

## SHORT BIOGRAPHIES



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# FUTURE OF THE BALKANS IN THE TIME OF INTEGRATION AND GLOBALIZATION – DANGERS AND CHALLENGES OF CONTEMPORARY TIMES

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POLITICAL THOUGHT

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## The context of divisions, East - West

A number of authors have written on the topic of divisions between the East and the West, or respectively, the Orient vs Occident, presenting such divisions as if they are mainly taking place between two systems of values. These divisions are cultural, and even more religious and historical. The most vocal proponent of such divisions is Edward W. Said who says that the Orient is the spirit which has been created by the Occidentalists, and this division is grounded on the way of thinking along ontological and epistemological differences<sup>1</sup>.

Kulenovic, by recalling Preston, suggests that the idea of superiority of the western man has not been born all of a sudden. The idea of superiority and supremacy of the colonial man has its own evolution. In his view, during the early period of trade exchanges between European and other non-European peoples, the Muslims were observed as exotic, but culturally equal. During the renaissance period, as the trade further expanded, the non-Europeans began to stand for innocence, therefore the term the *wild noblemen*. As colonialism was spreading during the nineteenth century, so the perception of them being wild and uncivilized started to equally change<sup>2</sup>.

John M. Hobson, on the other hand, maintains that the divisions between the East and the West gained momentum after the fall of Constantinople to the Ottomans in 1453. To support this claim, he points to the cylindrical map projected by the geographer Gerardus Mercator in 1569 in which there is an obvious unequal representation, given that the southern hemisphere is twice the size of the northern one, while the map shows quite the opposite, two-thirds covering the northern as opposed to the one-third covering the southern hemisphere<sup>3</sup>.

Our interest, however, is not in analyzing the divisions between the East and the West, but rather of scrutinizing the position of the Balkans, which geographically is spreading along these imaginary division lines. To this end, we shall refer to the observations made by Maria Todorova, who presents her views in her book „Imaging the Balkans“.

1 Edward W. Said, "Orientalism", translation into Albanian, "Orientalizmi", (2009), Logos-A, Skopje, page.. 24-25

2 Tarik, Kulenovic,(2012), translation into Albanian, "Islami politik – Konceptet themelore, autorët dhe grupet e një lëvizjeje moderne", Logos A, Skopje page 124, Preston (2002:138).

3 John M. Hobson, "The Eastern Origins of Western Civilization"(2013) Cambridge University Press, translation into Albanian, "Origjinat lindore të qytetërimit Perëndimorë" (2018) Logos -A, Skopje, page. 23.

## Where is the Balkans' place in the division East -West?

By analyzing the specificities of the peoples who abide in these regions, Todorova, in her book, is trying to find a single corner which belongs neither to the East nor to the West, but which rather belongs to both, more or less, a corner that would be much more authentic and unique, and in that perspective, she sees the Balkans as neither a transit zone for civilizations nor a crossroad at which they clash. This book may serve as a good reference for Balkanologists and the „Balkanization<sup>4</sup>“, and not only for that. According to her, the reference to the Balkan Peninsula was first made by Filippo Buonakorsi Kalimako in 1490 who used the term „Balkan,“ in his memoirs of the Pope Innocenti VIII. Namely, he used the name „Balkan,“ in reference to the mountain that was known as “quem incolae Bolchanum vocant” In 1577, the German priest Solomon Shvajger in one book printed in 1608 used the name Balkan referring to the mountain which during antiquity was known as Hemus, although the local population knew it by the name Komonica. In the beginning, the name was used only for the mountain that was spreading from Timok to the Red Sea in a total length of 555 km, while in 1808 August Cojnei assigned this name to designate the entire peninsula. Some other etymologists trace the origin of this word in the Turkish word “mud” by adding the suffix „an,“ in the sense of it implying decreasing<sup>5</sup>.

