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Relationship between nationalism and human rights: A Macedonian case study

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The Relationship Between Nationalism and Human Rights: A Macedonian Case Study

Director: Paul G. Lauren

A broad survey of the history of Macedonia, from the era of the Ottoman domination of the region to the more recent history of the modern Republic of Macedonia, demonstrates the tension between the forces of nationalism and the protection of human rights. While nationalism tends to focus on the particular traits that differentiate groups of people, those interested in protecting human rights emphasize the universal nature of those rights. At the same time and particularly in the Balkans, determining one’s national identity involves an element of subjectivity. Those who promote human rights, however, focus on the objective definition of those rights. Although the concepts of human rights and nationalism have evolved considerably throughout the long time span of Macedonian history, the forces of particular nationalism have consistently served as a major obstacle to the promotion of universal human rights.
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Introduction

Human Rights, Nationalism, and Alexander the Great

In 1910 a girl named Agnes Gonxha Bojaxhiu was born to Catholic parents living in the town of Skopje on the Balkan Peninsula. In the course of her life Agnes became a nun, adopted the name Teresa and eventually moved to Calcutta, India where she worked to promote the human rights of the poorest of the poor. The world mourned the death of Mother Teresa in 1997, and currently the Catholic Church is moving towards declaring her a saint. In discussions about her remarkable life, however, sources as diverse as parish priests, English language textbooks, and *Time* almanacs cannot seem to agree on the place of her birth. While all agree that she was born in Skopje, some say her birth occurred in Albania, some Serbia, others Yugoslavia, and still others Macedonia. The ethnic and national contours of the Balkans have created such an enormous amount of confusion that scholars living in the modern era of nation-states still labor to reconstruct the early twentieth century history of Skopje, currently the capital of the modern state of Macedonia.

Given these confusions, where then should a history of modern Macedonia and the relationship between the forces of ethnic nationalism and the protection of human rights begin? Many people immediately associate the beginning of Macedonian history with the accessible, familiar, and very human figure of Alexander the Great. Hearing his name conjures up images of the wars and conquests of a long-ago era. But it does more than that, for his own life and legend serve as a vehicle to begin the exploration of the on-
going tension between the struggle to promote human rights and the strength of ethnic nationalism.

Alexander the Great was born in 356 B.C. in a geographical area loosely known as Macedon. Significantly, for a later discussion of Macedonian nationalism, his birthplace, the city of Pella, is currently located in the modern state of Greece. In 337 B.C., in the name of all the Greeks of the peninsula, Alexander’s father, Philip of Macedon, declared war on the Persians who had ruled over the Greek city-states in Asia Minor for some time. One year later, however, Philip was assassinated, which meant that his twenty-year-old son Alexander suddenly assumed power and attempted to fulfill the mission his father had begun. In the fourteen short years of his reign Alexander would march his armies across the world in an unbroken string of victories. By the time of his death his empire stretched from the Greek peninsula, across Asia, and all the way to the Indus River. Records of Alexander’s travels and battles prove him an undisputed military genius who never suffered a defeat. Although strongly committed to his own people, he is also seen as at least a fair and just king who fought in part to destroy the tyranny of Persian rule over the Greeks and subsequently spread the ideas of Greek civilization, including those of human rights, to the world.

**Alexander the Great and Human Rights**

In the spring of 334 B.C., after consolidating his power on the Greek Peninsula, Alexander crossed over into Asia for the first time. He proclaimed the ostensibly noble goal of liberating the Greek cities and restoring to them the freedoms they had enjoyed through democratic governments before their conquest by the Persians. Out of stories
such as this a legend has developed that Alexander acted as a beneficent ruler who brought the advanced ideas of Greek culture and government to Asia. Regarding the nature of human rights, the legend at least suggests an important element of the struggle to promote those human rights. People everywhere, whether they live in Greece or Asia or anywhere else, deserve the right to self-government and freedom from despotic rule by a foreign empire.

In *The Evolution of International Human Rights*, historian Paul Lauren explores more concrete evidence regarding the ancient Greeks’ understanding of the universal nature of human rights. Living on the peninsula some years before Alexander, the Greek philosophers Plato and Aristotle recognized a universal law of God or nature. Lauren explains:

This law, they claimed, governed every element in the universe and provided the basis for an egalitarian framework of rights....It was eternal and universal, and thus placed well above the narrow and self-serving dictates of a particular state, the rules of a specific society, or the will of a single lawmaker....In his *Republic* for example, Plato argued that a universal justice exists that transcends immediate circumstance and allows people in different political systems to recognize that some actions are clearly just and others unjust.²

According to Plato and Aristotle, then, regardless of the particular ruler of a people, those people deserved the same basic freedoms and rights as any other. Similarly, the ruler does not make absolute laws, but some truths about the nature of justice exist above and independent of the ruler. The legends that have grown up regarding Alexander’s actions in Asia reflect this universal understanding of human rights.

Nevertheless, it would be a mistake to see in Alexander the embodiment of the ideals of Plato and Alexander. Although the philosopher Aristotle had lived at the Macedonian court for a time and had served as Alexander’s tutor, from the sources it
appears in fact that Alexander did not often act out of respect for ideas about the
universal nature of rights and justice. For example, in the process of chasing the Persians
across Asia, Alexander reached the Greek city of Aspendus. Aspendian negotiators went
out to meet Alexander and attempted to reach a mutual understanding. Upon the
negotiators’ return to the city, the citizens disliked the proposed agreement so much that
they reneged on the entire agreement. With complete disregard for the principles of
freedom and independence, in anger Alexander imposed extremely harsh terms on the
city. Specifically he placed the city under direct satrapal control, instead of allowing
them a democracy, and probably imposed a Macedonian garrison to ensure their
continued loyalty. We see in Alexander, then, a leader who talked about freedom but
acted out of concern only for his own power and ambition. It seems that rather than
acting to provide freedom for Greeks living under Persian tyranny, Alexander used their
position as an excuse to further his own power in Asia. We will return to the idea of
using human rights violations as a smokescreen for naked military or political ambition
later in the history of modern Macedonia.

Other evidence from Alexander’s many military campaigns also undermines the
legend of the justice of his reign. After Alexander had defeated the Persians in a battle at
the river Granicus, the Greek mercenaries who had been fighting for the Persians offered
to surrender. Alexander refused the offer, slaughtered most of the men and sent the rest
back to Macedonia to serve as slaves in the mines. In his attack on the Persian-controlled
Greek city of Miletus, however, Alexander followed a different path than he had at
Granicus. After he had defeated the city and it had surrendered, he treated all the
Milesian citizens respectfully, and also spared the Greek mercenaries on the condition
that they entered his service. Historian Peter Green explains Alexander’s actions by writing that he was “moved to pity by their courage and loyalty.”\(^4\) According to Green, then, the actions of the Greek mercenaries allowed Alexander to look past their particular task as serving in the forces of his enemy and view them as part of universal humanity capable of courage and loyalty just like his own soldiers. Rather than detracting from the legend, this story of his behavior at Miletus has contributed to the image of Alexander as a just and fair leader.

Some historians, however, discount the legend and attribute different motives to Alexander’s change in policy. R. D. Milns feels that Alexander had learned an important lesson from his harsh treatment of the Greek mercenaries on the Granicus. Although Alexander had hoped his actions would deter other Greeks from serving as mercenaries to the Persians, Milns explains that his actions had the opposite effect and “the mercenaries realized that here was an opponent from whom they could expect no mercy and with whom it must be a fight to the bitter end.”\(^5\) As a result Alexander had learned that “it was a big mistake to leave these tough and skilful fighters with only the expectation of slavery if they surrendered. Hence he offered them a pardon if they would join up with his forces; and all took the opportunity.”\(^6\) Milns suggests that rather than a concern for the universal nature of human rights, strategic and tactical considerations prompted Alexander to show clemency.

Milns’ explanation for Alexander’s motivation thus suggests a connection between the protection of universal human rights and practical benefits. The Executive Director of Amnesty International USA, William F. Schulz, echoes Milns’ conclusions. In his book, *In Our Own Best Interest: How Defending Human Rights Benefits Us All*, he
argues that fighting against human rights abuses in different ways will directly benefit the United States. Schulz thus makes the argument for our modern world that Alexander discovered in the course of ancient war: protecting human rights often has practical benefits. Later chapters that deal with the protection of human rights in modern Macedonia will return to this issue of the connection between human rights and expediency.

The story of Alexander’s first encounter with the Persian Great King Darius likewise has contributed to Alexander’s legend. After defeating numerous Persian forces throughout the Greek city-states of Asia Minor, he finally caught up with King Darius. They fought a major battle at Issus in 333 B.C. during which Darius’ army was defeated and the Great King fled with the bulk of the remaining forces, leaving his shield, armor, chariot, and even his family behind. While captives in Alexander’s camp, the Persian royal family heard about the Macedonians’ acquisition of Darius’ accouterments and assumed that the Great King had died in battle. Alexander learned of their mourning and, according to many of the earliest historical sources, immediately sent an envoy to reassure the family. The envoy “gave the message about Darius, and added that Alexander wished them to retain all the marks, ceremonies, and titles of royalty, as he had not fought Darius with any personal bitterness, but had made legitimate war for the sovereignty of Asia.”

On the one hand, Alexander’s actions suggest a universal understanding of human rights. In his treatment of Darius’ royal family he demonstrated his respect for the rights of people who not only belonged to the Persian Empire, but also belonged to the family of the very man he was fighting. In other words, he respected their right to life and
liberty regardless of their ethnicity or political affiliation. On the other hand, the message he sent reflects Alexander’s real aims in Asia. He fought his wars not for freedom or democracy for the Greeks but for the “sovereignty of Asia.” Furthermore, Alexander certainly did not exhibit such tolerance and respect in all, or even most, of his actions, and not until many years had passed would a universal understanding of human rights find a global voice, a topic that we will return to in Chapter 2.

In general, then, Alexander’s recorded deeds at least point, in some degree, to the universal nature of human rights. Independent of his actions, however, philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle would continue to articulate a vision of the universality of human rights, a vision that Mother Teresa would share many centuries later. In addition, and of great importance for the study of the modern state of Macedonia, a legend of Alexander as a fair and just ruler who spread the fruits of Greek civilization to the four corners of the known world has developed out of the now murky facts of Alexander’s life.

**Alexander the Great and Nationalism**

Several stories from Alexander’s governance of Asia, which read like legends but appear to have some basis in historical fact, reveal important aspects of the force of nationalism and its inherent conflict with a universal understanding of human rights. With Alexander’s eventual defeat of Darius, he assumed the mantle of the Great King and found himself with a whole new host of problems to confront. Previously, he had defeated and become the ruler over Greek-city states located on the Asian continent. As he continued to move inland he found himself with a growing number of “foreign” peoples, particularly Persians, under his command. The various groups of people in the
growing empire, including the Macedonians and Persians, each hoped to maintain their established traditions of culture, governance, and daily life, as well as their group’s position of primacy within Alexander’s realm.

To combat friction between the different groups, Alexander decided on a policy of mass marriages between Persian ladies and high-ranking Macedonian soldiers. In 324 B.C. after Alexander had returned from his eastward march to the Indus, at the city of Susa he organized the marriages of approximately one hundred interracial couples while he himself married two Persian ladies including the daughter of Darius. In similar fashion, Alexander also adopted the Persian style of dress and began to include some Persian troops among his own Macedonian regiments. These stories suggest how hard and creatively Alexander worked to ameliorate the problems of cultural rivalry that existed within the borders of his realm. In spite of his intentions, his governing decisions reflected the very real differences that existed between the groups. The tension between the different segments of the population suggests a mentality that emphasized loyalty to one particular group of people in opposition to all others. This process of finding identity within a certain cultural group necessarily embraces the particular, in sharp contrast to the universal understanding of human rights reflected in the legend of Alexander. In addition, as Alexander increasingly adopted many aspects of the Persian culture, he alone decided to redefine his identity, thus suggesting that a subjective decision-making process plays a role in the determination of an ethnic identity.

In general, the process of determining individual identity necessitates an exploration of one of the fundamental questions of human existence. Every person is some how different from the rest of humanity and particularly unique. At the same time,
simply by virtue of being human, all people are in some ways the same and share fundamental commonalities with one another. This philosophical tension between differences and similarities, which underlies the process of forming one's identity, will serve as the backdrop for an examination of the relationship between an ethnic or national identity, which emphasizes the particular and the unique, and the pursuit of universal, international human rights, which emphasizes the sameness of all humanity.

Currently, particularly in the modern states of Macedonia and Greece, the topics of nationality and Alexander the Great continue to serve as the focus for heated debates. Both sides try to claim the legacy of Alexander as uniquely and exclusively belonging to their group in an effort to provide legitimacy for their modern state. Some modern Greeks, therefore, claim that Alexander and all other Macedonians were actually Greek. According to these Greek nationalists, the Slavs on the Balkan Peninsula living within the modern state of Macedonia have no right to either the name or the legend of Alexander. Nationalist Macedonians respond in similar vein, arguing that Alexander was actually Slavic so the modern Greeks have no inherent connection with the man and instead only the Slavs can claim his legacy.  

Although modern nationalism differs considerably from the cultural identity of the time of Alexander the Great, the tension between the particular and the universal remains the same. The feud between the modern Greeks and Macedonians demonstrates each side’s loyalty to the particular aspects of their group, as opposed to a universal loyalty to all of humanity that might allow a more nuanced and complex view of Alexander’s history. The debate between the two groups also reveals that the actual facts of the history of Alexander the Great have less to do with the development of modern
Macedonian history than people’s perception and interpretation of the events of Alexander’s reign. We will address more fully the friction between modern Greeks and modern Macedonians in Chapter 3.

In general, then, as in the specific case of Macedonia, the oppositional, particular, and subjective nature of nationalism directly contradicts a universal understanding of human rights. Although the concepts of nationalism and ethnic or cultural identity, as well as people’s understanding of human rights, would evolve considerably over the many centuries of Macedonian history, the tension between the two has remained constant. Overcoming nationalism thus provides one of the most significant challenges to those who seek to promote the protection of universal international human rights. An exploration of modern Macedonian history will, in addition to answering the question of the birthplace of Mother Teresa, further clarify the nature of the relationship between the struggle for human rights and the forces of nationalism, as well as highlight the importance of the relationship between the two for our modern world.
NOTES


4. Ibid., 104.


6. Ibid.


Chapter I

Historical Background and “Ancient Ethnic Hatreds,” 14th to 19th Centuries

It is, or was, a gay peninsula filled with sprightly people who ate peppered foods, drank strong liquors, wore flamboyant clothes, loved and murdered easily and had a splendid talent for starting wars. Less imaginative westerners looked down on them with secret envy, sniffing at their royalty, scoffing at their pretensions, and fearing their savage terrorists. Karl Marx called them “ethnic trash.” I, as a footloose youngster in my twenties, adored them.

-C. L. Sulzberger, A Long Row of Candles

Many centuries separate the Balkans inhabited by Alexander the Great and the Balkans that witnessed the birth of Mother Teresa. Before turning to the events of the twentieth century, a brief exploration of the historical background of the region is essential for an understanding of modern Macedonia. In particular, in order to explain the violence and human rights abuses of the late twentieth century Balkans, many modern politicians have pointed to the existence of “ancient ethnic hatreds” between the various groups on the peninsula. Although we will return to the nature of those modern arguments regarding ancient hatreds in Chapters 2 and 3, an overview of the history of the centuries that preceded the twentieth demonstrates that economic and religious factors played a far greater role in defining the identities of the Balkan peoples than any concept of ethnicity or nationality.

Many historians and scholars have struggled to formulate an exact definition of either an ethnic or a national identity. In general, an ethnic identity involves defining one’s identity in terms of one’s ethnic group, while a national identity involves connecting individual identity with that of the nation. Over many centuries of history,
however, the meanings of the words ethnic group and nation have changed significantly. In particular, before the nineteenth century, little differentiated an ethnic from a national identity, as the existence of the Ottoman Empire inhibited the formation of modern nations and nation-states. During the era when national identity meant little in the Balkans, the same Balkan peoples also enjoyed fairly significant protection of their human rights. Consequently, when those peoples began to experience the first stirrings of national consciousness during the nineteenth century, the newly developing mentality corresponded with important changes regarding the protection of their human rights.

