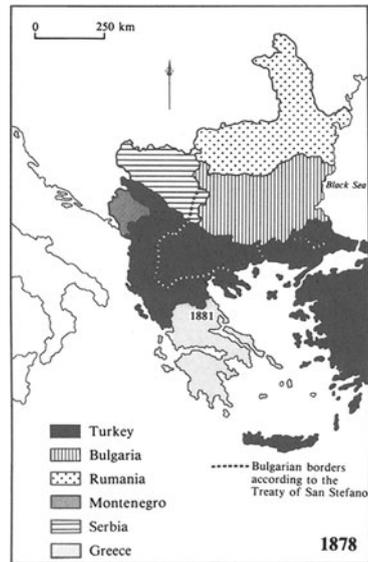
Balkan scene. There remained just the peoples of the Balkans, who thus enriched human history with another certitude – that peoples cannot be annihilated. The yearning for freedom is what gives small nations the strength to stand up to big nations. This fact has been reaffirmed in all continents and has thoroughly changed the character of international relations.

As a researcher into the problems of international relations, I have endeavoured to underscore the dynamic factors in Balkan developments as revealed by my research findings. At the same time, I want to stress how useful this knowledge is for the general study of international politics. It is from this standpoint that I have considered the theories and realities of international relations in the Balkans, in Balkan, European and world contexts. One cannot concentrate only on the conquerors and their handiwork over the past centuries, to the exclusion of the ceaseless struggle by the Balkan nations for their independence and for new mutual relations, within the Balkans as well as between the latter and Europe and the world. A broader approach is needed to the general problems of international politics, for only such a framework can give one an understanding of the events in the Balkans.

The problems involved are certainly not simple, and they could hardly be tackled by assuming what used to be a 'European' stance toward the 'backward' Balkans. Nor indeed was the book's purpose to become involved in all the controversies that are still reverberating inside the Balkans. Its purpose can best be described as an attempt to explain the place of the Balkans in international politics, with a specific accent on the Yugoslav experience. This experience, of course, comprises a considerable portion of the general problem of the Balkans in view of Yugoslavia's complexity and of the historical struggle for the unification and life in common of her equal nations.

BRANIMIR M. JANKOVIĆ

The Balkan Peninsula States from 1856 to 1920



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