If reading more carefully Todorova's book one may get the impression that for those dealing with geography, history and philosophy the term Balkan implies various forms and meanings, depending on the external and the internal factors. It is often perceived as the genesis of modern Europe, as the Orient stuck in the Occident, as Europe which has been left behind, and much more often as an ambiguity or anomaly. Throughout different periods of history, its borders have been defined differently, sometimes as geographical borders, whereas at times as cultural and religious ones. Also, the name varies, from Central European to South-Eastern Europe, but most of the time it remains the Balkans.<sup>6</sup>. And perhaps the most important thing to notice is that it has always been perceived as a synonym to “something different from us, the Westerners”.

Predrag Simic, reminds that the name Balkan has been given by the German geographer August Zeune in his attempt to use the awkward expression of that time referring to the „European part of Turkey,“ or „Turkey in Europe,“. Thus, within a great deal of history recorded, from the borders of ancient Rome to the Iron Curtain of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Balkans was the border between empires, religions, civilizations, at which peoples were often clashing by assuming the role of defenders of these borders. The consequences of

4 The term „balkanization,“ traces its origin back to the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when it was adopted in the lexicological terminology, to designate in its most basic sense „Division of one or more areas into smaller political territories, often hostile to each other,“.

5 Maria Todorova, “Imaging the Balkans”, Oxford University Press, përkythyer shqip, “Ballkani imagjinar”,(2013), Tiranë, Botimet IDK, faq. 43-49

6 Ibid, page, 50-62 .

such imperialist wars include, among others, the great migrations of peoples which had led to ethnic redistribution of population, and consequently, redistribution of various religious and cultural traditions, making thus this region appear as a "leopard skin". The various religious and cultural influences have resulted with mixing the Catholic and the Orthodox Christians with Islam devotees. The point made by Simic may be discerned the best when analyzing the data from the table below with regard to the ethnic compositions of the Western Balkan countries. See the Table1.

The main question seeking answer is why the Balkan states have remained heterogeneous by their national compositions, knowing that in the 19<sup>th</sup> and in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century they had been engaged in a permanent conflict, which had subsequently given rise to the term "Balkanization" as a synonym of such divisions and mutual hostilities. A part of the answer was offered by Simic himself, who further added that the fight for independence and national renewal in the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century had thrust the Balkan nations, in the light of their aspirations for national states, into conflict.

Speaking of nations and national states, we need to recall Anthony D. Smit's suggestion that the national identity of peoples during the various periods of history had had own rises and falls, and depending on the historical context, they may be divided into pre-modern „nations<sup>8</sup>„, or respectively primordial ones, such as the Egyptian, the Israeli (Judaism) and the Armenian. The historical „nations„ are the British and the French, which emerged as a consequence of the 100 year war. Nations which are considered modern and which emerge as a result of nationalism are the German and the Italian (1870-1871)<sup>9</sup>. The group of modern nations also includes those which emerged after the World War I as an antipode to communism. To this division we also add the nations which were promoted under the conditions of feudalism and the millet system of the Ottoman Empire, such as the Greek, Serbian, Bulgarian and the Romanian. They are not the result of industrialism or urbanism as was the case with the western part of Europe, which had resulted with the division of labour and the creation of the modern secular man of Gellner<sup>10</sup> as a precondition for replacing the traditional religion with the „new religion"<sup>11</sup>, or respectively the nation. Predrag Simic avers that as a result of the interference by the big powers, they had been prevented to delineate ethnic borders and set up hegemony over some of them in the region. This is the reason why, the author believes, the Balkans

7 Predrag Simic, "Do the Balkans exist?", The southern Balkans: perspectives from the region, Chaillot Paper 46, Paris-April 2001.

8 The term „nations„ is put in inverted commas because they don't belong to the term nation which is in use today.

9 More about categorization, pls see Anthony D. Smith, "The antiquity of Nations", translation in Macedonian, "Origin of nations„ (2016) ARS studio, page. 4-13 and Rizvan Sulejmani, "Shqiptaria Miti&Filozofia"(2020), Interlingua, page.. 123

10 Ernest Gellner (1994), "Conditions of Liberty: Civil society and its rivals", translation in Macedonian (2003), "Услови за слобода: Цивилно општество и неговите противници„, Современa Mislja, Magor, Skopje, page. 45.