In the centuries that followed the collapse of Alexander’s Empire upon his death in 323 B.C., several other empires enjoyed a time of prominence on the Balkan Peninsula. Both the Roman and the Byzantine empires conquered territory in the region at different times in the course of their long histories. In the seventh century, however, the ethnography of the region changed considerably with the influx of large numbers of Slavic peoples. These various Slavic tribes had established themselves on the peninsula as the Byzantine Empire began its decline. By the fourteenth century, a new group of conquerors, the Turks of Asia Minor, had begun to grow in strength and prepared for their invasion of the region. Importantly, the overview of pre-modern Balkan history that follows does not deal with the state of Macedonia, as no such state existed in actuality or even, in all likelihood, in imagination until the end of the nineteenth century. Instead, the historical background will focus primarily on the region in general, but with particular attention given to the areas and territory that played the greatest role in shaping what would eventually become the modern state of Macedonia.
Ottoman Administration of the Balkans: Fourteenth to Sixteenth Centuries

In the fourteenth century, Turkish armies marched out of Anatolia into the Balkans. At that time, however, the Turks did not refer to the region as “the Balkans” since the word “Balkan” was simply the Turkish word for “wooded mountain.” Historian Maria Todorova explains that over time, the term gradually “stuck as the permanent name for the mountain range that ran through Bulgaria. Later, although contending for primacy alongside such appellations as ‘Turkey in Europe,’ ‘Rumelia,’ ‘Southeastern Europe,’ etc., it came to be applied to the whole peninsula.” While modern-day perceptions of the exact geographical area referred to by the word “Balkans” differ, the legacy of the term itself dates from the Turkish invasions.

In 1389, after a series of battles, in Kosovo Turkish troops soundly defeated the combined Slavic forces of Serbians, Bosnians, and Bulgarians. In 1453 the Ottoman Turks captured Constantinople, by 1463 they had subdued Bosnia, and in relatively short period of time they had managed to exert considerable control over a large amount of Balkan territory. Several factors account for the relative ease of this Ottoman conquest. During the slow disintegration of the Byzantine Empire, the independent kings, despots, and lords of the small Balkan principalities had been fragmented and locked in hostilities against one another. As a result of their own conflicts, they often sought help from the invading Ottoman forces to aid in the settling of their local disputes, thus bringing Ottoman troops into the Balkans. With the gradual consolidation of Ottoman control of the region, many of these local lords lost their autonomy. Although some Balkan leaders may have resented the loss of power, at same time the Ottomans allowed many
members of the local military classes into their service, thus enabling them to retain some degree of their former status.⁵

In general, the Balkan peasants also viewed the Ottoman conquest in a favorable light. One prominent Balkan historian argues, “The Balkan peasants, who constituted the bulk of the people in that area, improved their lot during the initial period of Turkish rule; they were less abused, paid lower feudal taxes, and, as a result of the centralized Ottoman rule, had somewhat greater security.”⁶ According to Ottoman historian Perry Anderson, peasants in the Balkans enjoyed a “social condition that was...in most respects milder and freer than anywhere else in Eastern Europe at the time.”⁷ Following the Ottoman conquest, the Balkan peasants experienced an increased protection of certain human rights, such as the right to enjoy security and the freedom from exploitative taxes. The protection the Ottomans offered the peasants and the higher standard of living they enjoyed after the conquest helps to explain the ease of the Ottoman conquest of the region and the absence of peasant uprisings against their new overlords.

These descriptions of the Ottoman entrance into the Balkans not only explain the rapidity of their advances but also provide a broad idea of the society in which the local people lived. Reactions to the Ottomans varied, but depended primarily on whether one belonged to the class of the elite notables or formed part of the peasant class. Furthermore, although historians discuss the Ottoman conquest of regions such as Bosnia, it is important to qualify those statements to mean the conquest of the territory that today encompasses the modern state of Bosnia. No such state existed at the time of the conquest; instead the Ottomans encountered a region fragmented by the competing claims of small local lords and rulers. Already the information from the Ottoman
conquest disputes the claim that the “ancient hatreds” in the Balkans have existed for centuries. Ethnic hostilities certainly did not affect the ways in which local people in the Balkans reacted to the coming of the Ottomans.

Another factor that plays a part in explaining both the ease of Ottoman conquest and the lack of ethnic hostilities arises from the Ottomans’ view towards religion. The Ottoman Turks, who served as the overlords of the Balkans, identified themselves as Muslims. In other words, “The new state was in the hands of the Muslims and the official language was Turkish....Islam...separated the rulers from the ruled.”8 The “ruled,” then identified themselves, for the most part in the Balkans, as Christians. Far from requiring the conversions of their new subject people, the Ottoman Empire came to view itself as the protector of the Orthodox Church. Furthermore, as long as Christians and Jews swore obedience to their Islamic rulers, the state allowed them to exercise their religion freely and live according to their own religious laws.9 From the outset then, one of the primary divisions within the empire occurred along religious, rather than national or ethnic lines.

The Ottomans then developed an administrative system that organized groups of people into various millets based on their religion, not their ethnicity. In other words, as Balkan historian Wayne Vucinich points out, “there was a Muslim millet, but no Turkish or Arab or Kurdish millet.”10 Furthermore, as leading Balkan historian L. S. Stavrianos explains, the “Ottoman authorities divided their subjects not into Greeks or Bulgarians or Rumanians, but rather into the following millets: Orthodox, Gregorian, Armenian, Roman Catholic, Jewish, and Protestant.”11 Organizing people by religion combined groups that spoke different languages and fractured groups that spoke the same language.
speaking people, for example, found themselves divided into three different millets: the Orthodox Christian, the Roman Catholic, and the Muslim. A Catholic family that spoke Albanian, such as the family of Mother Teresa, would belong to the Roman Catholic millet along with all the other Catholics of the vast empire. The very nature of the millet system thus worked against the development of an ethnic or national identity based on a common language or a shared territory.

Under the Ottoman system, the Orthodox Church fulfilled a number of different functions for Orthodox Christians in the Balkans. In the political realm, the Church represented its followers in disputes involving the Ottoman authorities. This particular role of the Church hampered the development of a national consciousness since, in the words of Stavrianos, “the leadership of the Church was unchallenged. National policies and national objectives were virtually nonexistent. The Balkan world during these early years was a non-national Orthodox world, and Balkan politics were conceived of and expressed in non-national Orthodox terms.” The Church similarly exerted influence outside the political arena as it played a vital role in formulating the region’s culture and served as the center of the people’s social life. Stavrianos explains that the Orthodox Church “naturally dominated education, written literature and general intellectual life...In place of several Balkan literatures there existed only one Orthodox ecclesiastical literature.” In every aspect of life, politics, administration, social life, and culture, the Orthodox Church served to unite the disparate members of the faith living in far-flung geographical regions of the empire, thus working against the development of culture or identity based on ethnicity. It is important to note that at this point only one Orthodox Church existed. The different national churches, such as the Greek Orthodox Church or
the Serbian Orthodox Church, did not emerge until much later, and their evolution will be
dealt with shortly.

An examination of the nature of specific religious practices among the peasants of
the Balkans further demonstrates the lack of ancient hostilities among the different
groups. In spite of the official designations for the religious groups, in daily life the
people themselves considerably blurred the differences between their religions. Historian Mark Mazower relates a string of vignettes that illustrate the lack of clear
boundaries between religious practices. For example, Balkan peasants practiced the
custom of obtaining an amulet to ward of evil. As a result, "Priests were kept busy
writing messages on amulets in response to their flock’s demands, and when Christians
found their own amulets did not work, they would go and borrow Muslim ones." He
tells of a similar incident in which peasants living in Macedonia were asked to state their
religion. In response, they "would cross themselves and reply, ‘we are Muslims, but of
the Virgin Mary.’”

Mazower then discusses the way in which religion affected the lives of women.
Christian women could marry Muslim men, and the woman would not even have to
convert, although the children had to be raised as Muslims. Christian women could also
convert to Islam, which offered women a way out of unhappy marriages because, as
Mazower explains, “by converting to Islam they automatically obtained an annulment of
their marriage unless their Christian spouse converted too.” These accounts show a
further problem with the “ancient ethnic hatreds” thesis. Not only did the Balkan peoples
often identify themselves based on religion, rather than ethnicity, but also their blurred
concept of their own religious identities in practical living led much more naturally to religious toleration rather than hatred.

What then were the practical consequences for the Ottoman policy of religious toleration and the lack of ethnic animosity on the human rights of the Balkan inhabitants? Stavrianos explains that even though they considered it, the Ottoman Sultans did not pursue a policy of mass extermination of Christians. The Ottomans did not force the Christians to convert and never persecuted them in the ways that Muslims and Jews experienced in Spain. Furthermore, “in a period when Catholics and Protestants were massacring each other and when Jews were being hounded from one Christian state to another, the subjects of the Sultan were free to worship as they wished with comparatively minor disabilities.”21 At the same time, even though the Balkan Christians did enjoy a considerable degree of religious freedom, this did not necessarily translate into religious equality.22 Not only did Christian peasants have to pay higher taxes than Muslim peasants, but Vucinich also explains that “non-Muslims were never able to mix freely in Muslim society...[Christians] were socially castigated and deprived of rights belonging to the ruling Muslim elite.”23 Even so, these discriminations within the Ottoman system seem a far ways removed from the violent ethnic clashes of the current era. Only in the nineteenth century, after the Ottoman administrative structures had undergone significant changes, would people begin to seriously challenge the institutional inequality in the Ottoman system.

In addition to religion, economic class also played an important role in the lives of the Balkan peoples living under Ottoman rule. Ottoman authorities divided the population into two official groups: the rulers and the ruled. The ruling class comprised
the sultan, the bureaucrats, and the military men. The class of the ruled then encompassed all other groups of people in the empire and was referred to as the *raya*. Notably this distinction does not take into account religious differences. Regarding religion, historian Stanford Shaw states, “The Muslim *rayas* were no closer than the non-Muslim *rayas* to the Ottoman rulers; in language, customs, and mores the upper-class Ottomans were equally far from both and treated them, as a result, with equal scorn.”

In addition, Ottoman society divided the productive classes into three groups: farmers, merchants and craftsmen. According to historian Halil Inalcik, the sultan “ordered the members of each class to wear clothes indicative of their station in life, forbidding craftsmen and shop-keepers to wear the luxurious garments of the upper-classes.” The practice of assigning clothing to different groups in order to differentiate among people based on their livelihood serves as another example of the way in which class played an important role in the social structure of the empire. One’s profession, then, rather than one’s ethnicity or even one’s religion, served as an important factoring in determining particular identities.

In spite of these important distinctions based on economic status, as opposed to religion, the Ottoman cities in general retained a Muslim character. While significant exceptions existed, the urban merchants and craftsmen of the Balkans usually practiced the Muslim faith while the Christian peasants worked on the rural farms. As a result, a Serb, Rumanian, or Bulgarian peasant would feel like a foreigner in the towns of his native land. The discussion of the rural-urban divide presents an opportunity to examine the role that ethnicity did play during the Ottoman rule of the region. Explaining that a Serb, Bulgarian, or Rumanian felt like a foreigner in the cities of the
Balkans, alludes to the existence of the concept of ethnic identities. In fact, several Ottoman scholars agree that “the Balkan peninsula did not change radically in its ethnic composition during the Ottoman period.”

American diplomat Richard Holbrooke supports the suggestion that the Balkan people living under Ottoman occupation did express some concept of ethnic identity. He writes, “The linguistic, racial, and religious diversity of the peoples inhabiting southeastern Europe dates back to the Slav invasions, if not earlier.” Thus from at least the seventh century until the Ottoman conquest, a period of over seven hundred years, people maintained some concept of their ethnic differences. Holbrooke then goes on to explain, “Politically, however, this counted for little.” While some concept of ethnic identity existed, it did not play a very meaningful role in the people’s political, social, or economic lives, and was certainly not associated with the idea of a state based on national or ethnic divisions.

If, in general, the local inhabitants of the Balkan peninsula found their lives governed more by religious and economic aspects of their identity rather than their ethnicity, a question then arises regarding the exact nature of the Balkan people’s relationship to their land. The Ottomans’ organized the day-to-day administration of the lands of their empire in a fairly different fashion than the modern nation-state. In addition to the religious millet system, and the economic divisions between the rulers and the ruled, or the raya, a third system, called the timar-sipahi system, regulated the way in which the Ottomans administered the productive farmlands in the Empire. According to Stavrianos, Ottoman sipahis were “meritorious Moslem” soldiers to whom the Sultan

*Throughout the body of this thesis the modern spelling “Muslim” will be used, except for when it occurs in direct quotations.*
granted the right to collect certain taxes from specified villages.” These villages were grouped together into a *timar*. The Ottoman state then owned the land and fixed an amount for the *sipahis* to collect. The state also determined the portion to be sent back to the capital, and the *sipahi* could keep for himself whatever remained. The collection of taxes thus served as a settled income for the *sipahi*, and the ability of a single *sipahi* to collect taxes from a number of villages limited the extent of the lands encompassed within a *timar*.

In return for this income, the Sultan required the *sipahi* to live on the *timar* and also to be ready to go to war at the Sultan’s command. The *sipahis* were required to provide armed service for as long as they were needed and, during military campaigns, they paid allegiance only to the sultan. To the peasants who lived in the villages of the *timar*, the sultan granted the right to make use of a definite tract of land as hereditary tenants. In return the peasants paid taxes, determined by the state, to the *sipahi*. The *timar-sipahi* system played a crucial role in the structure of the Ottoman Empire in the Balkans, and in fact, Vucinich argues, “it was the keystone of the politico-military and socio-economic structure of the Ottoman empire. To a very large degree, the *timar-sipahi* system governed social relations in the empire.”

Although a discussion of the intricacies of Ottoman administration of the Balkans may seem far removed from the problems of the current era, a crucial factor emerges from an understanding of the *timar-sipahi* system. The Ottomans instituted administrative arrangements that did not involve the division of the Balkans into distinct states, republics, or provinces based on geographical borders or ethnic makeup. The *millet* system served to govern one aspect of the people’s lives, and the people within a
millet found themselves spread out over a large geographical area. Conversely, the
timar-sipahi system dictated important aspects of the socio-economic situation of the
peasants. Although larger administrative divisions did exist, the evidence suggests that
the primary focus of daily life for the peasants revolved around the timar and the millet.
This Ottoman system then translated into a society in which the people enjoyed a fair
amount local political autonomy, and religious minorities enjoyed substantial protection
under the imperial law. The evidence does not support the argument that groups of
people living on the Balkan Peninsula during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries nursed
“ethnic hatreds” for one another, as they did not even define their identities primarily in
terms of ethnicity, and the Ottoman system proved generally tolerant of those differences
that did divide groups of people.

The Ottoman method of administration described thus far generally functioned
best during the time between the conquest of the Balkans and the beginning of the
Ottoman decline in the seventeenth century. Before turning to the factors that led to that
decline, it is necessary to explore one final Ottoman system that profoundly impacted the
governance of the Balkans. In the fourteenth century Ottoman Sultan Murad I devised a
new method, eventually called the Janissary system, to provide administrators and
military leaders for the Empire. Ottoman officials would periodically travel to the
Balkans to extract a levy of the male Christian children. The Ottomans brought these
Christian boys back to the capital where they treated them kindly, gradually introduced
them to Islam, and educated them in a way that would develop both their minds and
bodies for service to the sultan as Janissaries. Those who showed merit could rise to the
highest-ranking positions in the military and imperial administration, while the others
served in lesser positions within the empire. Although considered the sultan’s slaves, according to historian Ferdinand Schevill, in the Ottoman Empire “there was nothing dishonorable about the slave status. Under the sultan, their master, and with his consent, his slaves...ruled the realm and shone in his reflected glory.” Importantly, according to the Koran, no one born a Muslim could become a slave, so the children of the Janissaries could not enter the ranks of the Janissaries.

Needless to say, by today’s standards a child-levy would entail serious human rights violations; at the time the system provided a high degree of order and stability to the Ottoman Empire. The Janissary system served as a meritocracy and protected against corruption, as the slaves owed their loyalty only to the sultan and could not pass on their privileges to the next generation. Similarly, the sipahis answered only to the sultan and also did not serve as hereditary rulers of their timars. As these two systems began to degenerate and increasingly tolerated corruption and abuse, the consequences of the changes within the Ottoman administration would profoundly impact the daily lives and the human rights of the Balkan populations.

Decline of the Ottoman Empire: Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries

Many different and complexly interconnected factors account for the decline of the Ottoman Empire following its zenith of power in the sixteenth century. For the purposes of this study, in the broad survey of Ottoman decline, particular attention will be paid to those factors that most directly impacted the development of new nation-states in the Balkans. The establishment of these new nation-states would have serious repercussions for the basic human rights of people in the Balkans, and particularly the
people in the region of Macedonia. In addition to the decline of the Ottoman Empire, two other interrelated factors account for the vast changes within the Empire: the influence of the Western European powers and the growth of nationalism with the Balkans. Before turning to the second two factors, which developed primarily in the nineteenth century, it is necessary to trace the roots of the Ottoman decline, which began several centuries earlier.