11 Rizvan Sulejmani, "Shqiptaria Miti&Filozofia"(2020), Interlingua, page. 123

has acquired the epithet “the powder keg” in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, which even nowadays is still being a source of stereotypes being made in reference to it.

Overview of the national composition of the population in the countries from the region									
National composition of the population in Republic of North Macedonia									
total	Macedonians	Albanians	Turks	Roma	Serbs	Vlachs	Bosniaks	Other	
2 022 547	1 297 981	509 083	77 959	53 879	35 939	9 695	17 018	20 993	
National composition of the population in Republic of Serbia									
Total <sup>12</sup>	Serbs	Albanians	Bosniaks	Montenegrins	Vlachs	Magyars	Macedonians	Croats	Other
7186862	5988150	5809	145278	38527	35330	253899	22755	57900	
National Composition of the Population in the Republic of Montenegro									
Total <sup>13</sup>	Montenegrins	Serbs	Bosniaks	Albanians	Croats	Muslims	Roma	Other	
516590	278865	178110	53605	30439	6021	20537	6251		
National Composition of the Population in the Republic of Bosnia and Hercegovina									
Total <sup>14</sup>	Bosniaks	Croats	Serbs	Undeclared	Other	Unknown			
3531159	1769592	544780	1086733	27055	96539	6460			
National Composition of the Population in the Republic of Albania									
Total <sup>15</sup>	Greeks <sup>16</sup>	Macedonians	Vlachs	Roma	Undeclared	Undetermined	Montenegrins	Other	
2,876,591	24.243	5.512	8.266	8.301	390938	44144	366	3368	
National Composition of the Population in the Republic of Kosovo									
Total <sup>17</sup>	Serbs <sup>18</sup>	Turks	Bosniaks	Roma	Ashkali	Egyptians	Gorani	Other/ Undeclared	
1739825	25532	18738	27533	8824	15436	11524	10265	3264	

**Table 1.** Overview of the national composition of the countries from the region

The fact that during the 19<sup>th</sup> century as many as seven wars were being waged in the Balkans: namely, the First and the Second Balkan War, the World War I, the Turkish - Greek War, the World War II, the Civil War in Greece, and the last one following the disintegration of former Yugoslavia in 1990s, is the main argument supporting the claim that there is a curse looming over the peoples of this part of Europe<sup>19</sup>. Furthermore, it is indisputable that the most common reason behind these wars was the establishment of nation-states, whose borders were supposed to coincide with the ethnic borders of the peoples in these areas.

<sup>12</sup> Census 2011, Source, Burimi: <https://www.stat.gov.rs/sr-Latn/oblasti/popis/popis-2011/popisni-podaci-eksel-tabele>-State Statistical Office.

<sup>13</sup> Census 2011, izvor. <https://www.monstat.org/cg/page.php?id=534&pageid=322>, Statistical Office MONSTAT

<sup>14</sup> REZULTATI POPISA, Popis stanovništva, domaćinstava i stanova u Bosni i Hercegovini 2013, Source, <https://www.popis.gov.ba/popis2013/knjige.php?id=0..>

<sup>15</sup> Census 2011, Source: [www.instat.gov.al/al/census/census-2011/te-dhenat-e-census2011.aspx](http://www.instat.gov.al/al/census/census-2011/te-dhenat-e-census2011.aspx)

<sup>16</sup> A part of the data on the smaller ethnic communities has been taken from the 2014 Ombudsman Report on Minority Rights, which it had taken from INSTAT.

<sup>17</sup> Regjistrimi i Popullsisë, Ekonomive Familjare dhe Banesave në Kosovë, 2011 REZULTATET PËRFUNDIMTARE TË DHËNAT KRYESORE, i realizuar nga Istat, CIRPS- Universiteti i Romës Sapienza, ICON-INSTITUT dhe Rrota Burimi, <https://ask.rks-gov.net/media/2074/te-dhenat-kryesore.pdf>

<sup>18</sup> The data from 2011, including the Census of the Population 2011, are included in the assessment on the northern part of Kosovo.