As already noted, the Janissaries comprised a major portion of the administrative and military posts in the Empire. Since those born Muslim could not enter the Janissaries, a paradox evolved in which slaves of Christian origin ruled a huge Muslim empire. Those born Muslim could only hold positions in the legal, religious, and educational institutions of their empire. By the seventeenth century, however, the system began to change. Instead of the sultan assigning posts on the basis of merit, he distributed those positions in return for large bribes. As a result, Muslims could now attain military and administrative positions if they could muster the necessary financial resources. At the same time, the timar system began to break down. The Janissaries began to displace the sipahis and accumulate their properties. In addition, instead of appointing loyal and deserving Muslims to administer the timars, the sultan began to sell the farms to the highest bidder. Whether the new bidders or members of the Janissaries governed the land, under the new system, known as the chiflik system, the administrators exploited the lands and the peasants as their own personal holdings. As a result, the tenants who worked the land retained less of their produce for themselves and began to experience restrictions on their freedom of movement. The corruption of the Ottoman
Empire, then, resulted directly in decreasing protection of the human rights, such as the right to freedom from excessive taxation, of the Balkan peasant populations.

Even during this period of decline, however, it is important to point out that by the beginning of the nineteenth century the majority of the Ottoman subjects in the Balkans did not identify themselves primarily by their association with their ethnic community. Economic distinctions continued to play a major role as both Muslim and Christian peasants suffered exploitation under the new chiflik system. Similarly, the Christians suffered as much from the increasing corruption of their own religious leaders within the Orthodox millet, as from the extortion of the Ottomans. Their dissatisfaction would eventually result in the reform of the millet administration, a subject that will be dealt with shortly. In general, though, at the beginning of the nineteenth century the average Balkan person defined himself by his occupation and any broader feelings of association were directed at the head of the religious organization, rather than towards the sultan.\(^37\) The transition to the new chiflik system, however, helped to set in motion the growth of Balkan nationalism.

The extortion and abuse of the Balkan peasants that arose from the disintegration of law and order led the bolder peasants to leave their farms and flee into the mountains and forests where, as Stavrianos explains,

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\text{they led perilous but free lives of outlaws... They came to be regarded...not as ordinary brigands but rather as the champions of the lowly and the downtrodden...Despite their limitations, these outlaws did create a tradition of resistance that profoundly influenced the popular mind. And they also provided a ready-made fighting force when various factors which they dimly comprehended culminated in the series of national uprisings in the nineteenth century.}^{38}
\]
We will return to the nature of those “various factors” shortly, but for the moment it is important to point out that the exploitation of the peasants, and the resulting violations of some of their basic human rights through the corrupt *chiflik* system, directly created the conditions that allowed for the later development of nationalist uprisings.

In addition to the outlaws and brigands, the peasants themselves also began to revolt against their repressive overlords, and by the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries the revolts had steadily spread across many parts of the peninsula. Significantly, Stavrianos relates that these peasant revolts “provided the mass basis for the nationalist movements and insurrections that developed among all the Balkan peoples during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.”

In contrast with the peace, security, and relative autonomy that the Balkan peoples had enjoyed during the height of Ottoman rule, as the Ottoman Empire began to decline, many of the inhabitants of the Balkan Peninsula suffered from decreasing protection of their human rights. As they began to protest against their exploitation and the corruption of the officials who ruled over them, they provided support for the growing nationalist movements. In some ways, then, nationalism evolved in the Balkans as a vehicle to express dismay at the human rights violations instigated, or at least tolerated, by the Ottoman Empire.

**Ottoman Reform Movement, or The Tanzimat: The Nineteenth Century**

Officials within the Ottoman capital recognized the exploitation and abuse suffered by the peasants, and in the nineteenth century they attempted to address the myriad of problems and corruption within the empire’s administrative system. In the early part of the nineteenth century, Sultan Mahmud II eradicated the Janissary system,
which, since the Janissaries had previously blocked all attempts at reform, paved the way for vast reform efforts within the empire. He also addressed the plight of his specifically Christian subjects and declared that “Turks and rayas be treated alike without distinction.” In this way the Ottoman reform efforts began to acknowledge that the protection of the human rights of the Ottoman subjects necessitated an appreciation that all people within the empire, regardless of religion or status, universally deserved the same treatment. Unfortunately, in spite of the decree emanating from Constantinople and the absence of the Janissaries, the Ottoman officials who continued to govern the Balkan provinces remained, in practice, inefficient and corrupt and the peasants continued to suffer.

Mahmud’s successor, Sultan Abdulmejid, along with his Foreign Minister Reshid, followed the path of reform that Mahmud had begun. The Western European powers also periodically responded to the plight of the sultan’s Christian subjects, who suffered from the corruption of the Empire’s administrative system. Under pressure from the Western powers, in 1839 Abdulmejid issued a decree known as the Hatti-i Sherif of Gulhane. The decree guaranteed definite rights for “all our subjects, of whatever religion or sect they may be; they shall enjoy them without exception.” The Hatti-i Sherif marked the beginning of reform period, known in Turkish as the Tanzimat, which continued with varying degrees of effectiveness until Sultan Abdul Hamid came to power in 1880.

In 1856, following the Crimean War and in part as a result once again of pressure from the West, the sultan issued another decree known as the Islahat Fermani. The decree read, “Every distinction or designation pending to make any class whatever of the
subjects of my empire inferior to another class on account of their religion, language or race shall be forever effaced from administrative protocol." Just as in Murad’s early declaration, both the Hatti-i Sherif and the Islahat Fermani spoke to the universalism inherent in the protection of human rights. In order to guarantee the legal, social and political rights of the sultan’s subjects, it was necessary to recognize that the state must view all subjects, regardless of their “religion, language, or race,” in the same way, regardless of that within their individual identities that served to divide them from one another.

In spite of these reform efforts, for the most part the position of the Christian peasants did not improve, at least in part because their own religious leaders within their millet had also become corrupt and exploited them as well. The sultan recognized that the Christian community’s abuse of the Christian peasants demanded a different kind of restructuring. Alongside the Islahat Fermani, in 1856 the Sultan also published the Hatti – Humayun. The decree reorganized the millet system and provided for the protection of the basic rights of the Balkan Christians. In part, self-interest motivated the reform attempts of the Hatti – Humayun. By the middle of the nineteenth century, the Ottoman Empire was beginning to suffer military defeats with increasing frequency and the Ottoman leaders sought a way to strengthen the vast and heterogeneous empire. They hoped, in the words of Stavrianos, “that these reforms...might lower the barriers separating the groups and encourage them to think of themselves as fellow Ottoman citizens rather than as Jews or Christians of various denominations.” Once again the Ottoman reform efforts attempted to instill a spirit of universality, as opposed to more narrowly defined conceptions of religious identity. Significantly, the Ottomans did not
succeed in creating larger bonds among their subjects because of the divisive nature of emerging nationalist ideologies that served to separate, rather than unify, the peoples of the empire.46

**Influence of the Great Powers**

Whence, then, did this spirit of Balkan nationalism arise? The evidence thus far suggests that from the fourteenth through the eighteenth centuries the Balkan peoples defined their identity through reference to economic and religious factors far more than any concept of ethnicity. Even as the *chiflik* system replaced the *timar* system, at the beginning of the nineteenth century Christian and Muslims alike suffered the exploitation of the Ottoman officials. Similarly the Christian administrative system sanctioned through the *millet* system continued to exploit the Christians of the Balkans. As already noted, the bandits and revolting peasants of the Balkans would eventually voice their complaints against the corruption in the Ottoman system in the language of nationalism. The gradual and complex evolution to that point, however, occurred because of several factors in addition to the decline of the Ottoman Empire. The Western European powers also played a significant role in the development of the new Balkan nation-states and the growth of Balkan nationalism.

As already mentioned, the Ottoman reform efforts occurred in part because of agitation from reformers within the capital but also because of pressure from the powerful nations of Western Europe. Britain, France, and Russia had all objected to the Ottoman policy of discrimination against the religious minorities within the empire and had pressured the sultan to issue the decrees that guaranteed equality to all citizens.47
Undoubtedly, many within the great power nations acted sincerely out of concern for the welfare of the Balkan Christians. At the same time, the actions the Great Powers took often also furthered the national foreign policy goals of the Great Powers themselves. As a result, according to historian and human rights expert Paul Lauren, “it became evident that international intervention in the name of ‘humanity’ might well be genuinely beneficent and justified, but at the same time always carried the dangerous potential of providing a convenient pretext for coercion as a guise for masking more suspicious motives of national self-interest and aggrandizement.” When the Great Powers took actions in the Balkans both to protect human rights and to further their own self-interest, they also incidentally and somewhat ironically helped to establish nationalism in the region.

Before turning more directly to the relationship between the political actions of the Great Powers and the development of Balkan nationalism, it is necessary to briefly paint a picture of the larger context of the great power interactions in general, in order to explain why those states took such a great interest in the events of the Balkan Peninsula. For a variety of reasons, including economic and political factors, Britain was interested in preserving the status quo of the continent. Britain thus tended to formulate pro-Turkish policies, and sought to preserve the integrity of the Ottoman Empire, at the expense of the newly developing Balkan nation-states. The British thus disliked Russian expansion in the Balkans, which often took the form of the establishment of new Balkan states out of territories previously controlled by the Ottoman Empire. France joined Britain in deploring Russian expansion. The Russians, for their part, hoped to increase their influence in the Balkans as the Ottoman Empire declined in power and prestige.
In the nineteenth century, then, the decay of the Ottoman Empire was such that it was widely known as “The Sick Man of Europe,” which turned the Balkans into an arena for Great Power competition.

In addition to Western politics, Western ideas also affected the national development of the Balkans. As the Balkan elites traveled to Western Europe for their education, the ideas of the Enlightenment and those released by the French Revolution profoundly affected their thinking upon their return home. The Christian Orthodox Church had maintained a monopoly over Christian culture and knowledge, but by the eighteenth century it was so integrated into the Ottoman imperial structure that it increasingly suffered from corruption and demoralization, and had ceased to serve as an independent actor dedicated to promoting the rights of the Christian subjects of the sultan. As a result a rift began to develop between the Church and new elements in Balkan society which, armed with the secular learning of the Western European Enlightenment, were challenging the status quo of the Church’s power and authority. The change in mentality would eventually contribute to a new form of organization in the Balkans: instead of the overarching dominance of one Christian Orthodox Church, new nation-states would begin to vie for the loyalty of the populations.

The economy of the Balkans also underwent significant changes. During the height of the timar system, most Christian Slavs lived in the countryside and worked on the land. Of course significant exceptions occurred, but in general the Ottoman cities retained a generally Muslim character. By the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, however, the Christian Slavs started drifting to cities. By the nineteenth century a class of Slavic urban shopkeepers and artisans had developed. The emergence
of a Slavic middle class began to allow the various ethnic groups to begin to form an idea of national cohesion that encompassed both rural and urban areas. Thus, in the nineteenth century the breakdown of the traditional rural-urban distinctions allowed for the development of a more ethnically-oriented conception of identity. The economic changes began to allow for the possibility that people could and would see themselves as part of a larger society, rather than simply as members of their smaller, more localized, urban or rural community.

In addition to economic changes and the ideas of the Enlightenment, the ideology of the French Revolution, and consequently nationalism, spread to the Balkans in a variety of ways. As Balkan merchants traveled abroad to other parts of Europe, they began to encounter the ideology of the French Revolution. The idea thus slowly developed among some segments of Balkan society of reorganizing the society on a national basis. French ideology also spread to the Balkans in other ways as a considerable number of Balkan soldiers served under Napoleon and found themselves affected by his personality and career, as well as the ideology of the revolution. In addition, in the nineteenth century students went abroad for their education and returned home with revolutionary ideas.

Significantly, the French Revolution represented a secular Western movement. Historian Bernard Lewis explains that the movement was not only non-Christian, but even anti-Christian, and its leaders stressed the divorce between the new revolutionary, national ideology and Christianity. Just as the teaching of the Enlightenment created divisions between the educated Balkan elites and the Orthodox Church leaders, the secular nature of the ideology of the French Revolution also helped shift the emphasis
away from the *millet* and religion as a primary means of defining one’s identity, and
towards the concept of the national entity.  

Even as the transmission of ideas resulted from Balkan peoples’ travels,
Europeans also made their way to the region itself. During the Napoleonic years the
French invested in both the cultural and the economic development of the Balkans.
Stavrianos explains that the French “built a network of secondary, commercial, and
agricultural schools. The national language was used in these schools and in the
newspapers that now appeared. The French also subsidized the publication of grammars
and dictionaries and encouraged the organization of a national theater.”

It is important to note that the French did not spread their propaganda to the region out of altruistic
motives. Rather, as Lewis points out, “there was the systematic propaganda directed
from Paris with the aim of undermining Ottoman authority... needless to say, this
propaganda was designed to utilize the local populations as pawns of French
diplomacy.”

Decades before the French would join the British and Russians in pressuring the
sultan for reforms, the French involvement in the Balkans helped to spark the
development of an ethnically-based identity. While superficially these two kinds of
actions do not seem contradictory, a closer evaluation reveals their inherent tension. As
already noted, the reform movements proclaimed the equality of all citizens. Efforts to
encourage the use of a specific local language for use in local schools and newspapers, on
the other hand, emphasized the differences between groups of people. In general, then,
the transmission of the ideologies of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution as
well as the direct actions of the Western Powers themselves, helped to set the stage for
the specific Balkan independence movements that emphasized the particulars and the distinctions among the Balkan peoples based on ethnicity or nationality, as opposed to their universal similarities.

**Serbian, Greek, and Bulgarian Independence**

An overview of the Serbian, Greek, and Bulgarian independence movements clearly demonstrates the relationship between the Great Powers, Ottoman decline, and the growth of Balkan nationalism. At the same time the history of these three states sheds light on the relationship between the nascent forces of nationalism and the protection of human rights. Finally, these three Balkan states would closely affect the development of twentieth-century Macedonian history. The era of Balkan independence movements opened in 1804 as Serbian peasants rebelled against the corruption of Ottoman rule. Ironically, far from calling for Serbia’s independence, they instead sought the return of the sultan’s authority over the corrupt provincial officials. Although initially successful, the Ottomans had defeated the Serbians by 1810 and the national consciousness of the Serbs themselves remained ill defined.

How then did the Serbs manage to win significant concessions from the vast Ottoman Empire? Balkan historian Misha Glenny explains, “To compensate for their political and economic weakness, the Serbian elites sought support for their aspirations from the European powers.” As a result the Serbians appealed to the Austrians and, perhaps more importantly, to the Russians, with whom they shared the Orthodox religion and a similar language. Following Napoleon’s defeat at Waterloo in 1815, the Russians turned their attention towards the problem of the relationship between the Ottoman Turks...
and the Serbs, and specifically the abuses the Christian peasants suffered at the hands of the corrupt Ottoman administrators. At the Vienna Congress in 1815, the Russian tsar declared himself the protector of the Orthodox Christians under Ottoman domination, and shortly thereafter the Russians forced the Turks to make concessions to the Serbs. Similarly, following the Russo-Turkish war of 1828-1829, the Russians insisted that the Turks grant complete internal autonomy to Serbia and formally recognize her monarch as a hereditary ruler. The Russians played such an important role in the development of Serbian independence that one historian writes, “it is doubtful that the Serbs could have won independence from the Ottoman Empire without the full support of one or more major powers.” In contrast to the role that Russia would play in demanding that the sultan recognize the universal rights of all Ottoman subjects, in their behavior towards the Serbs the Russians succeeded in fostering major differences between emerging ethnic groups, particularly the Serbs and Turks, as they argued for the creation of a new Serbian autonomous region. Furthermore, the extent to which the Serbian leaders relied on Russian influence to secure their new state suggests that the forces of Serbian nationalism in and of themselves would not have been strong enough to bring about the changes.

In 1821 the Greeks followed the Serbian example. Two Greek uprisings occurred simultaneously although the Ottomans quickly crushed the first movement that had taken place in the Danubian principalities. Fearing further rebellions, the Ottoman authorities jailed Greek nobles living at the southernmost end of the Balkan Peninsula in a preemptive move designed to forestall revolution. Their plan backfired because, as Mazower explains, “faced with the choice of arrest or rebellion, many Greeks chose the latter and began to attack Muslim settlements.” By violating the right of the Greek
nobles not to suffer arbitrary arrest, the Ottoman authorities prompted a response that would quickly take on national tones. The Ottoman actions against the Greek leaders provide yet another example of human rights violations serving as the catalyst for national agitation.

As the Greeks attacked the Turks in response, they committed numerous human rights violations of their own, killing men, women, and children. The Ottomans responded in kind and Mazower relates that their massacre of Greeks on Chios “shocked the liberal conscience of Europe.”62 The Great Powers responded to the situation by sending a fleet to the region. When the combined British, French, and Russian forces sank the Ottoman navy at the battle of Navarino, their actions effectively assured the establishment of an independent Greek state in 1830. It is doubtful whether the Greeks could have established an independent state on their own since they, like the Serbs before them, had lacked organization and their petty quarrels among themselves kept them from capitalizing on their earlier successes. After the Great Powers had ensured the success of the Greek movement, however, they continued their involvement when, two years later, they decided that the young Prince Otto of Bavaria, a seventeen-year-old Catholic would become the country’s new king.63 Rather than occurring as simply the result of a national or ethnic movement, Great Power politics played an important role in the formation of the Greek state.

Significantly, early on in Greek independence, in 1833 Greek leaders within the Orthodox Church declared their independence from the patriarch of Constantinople, thus establishing a Greek Orthodox Church. The Greeks thus set the precedent for later Balkan states as to the importance of establishing a national Church in the process of
building a nation-state. While the Ottomans engaged in a process of proclaiming the same treatment for all people regardless of religion through their Tanzimat reforms, the establishment of national Churches emphasized the differences between people, even those who shared the same religion.

Unlike the Greeks, the Bulgarians did not wait for political independence to proclaim their religious independence. In 1870 they declared the existence of the Bulgarian Exarchate Church and affirmed its independence from Constantinople. Just as in Greece, however, in Bulgaria human rights abuses ultimately resulted in a war of national liberation. By the late 1870’s the Bulgarians increasingly engaged in struggles against Ottoman misrule, just as the Serbs and Greeks had done several decades earlier, and in 1876 a group of Bulgarian leaders instigated a series of struggles known as the April Uprising. In spite of the leaders’ nationalist feelings, however, according to historian Glenny, “the April Uprising highlighted above all the weakness of Bulgarian nationalism, and the revolutionary leadership’s dire misreading of Bulgarians’ willingness to confront the might of the imperial state.” At this point in Bulgarian history, nationalist ideology remained, for the most part, an elite ideology; lacking broad-based support, local movements alone could not rid the country of Ottoman rule.

The Ottomans perhaps made a fatal miscalculation in their response to the Bulgarian uprising. In 1876 when the sultan’s irregular troops in Bulgaria reacted to the rebellions, reports of killings, rapes, pillaging, the use of torture, and many other atrocities began to appear in the West. In Britain, news of the Bulgarian Horrors, a term coined by William Gladstone, generated outrage and indignation. Reliable reports from foreigners living in the region, such as the American consul-general Eugene
Schuyler, President George Washburn of Robert College, and several American missionaries, agreed on the nature of the violence. These reports confirmed “that well over ten thousand Bulgarians had been massacred and several dozen villages destroyed.”

The public outcry against the Turkish behavior strongly influenced the policy of the Western European governments toward the Ottoman Empire and the situation of the Balkan Christians. For example, during a discussion in the British Parliament regarding the Turkish actions in Bulgaria, Mr. W. E. Forester referred to a letter in The Daily News that “described with much detail the total destruction of many villages and the massacre of their inhabitants, men, women, and children, by Turkish troops.” As newspapers such as The Daily News continued to report on the atrocities, public opinion increasingly demanded action from their governments.

Members of the British government then debated the appropriate response to the humanitarian crisis. One British cabinet member, Lord Salisbury, told British Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli “that concessions would have to be made to public opinion.” He continued:

I should like to submit for your consideration whether the opportunity should not be taken to exact some security for the good government of the Christians generally throughout the Turkish Empire. The Govt. of 1856 was satisfied with promises...we must have something more than promises.

Ultimately Lord Salisbury would travel to Constantinople to negotiate, along with representatives from Russia and the other Great Powers, a political settlement to the violence. Before turning to the discussions at the conference, it is important to note the powerful role that public opinion played in convincing the governments of the Western
European governments to respond to the human rights abuses in the distant land of Bulgaria. The interaction between public outcry against human rights abuses and governmental policy would continue to affect the modern history of the Balkans.

At Constantinople, the Great Powers together worked out a solution that called for further internal reform of the sultan's government, but the Ottoman Turks refused to accept the plan, claiming, in Lauren's words, "that how they treated their own subjects was a matter of exclusive domestic jurisdiction." The Great Powers disagreed with the Ottomans and, in response, the Russians invaded the Balkans and quickly defeated the Ottomans. Had the Ottomans not employed such excessive violence against the Bulgarians' revolt, it seems likely that the public opinion in Western Europe would not have demanded a military response from their governments, and it is possible to imagine a quite different resolution of the original conflict in Bulgaria. In reality, though, grievous human rights abuses played a pivotal role in determining an outcome ultimately unfavorable for the Ottoman Turks.

It is also important to point out that while not denying the existence of massive Turkish atrocities against the Bulgarian Christians, several historians call attention to the human rights abuses suffered by the Muslims in Bulgaria during this time period. Mark Mazower writes, "Tens of thousands of Muslim Tartars and Circassians fled Bulgaria when the Russian army invaded in 1877; others were massacred by Russian troops and Christian peasants." Historian Stanford Shaw even disputes the number of Christian deaths and points to the many Muslims who lost their lives during the conflict. Regarding Shaw's perspective, Misha Glenny explains:

Shaw also highlights the *instrumentalization* of massacres, so that external perceptions of the Balkans became polarized. For the bulk of European
politicians and newspaper readers, there were no Muslim victims during the Bulgarian uprisings...[T]he reporting of the Bulgarian massacres triggered a pattern that persists to this day – little sympathy is expressed for the victims of the conflicts if they belong to a national community which is considered the original aggressor. Glenny’s observations demonstrate one of the dangers that excessive nationalist feelings pose for the protection of human rights. When people, either within the conflict or watching from the outside, become so caught up in the nationalist struggle of one side that they cannot even acknowledge the sufferings of the other side, they have lost the important perspective regarding the universal human rights that both sides in the conflict deserve.† We will return in Chapter 4 to the idea of selective perceptions of victimization, particularly during the 1999 war in Kosovo.

In any event, the defeated Ottomans and the victorious Russians eventually met at San Stefano in 1878 to establish a settlement to conclude the war. The resulting Treaty created an extremely large Bulgarian state that stretched from the Black Sea to the Aegean (see Map 1 on page 42). The city of Skopje, Mother Teresa’s birthplace, changed hands for the first time since the Ottoman conquest in the fourteenth century as San Stefano promised the entire region to the Bulgarians. In addition to a host of other changes in the Balkans, the treaty also recognized a completely independent Serbia. The other Great Powers, however, especially Britain, disliked the way in which San Stefano extended Russia’s power into the Balkans. Britain then sent warships into the Dardanelles to protest the provisions of the Treaty. When war between the two Great Powers began to seem likely, Otto von Bismarck, leader of a newly unified Germany,

† Sissela Bok discusses this idea in some depth in her book, A Strategy for Peace: Human Values and the Threat of War (New York: Pantheon books, 1989). In the opening of the book she discusses the meaning of a “partisan” struggle and the dangers that occur when the partisans become so caught up with their own struggle that they cannot appreciate the legitimate suffering of the victims on the other side.
Map 1

The Treaty of San Stefano, 1878

offered to broker a new settlement. The resulting Congress of Berlin considerably revised the provisions of San Stefano. Although Serbia maintained her independence, the Great Powers whittled away the borders of Bulgaria by returning the territory loosely known as Macedonia to the Ottomans (see Map 2 on page 44). With a stroke of the pen, as they say, the city of Skopje quickly returned to Ottoman control.

The Congress of Berlin affected the development of the Balkans in a number of ways. In addition to the negotiations concerning borders and rulers, the Great Powers also addressed the issue of human rights during their discussions in Berlin. Concerned about the violations of human rights that had occurred based on differences of religion, the Treaty of Berlin also included language stipulating that within the Ottoman Empire “differences in religious creeds and confessions shall not be alleged against any person as a ground for exclusion or incapacity in matters relating to the enjoyment of civil and political rights, admission to public employments, functions and honors, or the exercise of the various professions and industries in any locality whatsoever.” The Great Powers thus inserted into the provisions of the Treaty of Berlin the language of universalism, or the idea that people deserved the right to work, and the right to participate in politics regardless of their religious confession.

The Great Powers’ concern with human rights at the Congress of Berlin also reflected another aspect of universalism. Echoing the ideas that Plato had expounded so long ago, the Great Powers refused to accept the Ottoman argument (the same one that they had sometimes argued for themselves) that the way in which they treated their own subjects should not concern any other outside actor. Instead, the Great Powers affirmed with Plato that some truths about the nature of justice exist above and independent of the
Map 2

The Berlin Treaty, 1878

Glenny, *The Balkans*, xvi.
ruler. With their actions they argued that “certain basic and fundamental...laws of humanity must be applied to behavior in the world, and that there were certain limits to the freedom that states could enjoy under international law when it came to dealing with how they treated their own nationals.” In other words, the Treaty of Berlin proclaimed that the Ottomans did not have the final word regarding the treatment of Bulgarian Christians within their territory. Instead, the Great Powers acted to guarantee the protection of certain fundamental rights for all Balkan peoples, regardless of either their religion or the government that ruled over them.

At the same time, as noted earlier the Great Powers also saw humanitarian intervention as a way of providing a “convenient pretext for coercion as a guise for masking more suspicious motives of national self-interest and aggrandizement,” and the Treaty of Berlin clearly reflected the more self-centered ambitions of the Great Powers. In addition to the language of universal protection of human rights, they also wrote into the Treaty certain clauses “which assured Russian, Austrian, and British control of their zones of influence.” Furthermore, according to historian Mazower, in the years that both preceded and followed the conclusion of hostilities:

The Great Powers were heavily involved in the new states’ internal affairs. They appointed their Kings from the unemployed scions of Europe’s princely houses, and drew up their constitutions and selected teams of military and civilian advisors – from the Bavarians who ran Greece under King Otto in the 1840’s to the Russians who ran Bulgaria, including its army and Ministry of War, in the 1880s. They defined borders and adjusted territories at diplomatic conferences and imposed their wishes on all parties through gunboat diplomacy and economic arm-twisting.

By carving up the territory of the Balkans through the establishment of new borders and new rulers, the Great Powers divided the lands and peoples of the Balkans. In contrast to the language of universalism, other provisions in the treaty established important
divisions between the peoples of the Balkans. Furthermore, following a precedent set by Alexander the Great, throughout the course of Balkan history outside actors would continue to wrestle with the tension between interventions motivated by genuine concern for human rights and human rights rhetoric as a smokescreen to disguise self-centered actions.

In addition, the boundaries the Great Powers finally established for the Balkans created resentment among the new states. As a result, one historian explains, “Balkan politics were driven by the dream of territorial expansion. All states could point to ‘unredeemed’ brethren or historic lands that lay outside the boundaries appointed them by the powers.”84 For example, Bulgarian leaders pointed to the boundaries of San Stefano Bulgaria as the template for the correct territorial dimensions of their state. The Greek and Serbian states, however, also laid claim to the territory of Macedonia based on their determination of the ethnic make-up of the population. The tension surrounding the ownership of the loosely defined territory of Macedonia, still under the control of the Ottoman Empire in the decades following 1878, would eventually lead to several bloody wars in the region, which will be examined in the next chapter. In any event, the drawing of definitive boundaries that separated different groups of peoples created the setting for further tensions and eventually wars between those peoples.

**Balkan Nationalism**

Even in tracing the development of three new nation-states in the Balkans, Serbia, Greece, and Bulgaria, the historical analysis thus far still has not described either the development or the extent of feelings nationalism or national sentiment in the Balkans.
during the nineteenth century. In part, this task proves difficult because of the confusion surrounding the exact meaning of the term nationalism. At the same time, the evidence suggests that these states developed in large part because of Great Power politics and competition, rather than simply as a result of Balkan nationalism. Nevertheless, a discussion of the vast changes that occurred in the administration and governance of the Balkans during the nineteenth century, as compared to previous centuries, helps to shed light on the general nature of the nineteenth century development of nationalism, and its component factors.

In the nineteenth century, the establishment of new national churches, such as the Serbian Orthodox Church in 1830, the Greek Orthodox Church in 1833, and the Bulgarian Exarchate in 1870, first existed along side and eventually replaced the one unified Orthodox Church. The new leaders of these national churches, did not, of course, play the same political role as religious leaders had within the Ottoman Empire, and the political structure of the region changed as well. Instead of the sultan in Constantinople serving as the highest political and military authority, following the independence movements, the Great Powers assisted the new states in establishing monarchies, based on the Western European dynastic model. As noted, both Greece and Serbia acquired monarchs through the intervention of the Great Powers.

The economic system changed dramatically as well. During the height of the Ottoman era the *timar-sipahi* system had governed the lives of the Balkan peasants. Each

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* An overview of the Serbian Orthodox Church proves much more complicated than that of either Bulgaria or Greece. Suffice it to say here that in 1831 the Ottomans recognized the autonomy of the Serbian Church. Several mutually independent units of the Serbian Church then continued to exist. Following the Congress of Berlin the different branches all gained full independence, but they would not unite under the auspices of one unified Serbian Orthodox Church until 1920. See, for example, “History of the Church.” [http://www.serbianorthodoxchurch.net/historyofchurch/book3/](http://www.serbianorthodoxchurch.net/historyofchurch/book3/) accessed on December 11, 2003.
timar comprised a relatively small parcel of land and played an important role in regulating the daily lives of the peasants. The more corrupt and exploitative chiflik system gradually replaced the timar system and, as already mentioned, the abuses the peasants suffered contributed to their rebellions against the Ottomans. The economic organization of the region was already changing with the Slavic migrations to the cities and the development of a middle class, but after the region gained independence from the Ottomans, the system ended all together and the new independent states organized their territory in a different manner. The end of Ottoman administration of the region necessarily brought about new administrative and territorial divisions of the region. Throughout the nineteenth century, then, at the instigation of the Great Powers, the new nation-states established concrete and specifically-drawn boundary lines, and began to create the possibility that a large number of people could begin to define their identities based on their relationship to the state.

In his exploration of the development of modern nation-states, Peter Sahlins has examined the creation of boundary lines in modern France and Spain in *Boundaries: The Making of France and Spain in the Pyrenees*. He traces the countries’ evolution from a concept of jurisdictional sovereignty to an understanding and expression of territorial sovereignty. Jurisdictional sovereignty refers to the ruler’s administration of the people, rather than the territory, of his realm. In the centuries before the nineteenth, the rulers of both France and Spain sought to ensure their jurisdictional sovereignty over their populations. By the middle of the nineteenth century, however, France and Spain had together agreed on the necessity for a concrete boundary line to separate the territory of
the two states. The agreement between them, reached in 1868, drew a definitive boundary line and marked the completion of the evolution to territorial sovereignty.85

Sahlins’ argument contains several aspects of importance for the Balkans, where clearly a similar process occurred. Under Ottoman domination, the religious leaders maintained jurisdictional sovereignty over their subjects through the millet system. While slightly more complex, the timar-sipahi system combined elements of both jurisdictional and territorial sovereignty, as the sultan enjoyed jurisdictional sovereignty over the sipahis, but the sipahis enjoyed some measure of territorial sovereignty over their timars. As already noted, however, the timar comprised a fairly small portion of land. In the nineteenth century then, the Balkan Peninsula witnessed an administrative reorganization that resulted in the creation of new, territorially-based states. These states had fixed and definitive borders, although, in contrast to the situation in France and Spain where those two countries worked out their boundaries, at least in the Pyrenees, without outside intervention, in the nineteenth century the Great Powers actively participated in the drawing of all the boundaries in the Balkans. Finally, although Sahlins points out that his area of study in the Pyrenees served as one of the last places in which France and Spain established territorial boundaries, even these Western European nation-states did not complete their evolution to territorial sovereignty until the nineteenth century.

If we accept then, that modern nationalism implies some sort of loyalty to a territorially-bound state, only in the nineteenth century did the Balkans begin to experience the conditions that would allow for the development of modern nationalism. Modern nationalism also often implies a common, national language. The nineteenth century witnessed the rising importance of a national language, and the establishment of
national churches. In contrast to the universalism of human rights, all of these changes, especially as they were contained within new and concrete borders, emphasized distinctions and differences among the people, and ultimately resulted in the possibility of a national enemy, or "other," against whom the new leaders of the emerging nation-states could rally popular support. An exploration of the growing feelings of national consciousness within Macedonia serves to clarify this process of the development of nationalism.

Before turning to the specific history of Macedonia, however, one further observation about the general nature of nationalism in the Balkans in the nineteenth century is needed. A comparison of the administrative structures of the Balkans under Ottoman rule and the governance of the new nation-states, demonstrates only the existence in the nineteenth century of the conditions necessary for the emergence of modern nationalism. This is not to imply that nationalism as a mass movement gained strength with large numbers of the population. In fact, it seems more likely that even in the nineteenth century, few people other than the emerging elites in the Balkans professed feelings of national consciousness. Instead of unified ethnic and national revolts against the Ottomans, according to Stavrianos, "a series of independent uprisings spread over the whole of the nineteenth century. And in place of common effort there was continued rivalry and occasional open conflict." Furthermore, "the Balkan peoples were divided within themselves as well as among themselves." Undeniably, the Balkans of the nineteenth century began to feel the impact of the forces of nationalism; those forces did not, however, take the shape of clearly defined, uniformly held beliefs among the majority of the people.
Mark Mazower explains that even once the new Balkan states enjoyed liberty from Muslim rule...their triumph did not mean that people in the Balkans immediately started thinking in terms of nation-states. On the contrary, ‘Romania’ and ‘Bulgaria’ were nations that as late as 1830 animated only a handful of individuals and activists, ‘Albania’ and ‘Macedonia’ in all likelihood next to none....[Furthermore, in Bulgaria by 1860] almost every educated person coming from that country called himself Greek as matter of course....[Even after the establishment of the Bulgarian Church in 1870] there were many Bulgarian speaking peasants...who considered themselves Greeks – by which they meant not that they supported the expansionist schemes of the Kingdom of Greece to the south, but that they worshiped in Churches run by the [Greek] patriarchate.