<sup>19</sup> Predrag Simic, “Do the Balkans exist?”, The southern Balkans: perspectives from the region, Chailot Paper 46, Paris-April 2001.

## Where are the borders of the Balkans today?

According to Predrag Simic, who, by recalling a strategic document entitled „The Balkans and its European Obligations”,<sup>20</sup> suggests that if we get back a bit to the late 1980s and the early 1990s, we should be able to see that the European Community had not been developing any special policy towards the South-Western Europe; whereas, opposed to this, it had been employing policies customized to address, in particular, the Central and the Eastern European countries. In the author’s view, a part of the political elites of Western Europe maintained that the European borders should overlay the „Carolingian Europe”, and this is the reason why the assistance has been mainly directed towards the so called Visegrad states. Consequently, the divergences created between the Central and Eastern Europe on the one, and the South-Eastern Europe on the other hand, had widened up. Thus, South-Eastern Europe has remained marginalized. Europe’s enlargement towards the Eastern countries is leaving the countries from the South-East into a much larger margin which, according to him, has led to „Europe, de facto, dividing the region on its left side, through the promotion of multilateral cooperation, from the region and its respective states at the right side”,<sup>21</sup>.

The arising question is, if this is a tendency of divisions and gradations, or more precisely, if this region still continues to be divided on the basis of the new accession criteria set for those aspiring for European Union membership? The answer to this question may be found in the 2003 Thessaloniki Declaration and its latest addition broadly known as the 2020 EU reinforced membership criteria.

Under the Thessaloniki Declaration produced by the European Commission, the countries which are aspiring for the EU membership and which, in their estimate, stand this aspiration in perspective, are called the Western Balkan countries. The document lists the countries that comprise this group, including Albania, Bosnia and Hercegovina, North Macedonia<sup>22</sup>, Serbia, Montenegro and Croatia<sup>23</sup>. Following Croatia’s full-fledged EU membership (2013), in the latest 2020 document entitled, “Enhancing the accession process – A credible EU perspective for the Western Balkans” the old criteria, with certain adjustments, will continue to apply for Serbia and Montenegro, whereas Albania, Bosnia and Hercegovina and North Macedonia shall be subject to assessment based on the new criteria.

20 Bertelsmann, “The Balkans and New European Responsibilities”, strategy paper presented to the special meeting of The Club of Three and the Balkans, 29-30, June 2000, Brussels.

21 The same document point 17, page 3-4. Quoted by Predrag Simic, “Do the Balkans exist?”, The southern Balkans: perspectives from the region, Chaillot Paper 46, Paris-April 2001., page 29.

22 North Macedonia, in the document it is named Macedonia as at that time the name of the country was still not changed.

23 Kosovo is not in the list as at that time the status of Kosovo was still not being determined as independent Republic of Kosovo.

The official explanation is that the two countries which shall continue under the old criteria have already commenced the negotiations, unlike the remaining ones. Notwithstanding, we can't but notice one characteristic which seems to be a common denominator for the countries that will be assessed by the new rules, and that is these countries either have as a majority, or as a significant part of their population, citizens belonging to Islamic confession. It is none of our intentions to claim that this may have had impact on the above decision, but, it anyhow leaves a bad impression as it is likely to correlate to the fact that the Balkan borders are acquiring a new dimension in which the religious belonging is an element that cannot be disregarded.