The lack of evidence for strong national mass movements within the nineteenth-century Balkans further calls into question the idea that “ancient ethnic hatreds” have animated the politics of the Balkans for centuries.

To conclude then, the nineteenth century began with revolts brought about by exploitation of both Christian and Muslim peasants that called for the reestablishment of Ottoman control. By the end of the century, a series of struggles and wars resulted in newly independent nation-states. This overview of the necessarily simplified history of emerging Balkan nationalism suggests that the transformation occurred in part as the Balkan elites learned and appropriated the ideology of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution. They then made use of those ideologies as they tried to lead the masses of peasants and other segments of society in organized political struggles against the Ottomans. At the same time, as the Great Powers intervened in the region, in part because of humanitarian concerns, but also as a result of their own selfish, national foreign policy objectives, they seem to have encouraged the restructuring of the Balkans along broadly defined national divisions, contained within concrete territorial borders and ruled by hereditary monarchs.
Macedonian Nationalism

In contrast to the new states of Serbia, Greece, and Bulgaria, no state of Macedonia emerged from the nineteenth century. In fact, no such creation of an independent state of Macedonia would exist until the very end of the twentieth century. Historians writing about the end of the nineteenth century, use the term “Macedonia” loosely to describe a vaguely-defined geographical region. In fact, not only did Macedonia lack any kind of established borders, but it also did not even exist as a single Ottoman administrative entity. In 1864 as part of the reform movement, and, incidentally, as part of the transition towards territorial sovereignty, the Ottomans had changed the way they administered their outlying regions. They divided their territories into vilayets, or provinces, and, in theory, allowed for greater devolution of power and local participation. Eventually three separate Ottoman vilayets, would divide the region of Macedonia. Each vilayet contained its own capital: Skopje provided the capital for the northernmost vilayet, the city of Thessalonica (Salonika) served as the capital of the western vilayet, and Monastir (Bitola) was the capital of the eastern vilayet (see Map 3 on page 53).

The nineteenth century population of Macedonia also provides challenges for objective study as most ethnographies and censuses of the region contained a serious political bias. That is to say, those making the maps created them with the intent of legitimizing certain political claims based on the ethnic make-up of the population, a process that would continue throughout the entire history of Macedonia and will be discussed in greater detail in later chapters. Nevertheless, although they differed in the
Map 3

Ottoman Macedonian

size they reported for each group, “most accounts of the ‘ethnic structure’ of the population of Macedonia in this period [late nineteenth century] agree that the main groups of people living there were Slavic-speaking Christians, Greek-speaking Christians, Turkish-speaking Moslems, Albanian-speaking Moslems, Vlachs, Jews and Gypsies.” Of course exceptions to these major categories existed, such as the Albanian-speaking Catholic Christian family of Mother Teresa. In fact, “the diversity of the population of Macedonia in the nineteenth century was so well known that it inspired the French expression ‘Macedonie,’ meaning a salad of mixed fruits and vegetables.”

Following the Congress of Berlin in 1878, Bulgaria and Greece, and to a lesser extent Serbia, all sought to claim for their new nation-states territory that comprised the area of Macedonia controlled by the Ottoman Turks. As a result, Orthodox Slavic communities in Macedonia could choose to affiliate “with either the Greek patriarch, the Bulgarian exarch, or the Serbian Orthodox Church.” One of the factors that affected a family or a village’s decision to proclaim their religious allegiance rested on whether they spoke Greek or a Slavic language. For the first time in Macedonia, then, the factors of religion and language began to take on “a nationalist interpretation by proponents of both Bulgarian and Greek nationalist ideologies.” In contrast to the earlier Ottoman reforms that proclaimed equality among all peoples regardless of their religious affiliation, in the struggle for the loyalties of nineteenth century Macedonian Orthodox peasants, religion and language began to reflect divisions among the people.

All three new Balkan nation-states tried various measure to ensure the support of various segments of the Macedonian population. Mazower explains that pro-Greek and pro-Bulgarian factions “founded schools to propagate their national ideas, established
Churches loyal to ‘their’ bishops, [and] produced maps and ethnographies to justify their claims.” With Austrian support, the Serbs also turned their attention towards Macedonia. They established Serbian schools that distributed free textbooks and provided salaries for teachers. They also sent their own priests to the region and thus joined the religious fight for the peasantry’s affiliation. The Macedonian peasants’ response to these attempts demonstrates their general lack of national identity during the last decades of the nineteenth century.

The British journalist H. N. Brailsford traveled extensively in Macedonia and reported on the conditions of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century Macedonia. He explains that he once talked with a wealthy Macedonian peasant who spoke Greek. When questioned regarding his ethnicity, the peasant replied that his village had been Greek four years ago but had since then become Bulgarian because the Bulgarians had not only sent the village a teacher but also a priest, while the Greeks had merely dispatched a teacher. Brailsford then makes the humorous observation that “the legend that Alexander the Great was Greek goes out by one road and the rival myth that Alexander was Bulgarian comes in by the other.” He concludes his observations by noting that he had heard “a witty French consul declare that with a fund of a million francs he would undertake to make all Macedonia French.” Brailsford’s observations confirm the lack of strong nationalist identities among the Macedonian peasant population; the peasants cared much more about the concrete realities of daily life than the abstract principles of national identity.

Similar practical considerations helped redraw religious, as well as ethnic, identities. A modern policy analyst explains that before the reform efforts of the early
nineteenth century, only Muslims could serve as gendarmes, and as such enjoyed a considerable amount of power at the local level. Consequently, some Christian families had one brother convert to Islam so that he could protect the entire family. Regarding the practical ramifications of such a conversion, the analyst then notes:

Everyone ate a common table, and if, for example, pork were available and a zelnik (pie) was made, the women of the house would put pork only in half the pita and both the Christian and Muslim sides of the family would eat from the same pan.98

The episode thus illustrates yet another way in which people redefined their identity. At the same time, it seems as though a significant amount of toleration existed between members of the different religious groups during this period of Macedonian history.

The new Balkan states of Serbia, Greece, and Bulgaria did not, however, limit themselves to peaceful methods of propaganda designed to spark changes in identity. When non-violent methods could not assure success, they “financed armed bands of patriots – some local, some supported by outside agents – to gain peasant adherents to their cause.” These “irregular bands of guerrilla fighters…attacked the Turks, fought each other, and terrorized the local population.” For their part, the Turkish authorities, the at least nominal rulers of the land, “sat back and watched the Christians fight among themselves, occasionally sending in Albanian irregulars when matters threatened to boil over.”99 The peasants bore the brunt of this agitation, as they cared more about regaining some measure of stability in their lives than about dying for the principles of nationalism. As a result of the fighting and chaos, many left Macedonia to live in one of the other Balkan states, Central Europe, or even across the Atlantic in the new world. Those who continued to live in Macedonia served as pawns in a political struggle among the states that surrounded them, who increasingly used violence to secure their loyalty.100 For the
peasants of Macedonia, then, the divisive nature of a nationalist fight that insisted that people choose one side or another created serious problems and difficulties. At this point in the history of Macedonia, the tension between the universalism of human rights and the particularism of nationalism resulted in concrete human rights violations for the Macedonian peasants.

Regarding the struggle for Macedonia, it is important to point out that the major actors themselves did not always have a clear idea of their final goals. In fact, Glenny notes, “[A]t the start of the Macedonian struggle, it seems its participants were sure of only one thing – that the Ottomans should leave. But beyond that, the conduct and aims of the Macedonians, of whatever ilk, were changing according to the fluid political conditions.” As a result people adapted their identities constantly in response to the changing political conditions, and especially during times of chaos and violence. The Macedonian elites’ response to the confusing situation brought about by the fighting, violence, and propaganda efforts proves revealing regarding the nature of the development of Macedonian nationalism. Anthropologist Loring Danforth reports that before 1870 and the post-Congress of Berlin propaganda efforts with Macedonia, the literate Slavic-speaking inhabitants of Macedonia and Bulgaria were engaged in a common struggle against Greek culture and linguistic domination in the Balkans. During this period the Slavs of Macedonia called their language Bulgarian. They hoped to create a single Macedo-Bulgarian literary language based on some kind of compromise among the various dialects of Macedonia and Bulgaria. That the small group of literate elites, rather than the large numbers of peasants, sought to define a national language for themselves demonstrates the lack of broad-based support for any kind of feelings of national consciousness. In addition, during the years before the Congress of Berlin, the elites of Macedonia viewed their language as compatible with
that of Bulgaria and did not yet seek to develop a separate and purely Macedonian
language.

Following the establishment of the Bulgarian Exarchate, however, Danforth
relates that the Bulgarian intelligentsia began “to impose an eastern-Bulgarian-based
standard language on the people of Macedonia.” The Macedonian elites resented this
approach and in reaction, “the first signs of Macedonian linguistic separatism appeared.
During this period, dictionaries, grammars, and textbooks began to be published in what
was specifically referred to as the ‘Slavo-Macedonian’ or ‘Macedonian’ language.”
One town, for example went so far that:

In 1892 the Kostur (Kosturia) parish school council adopted the proposal
of a group of teachers ‘to eliminate both Bulgarian and Greek and
introduce Macedonian as the language of instruction in the town school.’
However, the Greek bishop and the Turkish governor of the city prevented
this from taking place.104

These examples continue to demonstrate the divisiveness of nationalism. In response to
pressure that Macedonian elites conform their language to a standard set by Bulgarians,
Macedonians responded with the opposite extreme and established their own, separate
language. In the course of this process, the Macedonian elites sought to create and make
use of a language that differed from either Bulgarian or Greek and so emphasize their
own divisions and distinctions as a people separate and different from the Bulgarians,
Greeks, and Serbians.

Furthermore, the course of events in Macedonia also demonstrates the continuing
tension between the universalism involved in the protection of human rights and the
divisive, particularistic nature of nationalism. In his discussion of the history of
Macedonia, Danforth provides insightful observations into the nature not only of this period of Macedonian history but also the nature of nationalism in general. He writes,

The history of Macedonia shows that national identities are categories of ascription which are constantly subject to negotiation and change, that they often emerge in times of conflict, and that their construction involves a process of shared forgetting as well as shared remembering. ... [Macedonian history] also confirms that national identities develop in opposition to categories of ‘others’—that people know who they are not before they know who they are. Finally, it suggests that nationalist policies of persecution and forced assimilation may actually create the very national minorities they are intended to eliminate.105

These observations suggest two important aspects of the relationship between the protection of human rights and the forces of nationalism. First, the creation of a national identity requires an ‘other,’ or an enemy against which to express oneself. The existence and even necessity of an ‘other’ in order to define national identity will always be in conflict with an understanding of universalism that calls on people to recognize their similarities and sameness and thus their equal deservingness of the same basic human rights. Second, human rights violations and persecutions often engender a national consciousness that relies upon divisions between people. The protection of human rights and the forces of nationalism cannot help but conflict with one another.

The nature of national consciousness and the events of Macedonian history led Danforth to conclude that the history of Macedonian national consciousness, and thus the history of the modern Macedonian national state, does not actually begin with Alexander the Great. Instead, “it begins in the nineteenth century with the first expressions of Macedonian ethnic nationalism on the part of a small number of intellectuals in places like Thessaloniki, Belgrade, Sophia, and St. Petersburg. This period marks the beginning of ‘imagining’ a Macedonian national community, the beginning of the construction of a
Macedonian national identity and culture. As we will see, however, given the importance of a national history for the process of creating a national identity, the figure of Alexander the Great will remain important for the development of Macedonia.

Before turning to the twentieth century and the disastrous results of the nationalist policies of the Serbian, Greek, and Bulgarian states, Danforth’s analysis brings out one final point regarding the development of nationalism. He refers to the nineteenth century as the first moment when Macedonian elites began to “imagine” a Macedonian community. In his emphasis on the process of imagination, Danforth cites Benedict Anderson’s work on nationalism, *Imagined Communities*. Anderson argues that any single member of a nation will never know all, or even most, of the other members of the nation. Nevertheless, each individual person in the community holds in his or her mind an image of communion with the other members of the nation. As a result, “Communities are to be distinguished, not by their falsity/genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined.” An important aspect of national identity involves a person’s own perception or imagination of their national identity and national community. The nineteenth-century Macedonian peasants’ ability to willfully manipulate their identities in order to receive practical benefits further supports the existence of this imagined element of nationalism.

In stark contrast, however, the human rights abuses and violence that those peasants suffered as a result of the process of national imagining contain no element of subjectivity. No amount of imagination could change the nature of the guerrilla incursions into Macedonia or the consequent loss of security, safety, and even loss of life experienced by the peasants. Those peasants emigrated from the region of Macedonia.
because of very real threats to their life and liberty that existed objectively and independently of whichever way they had imagined their national loyalty. While nationalism thus necessarily contains an important element of imagination and subjectivity, human rights violations can be objectively observed and experienced.

In addition to the objectivity of human rights violations, visionaries, such as Plato and Mother Teresa, have pointed to an element of objectivity in the protection of those rights. They believed that some laws and truths regarding the protection of human rights exist outside and independent of the rules or the culture of a specific society with specific leaders. In the nineteenth century, expressions of that objectivity remained limited primarily to the visions of human rights advocates, although the Ottoman reform decrees also in some ways acknowledged the objectivity of the protection of human rights. As the advocacy of human rights progressed, however, that objectivity would begin to find more concrete expressions in world history. The increasing expressions of the objectivity of the protection of universal human rights would continue to affect the course of Macedonian history, as well as the relationship between the forces of nationalism and the protection of human rights.

Conclusion

An exploration of Ottoman administration of the Balkans from the fourteenth through the eighteenth centuries demonstrates a remarkable absence of ethnic hatreds between the various groups of people that coexisted on the peninsula. Furthermore, until at least the end of the eighteenth century, few within Balkan society professed strong national identities since economic and religious distinctions played a greater role in
defining peoples particular identities. In the nineteenth century, as ideas from the Western Enlightenment and the French Revolution spread to the Balkans, the elites, though not the masses of peasants, began to imagine their communities in a different way, which would gradually evolve into an expression of national consciousness. In part, the disintegration and corruption of Ottoman administration led to a system that abused the peasants and decreased the protection of their human rights. The exploitation allowed and encouraged the development of this national consciousness, underscoring the connection between human rights abuses and nationalism.

At the same time, the Great Powers of the nineteenth century became increasingly involved in Balkan politics. On one hand, concern for the human rights abuses of the Balkan Christians prompted their interventions and they pressured the Ottoman sultans to pass legislation recognizing the universal human rights of all Ottoman subjects regardless of religion or economic status. On the other hand, the Great Powers also acted in order to promote their own selfish foreign policy goals, which included rivalry with one another for dominance of the Balkans. They worked to establish zones of influence and in the process helped to create new and independent Balkan states. The Great Powers took the lead in drawing new and concrete boundary lines that would establish the territory of the new states and divide them from one another. The newly created territorial states would also help to provide the background for the Balkan elites to begin to imagine communities for themselves that did not depend on economic or religious affiliation but rather on territorially bounded and ethnically defined nation-states.

Within the amorphous region of Macedonia, a similar process of imagining began to occur among the elite population, even though no territorial state of Macedonia
emerged during the nineteenth century. In response to both peaceful and violent propaganda efforts of the Bulgarians, Greeks, and Serbians, the Macedonian elites began to establish their own distinct identity. Once again human right violations prompted the emergence of a distinct nationalist consciousness. Several elements that defined that consciousness included a separate language, as well as the existence of an enemy against which to define a new national identity. The separatism and divisiveness implied in these elements of nationalism contrast starkly with the universalism of human rights proclaimed in the Ottoman reform efforts. Furthermore, the imaginative and subjective nature of nationalism differs from the objective nature of the human rights violations and the objectiveness appealed to in the visions regarding the protection of those human rights.
NOTES


4 Anderson, Lineages of the Absolutist State, 371.

5 Inalcik, The Ottoman Empire, 13.


7 Anderson, Lineages of the Absolutist State, 371.


9 Inalcik, The Ottoman Empire, 7.


12 Ibid., 53.


14 Stavrianos, The Balkans Since 1453, 222.


17 Ibid., 85.


19 Ibid., 59.
20 Ibid., 61.


22 Inalcik, *The Ottoman Empire*, 105.


25 Inalcik, *The Ottoman Empire*, 150.


29 Ibid.

30 Inalcik, *The Ottoman Empire*, 104.

31 Stavrianos, *The Balkans Since 1453*, 86.

32 Ibid.; and Inalcik, *The Ottoman Empire*, 108.

33 Stavrianos, *The Balkans Since 1453*, 100.

34 Vucinich, “Balkan Society,” 600.


36 Stavrianos, *The Balkans Since 1453*, 120, 140.

37 Ibid., 130, 383.

38 Ibid., 144.

39 Ibid., 144-145.

40 Ibid., 300, 303; and Sultan Murad II, as quoted in ibid., 304.
41 Stavrianos, *The Balkans Since 1453*, 304.


46 Ibid., 387.


48 Ibid., 69.


50 Ibid., 149-150.


53 Stavrianos, *The Balkans Since 1453*, 199, 211.


55 Stavrianos, *The Balkans Since 1453*, 212.

56 Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, 211.


61 Mazower, *The Balkans*, 86.
Ibid., 87.

63 Ibid., 86-87.

64 Danforth, *The Macedonian Conflict*, 58.


69 Ibid., 380.


79 Treaty Between Great Britain, Austria-Hungary, France, Germany, Italy, Russia, and Turkey for the Settlement of the Affairs of the East, as quoted in Lauren, *International Human Rights*, 68.

Ibid.

Glenny, *The Balkans*, 146.


Ibid., 96.


Mazower, *The Balkans*, 89, 92, 94.

Ibid., 98.


Danforth, *The Macedonian Conflict*, 57.

Ibid.

Ibid., 58-60.

Ibid.


Glenny, *The Balkans*, 159.


Ibid.

Ibid., 62.

Ibid., 56.

Ibid.

Chapter II

Historical Background and “Ethnic Hatreds” Revisited, 1900 – 1980

We are trying to separate inseparable strands, to divide this one from that one, because this one may be Macedonian and that one may be Bulgarian.... Here the men sit back... talking about nationalism and hate while the women do all the work.

-Zlatko Blajer, editor-in-chief of Vecher (Evening)

While the turn of the century witnessed the gradual evolution of feelings of national consciousness in Macedonia, major changes in the greater global context began to affect the way many individuals and organizations understood human rights and reacted to human rights violations. As a result, while the twentieth century brought much suffering, many wars, and further ethnic-national violence to the Balkans, during this same time period many people also experienced an evolution in their understanding of human rights and particularly the universality of those rights.

In the years between the turn of the century and the outbreak of World War I, the world experienced a degree of global shrinking as, in the words of one historian, “technology and economic interdependence made it easier to view events in distant places as being related to each other and to more fully consider people beyond national borders as being brothers and sisters.”¹ In this context, officials from national governments as well as private individuals created thirteen intergovernmental bodies as well as three hundred and four non-governmental organizations (NGO’s) to deal with international events. Of particular significance for the protection of human rights, historian Paul Lauren explains, “when the NGO known as the Ligue de Droits de l’Homme emerged with its first publication in 1901...[it announced] that its vision to

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promote liberty, equality, fraternity, and justice applied not just to those in France— but to all humanity."² The twentieth century thus began with at least one organization calling for the recognition of the universality of human rights, or, in other words, an understanding that those rights did not depend on or change according to national borders.

The Ilinden Revolt

Within the Ottoman-dominated region of Macedonia, in 1903 a group dedicated to the overthrow of their Turkish rulers also reflected an appreciation of the universalism of human rights. On August 2, the Feast of St. Elijah, or Ilinden, the peasants of the villages surrounding the town of Monastir witnessed haystacks set ablaze and beacons burning throughout western Macedonia. These signs rallied the cetas, or armed bands of peasants, to begin to drive out the Turks from their villages. In the uprising's largest operation, some three hundred guerillas attacked the small, isolated, mountain town of Krusevo, defeated the Ottoman garrison, established their control over the town, and declared the town a republic.³ The journalist H. N. Brailsford, who traveled in Macedonia shortly after the event, explains that the new revolutionary leaders avoided excessive violence and bloodshed after they had secured the town. In fact, he notes that their behavior corresponded to their proclamation of the revolt, in which they had stated:

'We are taking up arms against tyranny and barbarism; we are acting in the name of liberty and humanity; our work is above all prejudices of nationality or race. We ought therefore to treat as brothers all who suffer in the somber Empire of the Sultan.'⁴
The Macedonian insurgents thus reflected the same attitude towards human rights as that of the Ligue de Droits de l’Homme. All those who suffer human rights abuses deserve the same restitution of their rights, regardless of their “nationality or race.”

It is interesting to note that before the uprising began, the inhabitants of Krusevo did not trust the armed bands of insurgents and had become increasingly nervous about their activities. Just as the Serbian peasants who revolted in 1804 originally sought a return of the sultan’s authority, the townspeople of Krusevo sent representatives to Monastir, the regional capital, to request that the Ottomans strengthen the local army garrison, even though almost all of the town’s 10,000 inhabitants were Christians. By August 2, however, the authorities had not responded to the townspeople’s request. The townspeople’s attitude toward their Ottoman authorities provides further evidence against the existence of “ancient ethnic hatreds.” Even as late as the beginning of the twentieth century, ethnicity did not prevent the Greek and Slavic speaking Christian residents of the town from requesting help from the Muslim Turkish authorities in order to prevent the spread of violence they feared their fellow Christians would instigate.

If the Ottomans hesitated to send in soldiers before the revolt began, they did not lack motivation after the insurgents had captured the town of Krusevo. The Turks recaptured the town without a fight and Ottoman troops participated in numerous rapes, murders, lootings, and burnings within the town. As a consequence of the Ottoman violence and in the aftermath of the destruction, members of the Greek community played an increasing role in the area as they brought help to their suffering brethren. Similarly, Serbia took the opportunity to increase its nationalist activities and propaganda efforts in the region. Thus, Balkan historian Misha Glenny explains, “the suppression of
Ilinden had therefore failed to crush the nationalist struggle. On the contrary, it had made it worse. Following the same pattern that other parts of the Balkans had experienced in the nineteenth century, in twentieth-century Macedonia human rights violations sparked nationalist agitation.

Although short in duration, the events in Krusevo have left a lasting legacy on the region's history. Just as with the story of Alexander the Great, the Ilinden uprising has played an important role in the nationalist histories of the region. In later decades, which will be discussed shortly, historians and political figures continued to draw upon the proceedings in Krusevo, events often only tenuously supported by facts, in order to support their various platforms. Although the full truth of the dramatic events in Krusevo will probably never be known, much is known about the leaders of the Ilinden rebellion, who would also become important figures in later nationalist histories. The group that had led the insurgency had formed in response to the economic hardship suffered by the Slavic peasants of the Macedonian area. In 1893 three friends met in the city of Salonika, and decided that they should rid the province of Ottoman rule in order to bring prosperity back to the Slavic peasantry. They formed a revolutionary committee and gradually recruited a larger membership. Several years after the group had instigated the Ilinden revolt, in 1905 they settled on the name of the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (VMRO). In their campaign for freedom from Turkish domination, VMRO members roamed the countryside in armed bands, or cetas, and terrorized the local populations. Reports of misery found their way to the offices of the European diplomats stationed in Macedonia and the Austrian Consul in Monastir, August Kral, reported:
The Committee [VMRO] is extorting money from Bulgarians, Greeks, Vlachs, Christians, and Muslims with indescribable arrogance. Christians who don’t pay are murdered while the Muslim landowners must reckon with arson attacks on all their property.8

Kral’s account once again calls into question the “ancient ethnic hatreds” thesis since the Slavic members of VMRO terrorized Christian and Muslim alike. The kind of activities VMRO engaged in also helps to explain why the inhabitants of Krusevo had appealed to Ottoman troops to provide military support just before the Ilinden uprising. In addition, the VMRO activities reflect a lack of effective governance for the region as a whole. Kral thus concluded his account by noting, “The longing for order among these unbearable circumstances and for a new strong administration is becoming ever more intense.”9 A violent organization such as VMRO could exist and even thrive in Macedonia during this period because the Ottoman government was not maintaining stability or protecting the inhabitants of the region.

The Young Turk Revolt

The Ottoman sultan who presided over this disorder had come to power with the end of the Tanzimat, or the period of Turkish reform attempts. Sultan Abdul Hamid sought to consolidate his autocratic rule, instead of pursuing earlier reform efforts, and toward this end he fought against not only the forces of nationalism but also against the processes of constitutionalism. As a result, Abdul Hamid employed a large number of informers and enforced strict censorship of the press. Unsurprisingly, many in the empire, in addition to VMRO, found themselves dissatisfied with his reign. In particular, many Turkish army officers had begun to form into secret military organizations and, as they merged with other similar groups, eventually adopted the name of the Committee for
Union and Progress (CUP). Just as the Krusevo insurgents had, these army officers used the rhetoric of universalism as a rallying cry. In fact, Glenny explains, the CUP “was not motivated by Turkish nationalism, an ideology still very much in its infancy. It was fighting for the modernization and strengthening of the empire under Western constitutional principles, and these included the equality of all races.”

In 1908 from their base in Salonika, the leaders of the CUP, or the Young Turks as they would come to be known, sent an ultimatum to Abdul Hamid that demanded the restoration of the 1876 constitution. The Army supported the revolutionary leaders and across Macedonia the Ottoman garrisons refused to obey orders. In yet another demonstration of Christian-Muslim cooperation, Glenny reports that Ottoman soldiers “concluded pacts with the Albanian, Bulgarian, and Serbian guerrillas they were meant to be combating.” Some Bulgarian bands then refrained from attacking the military leaders of the CUP. Finally, on July 24 Abdul Hamid complied with the ultimatum and restored the constitution.

In Macedonia much rejoicing greeted the sultan’s capitulation. One of the Young Turk leaders, Enver Pasha, exclaimed, “There are no longer Bulgars, Greeks, Rumans, Jews, Mussulmans. We are all brothers beneath the same blue sky. We are all equal.”

In Salonika, the gendarmerie commander observed:

[O]n the balcony of the Konak [town hall] Greek and Bulgarian bishops and the Mufti [Muslim leader] shook hands and then in the name of fraternity, they invited their coreligionists to follow suit...A cry of joy burst from every lung in the crowd and you could see Muslims, Greeks and Bulgarians, the old mortal enemies, falling into one another’s arms.

One of the VMRO leaders, Iane Sandanski, matched his actions to the bold words of equality and fraternity as he and his followers handed over their weapons to the CUP,
who acknowledged the sacrifice and then returned the guns. Sandanski and his men then proceeded to destroy all the weapons. The Young Turks thus came to power by fighting against injustice and repressive autocracy and promising the rule of equality for all.

Once in power, however, the Young Turks’ rhetoric came into conflict with the realities of a vast, decentralized, and polyglot empire. Balkan expert L.S. Stavrianos notes that they “were ready to grant political representation and religious freedom to all peoples of the empire. But in return they required that these people should support the imperial structure and accept Turkish predominance.” After they forcibly crushed all opposition to their rule, “they proceeded with their policy of centralization and Turkish hegemony.” In spite of the universal rhetoric they employed immediately following the revolution that declared all people equal regardless of their nationality, in governing the empire they resorted to official distinctions based upon nationality. Nationalism served to divide people who had so recently found themselves unified in their fight against the oppressiveness of Abdul Hamid’s reign. Furthermore, the more the Young Turks followed a policy of Turkish hegemony, the greater the nationalist opposition. Following the Young Turk revolt, all the attempts to suppress the local nationalisms in favor of a greater Ottoman nationalism had the opposite effect and, Stavrianos explains, “[T]he result was a vicious cycle of repression and resistance.” Just as in the nineteenth century, then, repressing nationalism led to its more fervent expression.

The Young Turk revolt provoked many far-reaching consequences but several developments in particular would affect the course of Balkan history and, ultimately, the fate of Macedonia. Both the Great Powers as well as the new Balkan states interpreted
the events of the revolt as a signal of Ottoman weakness. Prince Ferdinand of Bulgaria took the opportunity to declare Bulgaria’s full independence, as opposed to the autonomy within the empire that the state had previously enjoyed. Austria-Hungary followed Bulgaria’s lead by annexing the territories of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which, up until that point, had only been occupied by Austro-Hungarian troops. The fear of losing territories caused the CUP to reject most of the demands emanating from the Christians of Macedonia because they feared secession. In response, the Serb, Bulgarian, and Greek guerrillas within Macedonia once again decided to use force as means to achieve their ends.\footnote{In addition, the loss for Serbia and Montenegro of a path to the Adriatic through Bosnia and Herzegovina prompted them and the other South Slavs increasingly to turn their attention southward toward Macedonia.} Consequently, the four Balkan states of Serbia, Bulgaria, Greece, and Montenegro gradually came together into a system of alliances and by 1912 they had all signed diplomatic pacts with one other. In an analysis of the establishment of this Balkan League, James Bourchier, a well-known Balkan authority and London Times correspondent, wrote that its formation “was the direct result of the insensate efforts of the Young Turks to stifle national sentiment among the various races of the Empire.”\footnote{Before discussing the actions of the Balkan League it is important to pause momentarily to consider the status of the city of Skopje during this time period. In spite of the political changes occurring in the areas surrounding Skopje in Bosnia, Herzegovina, and Bulgaria, the borders of the region of Macedonia had not changed since 1878. Although the San Stefano Treaty had briefly allocated the city of Skopje to Bulgaria, the Congress of Berlin returned control of the city to the Ottomans, who}
continued to administer it in 1910. When the baby girl who would grow up to become Mother Teresa was born in Skopje to Albanian-speaking Catholic parents, the city still belonged to the Turks. Technically, then, it is possible to say that Mother Teresa was born in the Ottoman Empire. The Young Turks, however, would not enjoy their possession of the city for long. In 1912 when Turkish leaders refused to address the grievances of many Albanians, 20,000 Albanian tribesman occupied Skopje. Their successes provided a graphic demonstration to the Balkan League as to the extent of Turkish weakness in Macedonia.²²

The First and Second Balkan Wars

Even within the structure of the Balkan League, Serbia, Bulgaria, and Greece had not settled their divergent claims to the region of Macedonia. Nevertheless, when Montenegro declared war on Turkey in 1912, the other three Balkan states quickly joined their ally with the goal of driving the Turks out of Europe, and thus they ushered in the First Balkan War.²³ The Bulgarians quickly found themselves in a contradictory position. Politically, they hoped to capture much of Macedonia and particularly the city of Salonika. Military considerations, however, forced them to send troops to fight against Constantinople while the Greeks and the Serbs advanced into Macedonia and occupied various parts of the region.²⁴ The Balkan allies defeated the Turkish armies surprisingly quickly and the 1913 Treaty of London stripped the Ottoman Empire of most of her remaining European territories and also created an independent state of Albania.²⁵

The war unleashed considerable violence, particularly towards the civilian populations, and the devastation attracted the attention of those around the globe.
concerned with the violation of human rights. Following the conclusion of the Second Balkan War in 1913, an American group called the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace sent an international Commission of Inquiry to the region to report on the violence. The Carnegie Inquiry gathered vast amounts of documentation regarding the atrocities committed, especially against civilian populations, which they then published upon their return. Especially since many historians and politicians writing in the decades since the report’s publication have used the inquiry’s conclusions to justify theories of “ancient ethnic hatreds,” it is worth noting their observations in some detail.

Regarding the violence that followed the conclusion of the First Balkan War, one member of the inquiry explained that the Balkan War of Liberation,

unleashed the accumulated hatreds, the inherited revenges of centuries. It made the oppressed Christians for several months the masters and judges of their Moslem overlords. It gave the opportunity of vengeance to every peasant who cherished a grudge against a harsh landlord or a brutal neighbor…To the hatred of the races there was added the resentment of the peasantry against the landlords (beys), who for generations had levied a heavy tribute on their labor and harvests. The defeat of the Turkish armies meant something more than a political change. It reversed the relations of conqueror and serf; it promised social revolution.26

Although the inquiry presented, in quite strong terms, the existence of ancient hatreds, for the most part the study concerned itself with the events of the present and did not delve deeply into history. As a result, they provided little evidence to explain or support their claim of ancient hatreds; they merely stated their existence. The evidence that does exist, such as that of the Christian townspeople in Krusevo, who just nine years earlier had appealed to the Ottoman authorities for help dealing with bands of armed Christians, contradicts the inquiry’s assertion. At the same time, the inquiry did discuss the social injustice faced by the peasantry at the hands of their overlords. That despicable violence
occurred in the region is beyond doubt; whether that violence occurred because of ancient national enmity is less certain, and it surely seems as if the human rights violations the peasants suffered contributed significantly to the severity of the violence. Thus from the first revolt of Balkan peoples against the Ottomans, in Serbia in 1804, to the final one in Macedonia in 1912, the poor living conditions and lack of basic rights for the Balkan peasants, regardless of their language or religion, contributed significantly to the political upheaval, military actions, and, ultimately, the end of the Ottoman Empire in the Balkans.