Another, even more striking example, is the case with the Republic of North Macedonia which, in addition to the general accession criteria is obtaining new ones imposed by the neighboring countries. Such was the case with the name change, imposed by neighboring Greece, while at the moment we are facing new criteria being imposed by neighboring Bulgaria in relation to the language and history. By silently tolerating such commitments, the European Union is taking the risk of becoming a part of the scenario in which the drawing of the Balkan borders will be guided by the hegemonic tendencies of countries that have such pretensions. It would be even more frightening if such tendencies got legalized, and if, at the end, only Macedonia remained to be the Balkans and a faithful guardian of the term "balkanization". Thus, the once "peace oasis" might be turning into the apple of discord pushing the whole region into destabilization and war. Optimism is the motive driving us ahead to persevere, while pessimism makes us cautious. In our estimate, the given prognostication, in this case, is made from the point of view of a real optimist.

## **The new challenges of the Balkans in the time of integration and globalization**

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Those countries of the region which are not part of the European Union are no longer referred to as by the EU South-Eastern Europe, but have instead acquired a new name, namely the Western Balkans. As of the extent up to which these countries are considered to be „European or non-European,, this is something that is based on their relation and status with the EU and NATO. Today, they are assessed as "more European" or "less European" in relation to their EU and NATO membership. A part of the countries which are presently regarded as belonging to the Western Balkans are NATO members, while in regard to their European integration, they have either started the accession negotiations or are at the stage of preparing for it. There are such states, like Bosnia and Hercegovina and Kosovo, which represent a kind of a soft protectorate, since their protection from external risks is guaranteed by NATO. The most powerful country in the Western Balkans, Serbia, is running the negotiations with the EU, but it has no intention of becoming a NATO member since it considers itself to be neutral, despite of it proceeding with a



permanent armament more than that is the case in the East, in a similar way in which Russia is doing the same in relation to the West.

Such undefined position is keeping them in a latent uncertainty, which by itself implies risk and danger. The greatest risk for these countries is how to sustain their peace, especially in conditions of unequal status which they have in regard to these two organizations, given that the overall concept of the stability of the region was based on „demilitarization„ of the countries through their entry under the security umbrella of NATO and through their economic and social recovery ensured through the EU integration. With Serbia being set aside from this concept, following its refusal to become a NATO member, and with its doors being permanently open towards Russia, notwithstanding that formally it has started the negotiations with the EU, the aforementioned concept of regional security is put at stake. This issue is becoming even more topical when considering the fact that the countries are completely asymmetrical in view of their military and security forces, but also in terms of their economic and human potentials, as may be discerned from the data provided in Table 2.

Asymmetry of the Balkan countries			
Name of the country	Population2017	GDP \$ / 2017	% of GDP allocations for the army /2017
Macedonia	2.078.453	5350.4	1.0%
Albania	2.873.457	4868.1	1.2%
Bosnia and Hercegovina	3.507.017	5561.2	0.9
Bulgaria	7.075.991	8311.9	1.5
Montenegro	622.471	7812.9	1.7
Serbia	7.022.268	5992.2	1.98%
Turkey	8.0745.020	14933.2	2.17
Greece	10.760.421	23027.4	2.5
Kosovo	1.830.700	4068.2	0.78%
Croatia	4.125.700	15219.8	1.44%

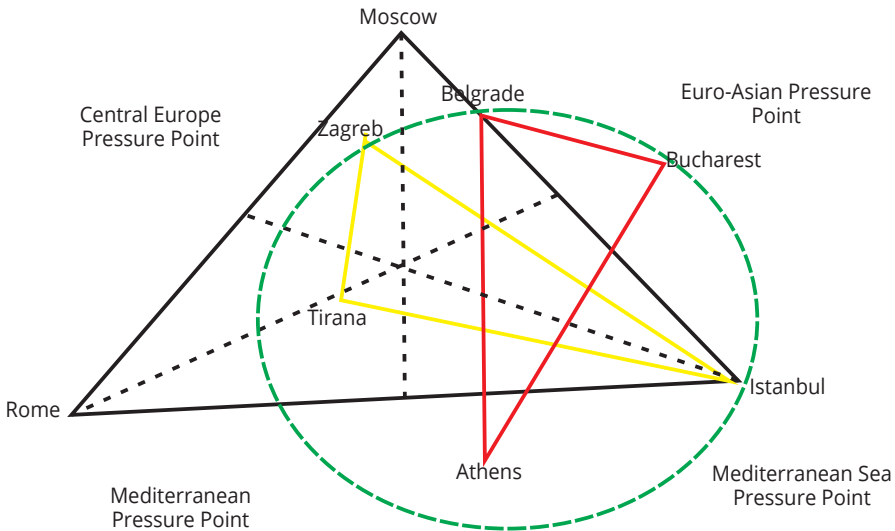
**Table 2.** Asymmetry of the Balkan countries