The events of the Second Balkan War provide even further evidence against the “ancient ethnic hatreds” thesis propounded by the Carnegie Inquiry and others. Following the conclusion of the First War, both the Serbs and the Greeks began campaigns of forced Serbianization and Hellenization of the areas of Macedonia that their militaries had occupied, in order to strengthen their justification for annexing these areas. It is a telling comment on the continued impermanence and vagueness of the people’s ethnicity that the Serbs and Greeks truly believed they could “make” the people living in Macedonia Greek or Serbian. Some inhabitants resisted the Greek and Serbian policies but Glenny states that those local populations “who refused to accept the nationality of the incoming administration (if one can call plundering thugs ‘administrators’) were run out of town, harassed, or murdered.” The Bulgarians, for their part, found themselves dissatisfied by the conclusion of the war as they had won militarily but not secured their political objectives. After considerable friction, Bulgaria attacked Greek and Serbian forces in Macedonia and the Serbians and Greeks responded with a declaration of war on Bulgaria. Montenegro joined on the side of Serbia and Greece as did, of all states, Turkey. Glenny then notes that in the course of the ensuing
war, "Greeks and Serbs invited local Turks to join them in atrocities against the Bulgarian peasantry." Thus within months of the conclusion of the First Balkan War, the supposed ancient enemies had drastically switched sides.

The Carnegie Endowment Inquiry struggled to clarify the significance of the transfer of allegiances, but an examination of the inquiry’s findings regarding the describing the creation of Bulgarian-Greek enmity, sheds light on the development of nationalist hatreds in general. They explained that the Greek press began to publish articles that attested to the violence of the Bulgarians:

The Greek press had had little to say regarding the Bulgarian excesses against the Turks while the facts were still fresh.... Now everything was dragged into the light and the record of Bulgarian bands, deplorable in itself, lost nothing in the telling. Day after day the Bulgarians were represented as a race of monsters, and public feeling was roused to a pitch of chauvinism which made it inevitable that war, when it came, should be ruthless.

In the Second Balkan War, then, the divisiveness of nationalism reached its ultimate expression. The Greek press portrayed the Bulgarians as “monsters,” or, in other words, less than human.

In this way the Greeks could justify extreme violations of the human rights of the people who had so recently been their allies. In fact, the inquiry provided the insightful observation that relates to human rights violations in many settings: “Deny that your enemies are men, and presently you will treat them as vermin.” The inquiry then examined how it happened that so much of the violence was propagated by and directed against civilians. They concluded:

The local population is divided into as many fragmentary parts as it contains nationalities, and these fight together, each being desirous to substitute itself for the others... The first consequence of this fact is that the object of these armed conflicts, overt or covert, clearly conceived or
vaguely felt, but always and everywhere the same was the complete extermination of an alien population.\textsuperscript{33}

The divisiveness of nationalism, particularly a nationalism that does not consider its opponents as fully human, has the potential to lead to genocide, or the complete destruction of a group of people. Thus, while human rights violations repeatedly produced nationalism in the Balkans, that nationalism, which cleaved the people apart often in order to justify political ends, in turn led to the worst kinds of human rights violations.

If “ancient ethnic hatreds” did not cause the violence unleashed by the Balkan wars, the question then arises as to why the Balkans witnessed such devastation during the 1912 and 1913 conflicts. The Carnegie Inquiry explored this very question, albeit without discounting the existence of ancient enmities. In the introduction to their report, the French senator and member of the inquiry, Baron d’Estournelles de Constant harshly criticized the sale of military armaments from Western European countries to the new Balkan states, noting that France alone had spent one hundred billion francs in the past forty-three years providing weapons to the Balkans. He thus concluded:

The real culprits in this long list of executions, assassinations, drownings, burnings, massacres and atrocities furnished by our report are not, we repeat, the Balkan peoples...Do not let us condemn the victims.... The true culprits are those who mislead public opinion and take advantage of the people’s ignorance to raise disquieting rumors and sound the alarm bell, inciting their country and consequently other countries into enmity. The real culprits are those who by interest or inclination, declaring constantly that war is inevitable end by making it so, asserting that they are powerless to prevent it.\textsuperscript{34}

In spite of their belief in the existence of implacable enmity between the various groups, the Carnegie Inquiry placed the blame for the horrific violence not on the feelings of the inhabitants of the Balkans but on the policies of Western Europe. Furthermore, they
condemned those, either in the Balkans or in Western Europe, who justified the sale of weapons by pointing to the inevitability of war or the bloodthirstiness of the participants. It appears, then, that referring to a tradition of “ancient ethnic hatreds” as the cause for war serves merely as a political excuse to further some other agenda or policy, in this case the selling of weapons. The Carnegie Inquiry had limited the scope of their investigation to war in the Balkans and published their report in 1914 on the eve of World War I. It seems possible that with the hindsight of four more years, the members of the inquiry might have felt that their conclusions held true not simply for the Balkans, but for other countries of the world as well.

In any event, just four weeks after it had begun and had unleashed horrific violence, the Second Balkan War concluded when Bulgaria, attacked from all sides, surrendered. The ensuing Treaty of Bucharest gave Bulgaria only a tiny portion of Macedonia, leaving her bitter and hungry for revenge. Salonika and most of the coastal areas of Macedonia went to Greece, while Serbia retained the north and central portions of the region, which included the cities of Monastir and Skopje. In 1913, then, the city of Mother Teresa’s birth and all its inhabitants, including the three-year-old child herself, came under the control of the state of Serbia. Thus while some may claim that Mother Teresa was born in Albania, due to her primary language, others point to Serbia as her country of origin, perhaps because that state gained control of the city so soon after her birth.

Having acquired a portion of Macedonia, the state of Serbia then had to determine how to administer its new territory. At this point, our story leaves the Greek and Bulgarian portions of Macedonia in order to follow the history of the territory annexed by
Serbia. The borders of the Greek and Bulgarian portions of Macedonia have not changed substantially since their incorporation and in fact those areas remain part of Greece and Bulgaria to this day. The Serbian portion alone would eventually become the modern day Republic of Macedonia. In the meantime, however, in 1913 the Serbian leaders decided that their portion of Macedonia, which they referred to as “Old Serbia,” stood apart from the state of Serbia and did not, therefore, fall under the same constitution as that of the Serbian Kingdom.

Shortly after the conclusion of the war, Serbian leaders published a security decree that basically established a military dictatorship over “Old Serbia.” The decree contained many draconian laws that affected the basic human rights of the local population living in the Serbian controlled portion of Macedonia. For example, the decree stated, “The decision of the police authorities...is sufficient proof of the commission of a crime,” thus robbing the population of the right to a fair trial. Another provision declared, “Where several cases of rebellion occur in a commune and the rebels do not return to their houses within ten days from the police notice, the authorities have the right of deporting their families withersoever they may find convenient.” The inhabitants of Macedonia could thus find themselves uprooted and forced to relocate even if they had not committed any illegal actions.

Regarding the Serbians’ treatment of the inhabitants of Macedonia, the Carnegie Inquiry concluded,

In a word, it could be said that the Turkish ‘law of vilayets,’ in combination with the ancient rights and privileges of Christian communities granted to the different nationalities by treaties and firmans, gave far better assurance of mutual toleration, and even a more effective reign on the arbitrary power of the administration than was afforded by this new draft constitution.
Although the inquiry does not draw any conclusions regarding "ancient ethnic hatreds" from observations of the Serbian administration of "Old Serbia," it nevertheless seems telling that inhabitants of Macedonia had enjoyed greater protection of their human rights under the administration of the Ottoman Turks then they did once they were incorporated into the state run by their fellow Slavs with whom they shared the Orthodox religion and a similar language.

At the same time, in an important remark regarding the connections between nationalism and human rights, the Carnegie Inquiry stated, "The confused tangle of Balkan nationalism can not be straightened out either by attempts to assimilate at any price, or by new migration...The way to arrive at such mutual protection [of minorities]...is an effective mutual guarantee of religious and educational autonomy." In other words, only an appreciation that everyone, regardless of ethnicity, deserves the same rights to freedom of religion and education would bring the violence in Macedonia to an end. The inquiry thus explicitly rejected the particularism of nationalism in favor of the universalism of human rights.

**World War I**

The story of the Serbian nationalist, a man from the recently-annexed province of Bosnia, who in 1914 murdered the Austrian Archduke Francis Ferdinand, is well known, as are the consequences of that assassination, which drew the countries of Europe into war. In fact, at the war's beginning, Glenny tells us, "when Austria bombed Belgrade and launched its air invasion of Serbia, it was known briefly as the Third Balkan War." Although that name may not have lasted, the Balkan participants in the war certainly
continued to view their military activities in that light. The Balkan states, including that portion of Macedonia known as “Old Serbia,” joined the Great War simply in order to continue their struggles with each other for territory.\textsuperscript{40}

In 1915 Prince Ferdinand, the ruler of Bulgaria, mistakenly determined that the Central Powers were going to emerge from the conflict as the victors and so he brought his country into the war on their side in return for a promise of much of the territory of Macedonia.\textsuperscript{41} After the Bulgarian troops had routed the Serbian army in southern Serbia and northern Macedonia, Glenny relates, “Their commitment to the Central Powers faded...A Bulgarian general had blandly informed his German liaison officer, ‘for us Bulgars the war is really over. We have all we want.’”\textsuperscript{42} The Bulgarians then refused to fight the British and French in Salonika, preferring instead to expand their occupation in the Western Macedonian lands claimed by their ally, Austria-Hungary. For a time during WWI, then, Mother Teresa’s birthplace came under Bulgarian wartime occupation.

In the meantime, the CUP leadership in Turkey continued to struggle with issues of nationalism and war within the empire. By 1915 the Turkish government had also joined the Central Powers but claimed that their minority Armenian population was aiding the Russian enemy. Under the cover of wartime chaos, the government began a program of genocide that involved the arrest, deportation and systematic execution of Armenian political, religious, educational, and intellectual leaders. Armenian soldiers serving in the Ottoman armies as well as ordinary civilians were also murdered.\textsuperscript{43} Although the leaders of the CUP had begun their time in power with such strong words of equality, fraternity, and universal rights, once faced with the task of governing the vast empire, they degenerated into militant nationalism. Just as had happened in the Balkans,
this divisive nationalism dictated that only one ethnicity or group of people could live within a state, completely ignoring the vast complexities and subjectivities that surround the concept of ethnicity. Just as during the Balkan Wars, genocide resulted as the ultimate and tragic consequence of this divisive nationalism that insisted on recognizing the differences between people instead of focusing on all people’s universal human rights.

When confronted regarding their treatment of the Armenians, in spite of evidence linking the CUP government to the violence, the Turkish leaders claimed helplessness and attributed the violence to the indignation of Turkish citizens who believed the Armenians were assisting the Russians. Misha Glenny harshly criticizes the Turkish position that accused the population of being prone to bloodthirsty behavior. He writes,

All Balkan massacres this century have enjoyed the specific approval of state organs, whose agents have usually been the instigators as well...Such events are invariably accompanied by a historical justification which can usually be boiled down to the simple formula of ‘eternal enmity’ between two communities. The construction of this justification by historians, newspapers and other media under state influence, however, tends to mask the real intentions of the elite.44

Just as the Serbian, Greek, and Bulgarian elites of the Balkan Wars all tried to use mass sentiment to sanction their territorial grabs, the Turks also blamed the nationalism of the people for their wartime policy of genocide toward the Armenians in their effort to create a Turkish state. These examples show nationalism as a tool of cynical politicians interested in power and status rather than the welfare of their people. As a tool of the power-hungry, nationalism comes into sharp conflict with a universal understanding of human rights that works for the same treatment of all people, particularly the powerless.
World War I shared yet another sad commonality with the events of the Balkan Wars. Although the authors of the Carnegie Inquiry had expressed both sadness and surprise at the level of civilian casualties during the Balkan Wars, tragically WWI also brought suffering to numerous civilians. In fact, Lauren explains, “It is estimated that in Russia, Serbia, and Bulgaria, the civilian loss of life actually exceeded those of the military.”

The suffering of so many prompted a further examination of the universality of human rights as many humanitarians responded to the wartime catastrophes because of a belief that “these victimized civilians possessed the right to food and care simply by the nature of being human.” For example, American businessman and humanitarian Herbert Hoover created the Commission for Relief in order to convey shipments of food and supplies to those suffering in the war zones. Thus, the brutal years of WWI and the Balkan Wars witnessed extreme violence that came about due to nationalism, particularly the divisiveness of nationalism that did not recognize the humanity of those it called “others” and so engaged in genocidal policies. At the same time, prompted in part because of the massive suffering of so many, humanitarians continued to develop an ever more comprehensive understanding of the universality of human rights, or the belief that everyone, regardless of the issues that divide people, deserve the same basic rights.

Just as WWI had started in the Balkans, it also partially came to an end there. When Allied troops fought their way north from Salonika and eventually occupied Skopje, they brought about the collapse of the Central Powers’ Macedonian Front, and the German forces then contacted American President Woodrow Wilson to discuss an armistice. Mother Teresa’s birthplace thus once again changed hands just before the victorious states gathered in Versailles for the Peace Conference. The victors faced a
daunting challenge as WWI had brought about the dissolution of four major empires: the Austro-Hungarian, German, Russian, and Ottoman empires had all collapsed during the course of the war. As the victors met at Versailles to determine the post-war fate of these newly liberated territories, two basic considerations guided their actions.

On one hand, emerging as part of Wilson’s platform of Fourteen Points, Lauren notes, “The collective right of self-determination, or the freedom to choose one’s own form of government surfaced immediately and powerfully at the peace conference.” In fact, regarding the specific problems of the Balkan lands, the eleventh of Wilson’s fourteen points stated, “The relations of the several Balkan states to one another [should be] determined by friendly counsel along historically established lines of allegiance and nationality.” And yet, this principle proved somewhat difficult to apply in complicated areas such as the Balkans where heterogeneous populations, as we have seen, were the norm and peoples’ ethnicity and nationality subject to change. In fact, no clearly “established lines of nationality” existed at all. Another complicating factor could be seen in the fact that in 1917 Russia had experienced the Bolshevik Revolution. Lauren explains that the allies hoped that by creating new states, including those inside the Balkans, that owed their allegiance to their benefactors, they could “contribute toward creating a cordon sanitaire, or a sanitary barrier, to quarantine what many leaders in the West perceived as the infectious disease of communism emerging from Lenin’s Russia.”

At the same time, though not participants of the same stature at the Versailles Conference, the elites from within the areas of the former empires also had strong feelings about how the conference should allocate and divide the land. Particularly
within and around the state of Serbia, the combination of the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the question of nationalism provoked a variety of ideas regarding the lands in which Slavic people inhabited. On one side, many of the leaders of the existing Serbian state hoped to see all the lands previously part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in which Slavs were living incorporated into the Kingdom of Serbia. Others formed the Jugoslav Committee, and even before the war’s end they began to promote the idea of a federal structure for the Slavic lands. The Committee sought equal representation and power for the Croats and Slovenes as well as the Serbs within the new state. The government of Serbia and the Jugoslav Committee eventually agreed to form a Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, but declined to articulate a clear position regarding whether the new state would entail a centralist or federalist government. The forces of nationalism thus created divisions among the group of Yugoslavs as many Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes insisted upon emphasizing their particularities and their differences with one another in their pursuit of power and influence within the new state.

With the blessings of the Allies, the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, with its capital at Belgrade, in fact came into existence just several days after the signing of the armistice, and both the city of Skopje and the young girl who would become Mother Teresa found themselves part of yet another country. In just eight short years this little girl could claim to have lived in three different states and to have experienced the administration of three separate occupying forces, all without leaving the city of her birth. Just as they had during the Congress of Berlin in 1878, the Allies, swayed by their different moral and strategic considerations, proceeded to draw the borders and influence the creation of governments for the new states. Wilson and others at the conference
realized that, given the vast complexity of the populations within the territories in question, the establishment of new states, even under the auspices of self-determination, would create minority populations at risk of persecution from their new governments. Wilson thus acknowledged, “Nothing is more likely to disturb the peace of the world than the treatment which might in certain circumstances be meted out to minorities.”

Wilson thus clearly articulated the connection between the violations of human rights and the violence of war, and the connection between protecting human rights and avoiding international conflict. In order to combat the problems faced by minorities, the peacemakers negotiated an international legal foundation for the protection of minorities and insisted that the newly created states, such as the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, assure the protection of the citizens within their borders.

This legal framework, which became known as the Minorities Treaties, used the language of universalism to ensure the protection of rights for all people. These treaties required the new states “to assure full and complete protection of life and liberty” to everyone “without distinction of birth, nationality, language, race, or religion.” At the same time, the treaties also unconsciously recognized the divisions created by nationalism as they stated “that the stipulations in the foregoing articles, as far as they affect persons belonging to racial, religious, or linguistic minorities, constitute obligations of international concern and shall be placed under the guarantee of the League of Nations.” The treaties thus guaranteed international protection only for those groups considered minorities, thus sharply contrasting with the language of universality. Given the subjective and vague nature of ethnic identity within Macedonia, we shall see
shortly that these stipulations within the Minorities Treaties resulted in problems for the inhabitants of the region.