The second challenge facing these countries is how to be able to handle the external centers of power which have the tendency to fill in the gap created as a result of the different status that the countries are having in relation to these two powerful organizations, EU and NATO respectively, and furthermore, how to handle their small capacity for resolving mutual problems.

The influence from external centers of power may be seen through the sketch drawn up by S.A. Giannakos, in the book “Ethnic Conflict, Religion, Identity and Politics”<sup>24</sup>, who analyzes the reasons behind the conflicts in the Balkan and the term „balkanization,,.

The sketch shows two triangles with pressure points, one that is more stable, Belgrade, Bucharest, Athens, against the second one which is more unstable Zagreb, Tirana, Istanbul. Above this triangle the author has added a new triangle, marking the religious centers which have their own influence in the region, namely Rome, Moscow, Istanbul.

If we analyze the data from the Table 2 and the sketch 1, we may conclude that maintaining the stability in the region within the present circumstances, when we face another enemy never seen before, is adding further complexity to the situation. These days while I’m writing this text, there is a huge battle for influence being waged by these power centers, but also by some countries from the Western Balkans who attempt to take advantage of the common danger posed through the pandemic. The jobs that are life-saving within the current “to be or not to be” circumstances, are used as powerful weapons in a broader context, and especially in this region, with the objective of restoring for the respective countries their lost positions.



**Sketch 1.** Presentation of the points of influence in the Balkan according to S.A. Giannakos<sup>25</sup>

<sup>24</sup> S.A. Giannakos, “Ethnic Conflict, Religion, Identity and Politics”, (2002) Ohio University Press, përkthimi shqip, “Konflikti etnik – Religjioni, Identiteti dhe Politika”.

<sup>25</sup> In the sketch, the author of the text had added to the original sketch the triangle presenting the power of influence from the religious centers.

The assistance provided by the power centers, such as EU, but also Russia, China and Turkey, under the veil of humanism, apart from their good intentions, may be very easily turned into hidden weapon for exerting soft influence. The narrow circle of countries which have the tendency of exerting such influence include Serbia and Albania, which are giving out free jabs, the first one to Macedonia, Bosnia and Montenegro, whereas the second one to Kosovo. It is obvious that the hegemonic ambitions are still being very much alive and kicking. In such circumstances, amidst the present halt in the process of integration, the smaller countries, such as Republic of North Macedonia, Kosovo, Montenegro and Bosnia and Hercegovina, may become an easy prey to these centers. As of whether these countries will remain to play on the „balance of fear“<sup>26</sup> card, as Professor Frckovski was using as a reference to the politics of the Republic of Macedonia prior to 2001, remains to be seen.

In view of the data presented above, but also in view of the historical development of the term Balkans and “balkanization”, we shall try to make the summary of this paper, which may serve the purpose of the paper conclusions.

## Summary

In an attempt to give our conclusive view of the perspective of the Balkans, and the peoples of this region in the time of integration and the challenges of globalization, we will analyze two points of view, one by Ismail Kadare and the other by Maria Todorova.

The first one is by Ismail Kadare, the most renowned Albanian writer, who says:

*“The peoples of the Balkans are standing at the gates of Europe, but still, they cannot hide the impression marks that the Ottoman Empire had imprinted on their body and consciousness. “They feel nostalgia for Europe, but along this feeling there also lie their irritation and anger: irritation for their own mistakes which they are unwilling to admit, and anger because their mother continent has been oblivious to them for so long.”,*

(translation made by the author)

In this author’s opinion, the future of the Balkans depends on two factors: first, on the peoples who live here, and second, on Europe, or more precisely on Atlantic Europe. The author offers further explanation by saying that when considering the destiny for both sides, understanding and misunderstanding become fundamental factors for their developments that is something for which both sides take their own responsibility. It is fashionable to say that the Balkans is not understandable for Europe, something that

<sup>26</sup> Ljubomir Frckovski, “Macedonia and the Region”, The southern Balkans: perspectives from the region, Chaillot Paper 46, Paris-April 2001, page. 38

<sup>27</sup> Ismail Kadare, “The Balkans: truths and untruths”, The southern Balkans: perspectives from the region, Chaillot Paper 46, Paris-April 2001.

even the Balkan peoples are claiming as a fact, the author suggests. He further adds that they make this claim with a certain dose of regret, though behind this special sentiment they still uphold their claim „*We are unpredictable, enigmatic, and no one can even guess what we think,*“, while flirting with capricious pride.<sup>28</sup>

The second, more optimistic view, is the one of Maria Todorova, who suggests:

*“People and gods meet or come across over bridges or crossroads. In the Balkans, they unite in one complex process of contact-conflict, which makes them different from the ideal type of religious doctrines and ideologies. During the development of human civilizations, the Balkans should not be seen as a transit zone, but rather a space where people overcome the contradictions of God and gods. This is the high price of the life paid by many generations, and it requires revision of the basic ideological principles revealed through the metaphorical ethics above the bridge, the crossroads and the strategies heaving in sight „<sup>29</sup>*

Our standpoint is that the words, „... and it requires revision of the basic ideological principles revealed through the metaphorical ethics above the bridge, the crossroads...“, are offering the answer to the question, “which is the main test facing the peoples of the Balkans in time of globalization and new challenges?”.

The nations from this region should try to denounce the burden which they have been unjustly imposed on to carry in the sense of this region being a transit zone or bridge for civilizations, and they should instead take the stance implying “The Balkan is the center of civilizations, rather than the place in which they intersect and clash. Here they merge, they communicate with each other and they find solutions. Even less should they feel remorse for belonging to a certain zone of Europe which, during a certain period of its history, had been a part of an Empire where modernization had arrived late, as Kadare suggests.

They are capable of overcoming the differences between the „little gods,“ who promote partial ethics and ideologies, because they believe in a single God or Allah, and anything else but this truth, which is related to certain historical contexts when the single truth was revealed through actors which history had brought up to the surface, is lateral and meaningless.

Peoples and nations develop within a certain historical context which determines the way in which they aspire to rise. The respective circumstances depend as much on their decisions as they are a product of the cosmological forces in which they do not partake. This process in the Balkans had had its own course, in which both the dark and the bright

<sup>28</sup> Ismaj Kadare, “The Balkans: truths and untruths”, The southern Balkans: perspectives from the region, Chaillot Paper 46, Paris-April 2001, page.5.

<sup>29</sup> Georgieva, “Kohra i bogove”, 41, quoted by Maria Todorova, “Imaging the Balkans”, Oxford University Press, translation in Albanian, “Ballkanin imagjinar”,(2013), Tiranë, Botimet IDK, faq. 94.

side were noticeable. It is the task of this generation to now unveil the bright side of history when the peoples from these areas lived in the past in full peace and harmony, with no mentors and tutors.

Presently, the Balkans should avoid by all means and purposes to serve as a line, a line of divisions between civilizations, religions and cultures, and should instead be guided by the merit it has been endowed with through its geography and history, and that is to be the center of unification.

First it needs to recognize this role, and then it should seek to develop a new strategy, a new philosophy, for the new human of the globalization, the human who would be ready to bring together not only the East and the West, but also the South and the North.

We believe that by taking only such position in the time of integration and globalization, the Balkans will be able not only to overcome more easily the contemporary challenges, but also to open up the way for a brighter future.

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