What then was the post-war status for that portion of Macedonia known as “Old Serbia?” The Treaty of Neuilly, which the victorious Allies concluded with the defeated Bulgaria, left the boundaries of Macedonia essentially the same as they had been in 1913 following the Second Balkan War. The strategic considerations of the Allies did, however, deprive Bulgaria of a few key areas, which they then awarded to the new Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, in order to hinder Bulgaria’s ability to launch another offensive. Thus in 1921 when the new kingdom passed its first constitution, known as the Vidovdan Constitution, political scientist Malbone W. Graham explains, the government continued to treat “Old Serbia” as a part of Serbia and in fact “made few modifications in the structure of institutions inherited from Serbia.” Of great importance for later developments regarding the divisiveness of nationalism within the state, the “Vidovdan Constitution provided a strong dynasty and plentitude of royal authority…the monarchy contained also an extraordinary amount of moderative power which the ruler could freely exercise outside the scope of parliamentarism and which was not subject to parliamentary control.” This apparent triumph of the forces of centralism over federalism would have significant consequences for the proponents of extreme nationalist feeling within the new state.

As for national sentiment within the Serbian portion of Macedonia, the confusions that had existed before the war did not vanish with the vast amounts of blood spilled in the region during the wars. Few historians or ethnographers would claim the existence of a separate Macedonian nation or ethnic group during this time period, and the Slavs,
especially those living in rural areas, still did not profess a firm sense of any national identity. A novelist, Stratis Myrivilis, described life on the Balkan front during WWI in his novel, *Life in the Tomb*. He wrote of a family who lived in central Macedonia and though they spoke a Slavic dialect described themselves as neither “Boulgar,” “S’rrp,” nor “Grrts.” From Myrivilis’ work as well as other sources Loring Danforth then concludes, “Of those Slavs who had developed some sense of national identity the majority probably considered themselves Bulgarians, although, as A. King points out, they were aware of differences between themselves and the inhabitants of Bulgaria.”61 The end of WWI thus brought a conflicting and confusing set of circumstances to the inhabitants of Macedonia. Politically they had joined a newly created kingdom as part of the state of Serbia. Yet, the Minority Treaties cautioned the new kingdom that the way in which they treated minorities constituted obligations of international concern. The very nature of the vagueness and subjectivity of the question of national identity within Macedonia, however, would make determining who did and did not qualify as a minority and therefore deserved international protection, an exceedingly difficult proposition.

**Interwar Period**

Following the establishment of the Vidovdan Constitution, nationalists from both Serbia and Croatia often held divergent opinions regarding policy for the country. For the most part they cooperated within the government to work towards a solution of the country’s problems. In 1928, however, a nationalist assassinated the Croatian leader Stjepan Radic. Graham explains that the move symbolized the failure of the existing parliamentary process to resolve the problems of extreme nationalism. The monarch,
King Alexander, then set aside the constitution as “having failed to create the consensus required for national unity and undertook, as was permissible to him in the transitional constitution-forming period, a personal rule of direct royal responsibility for the people.” In a symbolic move designed to emphasis national unity, in 1931 the king also changed the name of the country, obliterating distinctions between Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, as all became Yugoslavs in the new state of Yugoslavia. Just three years after the Albanian-speaking teenager left Skopje for Ireland on a path that would eventually take her to Calcutta as Mother Teresa, her hometown found itself once again part of a state with a new name. Skopje would remain part of Yugoslavia until 1992, the better part of the lifetime of Mother Teresa, which perhaps explains why so many claim Yugoslavia as her birthplace.

In any event, although it is a bit of an anachronism to refer to Yugoslavia in the years before 1931, for simplicity’s sake, from here on out, throughout the interwar period, the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes will be referred to as Yugoslavia. According to Danforth, the official position of all the various Yugoslav governments throughout the years before World War II “was that the Slavs of Macedonia were ‘South Serbs.’ Macedonia was referred to as ‘South Serbia,’ and the language spoken there was considered a dialect of Serbian.” In addition, according to one historian of modern-day Macedonia, “School instruction was in Serbian, all higher officials were Serbs, and the Church was Serbian.” As this policy seemed somewhat at odds with a population who, if they professed any ethnicity tended to associate more with Bulgaria, the Yugoslav government in Belgrade thus embarked on a program of forced assimilation. Historian Kofos Evangelos notes that as part of this process, “pro-Bulgarian leaders and members
of the Bulgarophile intelligentsia were deported or imprisoned. At the same time, thousands of Serbs were settled in the region to assist in the assimilation of the native Slavs.” In general, peaceful methods of integration were abandoned and compulsory means pursued." That the Yugoslav government believed it could force the population into a Serbian identity in and of itself testifies to the subjective nature of national identities, particularly in Macedonia during this time period.

In contrast to what the government hoped to achieve, however, and following a pattern that had repeated time and again in the Balkans, the more intense and arbitrary the measures, the more they stimulated resistance as the inhabitants began to look to Bulgaria as the source of their identity as well as a potential liberator who could free them from Serbian oppression. Consistent with the pattern, then, violations of human rights sparked increased national sentiment among the population. Theoretically, the obvious course of action for the persecuted minority within the Serbian portion of Yugoslavia would have been to appeal to the League of Nations to enforce the protection due to them under the Minority Treaties. One Balkan historian explains, however, that Yugoslavia managed to block this channel of appeal by its “refusal to admit the existence of a ‘Bulgarian’ or ‘Macedonian’ minority.” Yugoslavia claimed that Bulgaria, still bitter after her loss of most of Macedonia, hoped to use the pro-Bulgarian sentiment within Yugoslavia as an excuse to reclaim the lost lands. Political considerations combined with the subjectivity inherent in national identity allowed a loophole in the Minority Treaties under which the Yugoslavian government could deny to the inhabitants of Macedonia the right to practice their religion or enjoy education in whichever language they chose. An international treaty that attempts to protect people’s human rights,
therefore, by implicitly recognizing the divisions brought about by nationalism does not seem to work. It is also interesting to note the irony of the Yugoslav government on the one hand denying the existence of a minority population and on the other hand engaging in a program of forced assimilation.

The Yugoslav policy of forced Serbianization had the result of encouraging VMRO, the organization that had originally formed during the Turkish rule of Macedonia to fight for a free Macedonia, to continue its violent activities. Following the conclusion of WWI, VMRO bands committed numerous acts of terrorism as they attempted to turn the population against the Belgrade government. The Bulgarian government tolerated VMRO activities and allowed the group to raise funds in Bulgaria. In fact, VMRO basically ruled over and administrated the Bulgarian portion of Macedonia. Repression of human rights thus encouraged the activities of a violent terrorist organization, even as the campaign of terrorism caused its own form of human rights abuses. Furthermore, as the organization became more and more of a terrorist society, the actions of VMRO placed a serious strain on the relations between Serbia and Bulgaria. One historian relates that the number of VMRO members entering Yugoslavia from Bulgaria forced the Yugoslavs to keep “the Yugoslav-Bulgarian boundary of more than 400 miles lined with barbed wire entanglements and rows of ditches. There were high towers and pillboxes between them.” The stress between the two states proved the truth of Wilson’s concerns regarding the conduct toward minorities. The way in which the Yugoslavs treated their own population, in this case by denying them basic human rights, created a situation of international tension.
VMRO did not, however, manage to affect any major political changes during the interwar years. In part they failed due to the vague nature of their aims: they did not have a definitive position on whether they wanted Bulgaria to annex Macedonia or whether they hoped for the autonomy of Macedonia. Furthermore, they did not enjoy widespread support and instead relied on terrorist activity, with its accompanying human rights violations. They had no constructive goals, working instead merely to bring about the overthrow of the existing government. Eventually the organization broke into various factions more concerned with their leaders’ personal ambitions and vendettas than with any kind of national agenda. It is also important to point out that even had appealing to the League of Nations been a possibility, it is likely that VMRO would not have pursued that course of action because improving the conditions for the inhabitants of Macedonia would have necessarily meant the end of VMRO. Finally, in 1934 after another assassination deprived Yugoslavia of a monarch* and a coup in Bulgaria brought a new government to power, the new Bulgarian government sought friendship with Yugoslavia. As one of their first acts, the Bulgarian government ordered VMRO to disband. While VMRO thus exercised little political impact on the development of Macedonia, because their ostensible goal involved a “free” Macedonia of one form or another, like Alexander the Great and the Krusevo Republic, VMRO too would come to play an important part in later Macedonian nationalist histories.

Alongside VMRO, another organization within Macedonia also challenged the existing Yugoslav government. The Communist Party of Yugoslavia, formed in

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*The assassination brought about for the first time discussion in the recently created League of Nations regarding the creation of an international criminal tribunal. Although such a tribunal was never established, both the existence and absence of international criminal tribunals would continue to play an important role in Balkan history, and will be discussed more fully later in this chapter as well as in the two that follow.
1919, enjoyed widespread support in the elections of 1920 in Macedonia, and then was banned by the government in 1921. The Communists continued to operate, despite their illegality, but suffered under yet another handicap. They had committed to obeying the orders of the Comintern, controlled by the Soviet Union, but the Comintern’s positions, particularly regarding questions of nationality, proved difficult to swallow for many within Yugoslavia. Like Wilson, members of the Comintern believed strongly in the self-determination of peoples. They objected, however, to what they viewed as the small imperialist states that the Allies had created in their attempt to form a cordon sanitaire. Stavrianos explains that the Comintern believed “these states had been formed by the annexation of large areas with foreign populations. Accordingly the [5th World] Congress proclaimed the right of every nation to self-determination, even to the extent of separation.” The policy of separation proved a stumbling block, however, as “parties committed to the wholesale dismemberment of their own countries had little chance of gaining widespread support.”

It is telling that while both the Communists and the Western Powers agreed on the principle of national self-determination, neither side could agree on how to implement that principle in practice. Rival political considerations definitely played a role, but at the same time, just as in the instance of the Minority Treaties, the principle of self-determination of peoples reveals the difficulties in basing a policy on a concept as vague, subjective, and subject to change and manipulation as national identity. Furthermore, the struggles within the international Communist organizations over the question of nationality reveal the way in which nationalism continued to divide people who agreed on so many other issues.
In spite of the handicap they suffered as a result of the divisive national issue, the Communists enjoyed some success in part because of the social justice aspect of their ideology. Stavrianos explains that Balkan peasants, who still made up a significant amount of the population and "who knew little about Marxist ideology could grasp and appreciate these ideas. Social justice was bound to have appeal where social injustice was the rule." Just as Serbian repression sparked VMRO into action, the denial of social justice to the Balkan peasants allowed the Communists to gain followers. Furthermore the repression of the Communists forced them to develop a vast underground network and organization and when the Axis armies occupied the Balkan Peninsula at the start of WWII, their long tradition of underground struggles helped the Communists effectively lead a resistance movement.

World War II

The advent of the World War II brought unprecedented violence and chaos to many reaches of the globe. The confusion and bloodshed within Yugoslavia, however, proved particularly acute. In order to understand the wartime events that brought near anarchy to most of the country, it is necessary to revisit briefly the tensions that existed between the various nationalities within Yugoslavia and the Yugoslavian government prior to the outbreak of war. Although the country had gone through several major changes in government, the central issue over the power and status of the various nationalities within Yugoslavia remained unresolved. After the assassination of King Alexander in 1934, the government operated without a monarch as a Regency Council provided the political leadership. The Serbsians and Croatians continued to struggle with
one another and their tensions, as Graham notes, “opened to the doors of the Yugoslav household still wider to Axis connivance and conspiracy.”

Following the outbreak of WWII, both Hitler and Roosevelt urged the strategically located Yugoslavia to join their respective sides. When Roosevelt’s inducements proved less convincing, the leaders of the Regency Council signed a Tripartite Pact with Germany. Many Yugoslavs, but Serbs in particular, felt deep indignation upon learning of their country’s cooperation with Germany. A military leader, General Dusan Simovic, launched a coup and without encountering much resistance took over the government. Although Simovic had come to power by opposing an alliance with Germany, he quickly discovered that he could not control the country and win the support of the Croatian factions in the government, who supported the Germans, and so he reluctantly agreed to support the Tripartite Pact. His acquiescence came too late, however, and Gleny explains that, irritated by the complexities of Yugoslavian politics, “the Fuhrer exploded in fury on receipt of the news from Belgrade. Almost immediately he tore up the Tripartite Agreement with Yugoslavia and ordered the \textit{Wehrmacht} to invade the country.” Belgrade quickly collapsed and within days the Germans had smashed the Yugoslav army. The divisiveness of Yugoslavian politics that emphasized the particular differences between Serbs and Croats once again helped to bring disaster to the country.

After they had overrun Yugoslavia, the Nazis established four “puppet” governments in Croatia, Serbia, Slovenia, and Montenegro. Yugoslav historian Wayne Vucinich explains that of the new regimes the largest and only one with any semblance of independence was Croatia, headed by Ante Pavelic. Pavelic had organized the terrorist
group known as the Ustase and spent years of training in Italy and Hungary learning Nazi methods in order to serve fascist interests in Yugoslavia. Following the sad pattern of nationalist politics in the Balkans, Pavelic articulated the ideology that Croatia had no room for the Serbian people and his Ustase mercilessly persecuted all the Serbian inhabitants of the area. Vucinich relates that the Ustase’s “objectives were to exterminate the majority of the Serbs and to ‘Croatianize’ the rest. The first was achieved through mass slaughter of innocent civilians and such concentration camps as that at Jasnovac, and the second through the establishment of the Croatian Orthodox Church.” Just as during the earlier Balkan wars, politics based on nationalism during WWII resulted in several tragic consequences. First, nationalism’s emphasis on each group’s particularity created such deep divisions between the two groups that some Croatians became capable of massive human rights violations against the Serbs. Second, the rhetoric of nationalism combined with the idea of the self-determination of nationalities convinced the Croatians that they had to rid their state of all Serbs, civilians and soldier alike. One again extreme nationalism led directly to genocide.

Given the violence propagated not only by the Ustase but also by the Nazi forces, several groups developed within occupied Yugoslavia to resist the foreign militaries. With the defeat of the Yugoslav army, many officers and soldiers fled to the hills to form an organization, led by Colonel Dragoljub (‘Draza’) Mihailovic, and loyal to the former government of Yugoslavia now in exile in London. Just as the Ustase attempted to create a purely Croatian state (whatever that would have meant in reality), Mihailovic’s organization, known as the Cetniks, fought for the “biological survival” of the Serbs in the face of the policy of extermination propagated by the Ustase. A Cetnik Manifesto
of 1941 took the extreme position that “transfers and exchanges of populations, especially of Croats from the Serbian and of Serbs from the Croatian areas, is the only way to arrive at their separation and to create better relations between them.” The manifesto thus clearly articulates the divisiveness of nationalism by stating that only through the separation of people can they coexist. It is easy to imagine how those who supported the “ancient ethnic hatreds” thesis could believe that the Croatians and Serbs really could not live together. As the historical evidence suggests the fiction of the thesis, however, other factors must have been at work. It seems far more likely that the violence, rather than resulting from ancient enmity, arose as the political leaders of the various groups propagated extreme nationalist ideologies in order to further their political aspirations.

To add to the political and military milieu within the chaotic war-torn Yugoslavia, yet another resistance group developed and drew strength from a very different kind of ideology. Members of the previously-banned Communist Party of Yugoslavia gathered in Belgrade under the leadership of Josip Broz Tito. They began to activate the underground network of Communists and developed a strategy of guerrilla resistance. These Partisans, as the Communists came to be known, had to fight not only the Nazis but also the Cetniks, the supporters of the Monarchy, and the Ustase, the local fascist organization. They aimed, in addition to the liberation of their country, to establish a new socialist order.

Two factors aided the Partisans in gaining the support of the population. First, the violent actions of the Ustase served as a powerful recruiting tool of the Partisans. As Glenny explains, the Serbian “peasants had a choice – to be incinerated or butchered in
their homes by the Ustase or to fight.” Thus, as we have seen elsewhere throughout the history of the Balkans, extreme nationalism and the violent repression of people’s basic human rights create strong opposition. In addition, the second factor involved the universalism within Partisan ideology. Vucinich observes:

Of all the political parties, only the Communists succeeded in organizing the masses, regardless of nationality and religion, into a single resistance front. The Partisans, under Communist leadership, took up the Yugoslav banner, adopted a republican platform, and opposed the various brands of Serb and Croat chauvinism, offering an opportunity to Macedonians, Montenegrins, Croats, Slovenes, and others to achieve their national aspirations for equality with the Serbs and autonomous statehood in the new federated Yugoslavia. The Serb nationalist program of the Cetnici [Cetniks] did not appeal to the masses.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, an organization that held social justice as a primary aspect of its ideology also focused on universalism. The Communist Partisans disregarded the rhetoric of the Serbian and Croatian nationalists’ focus on the particular aspects of each group to create an organization that looked past differences of language or religion to offer opportunities to everyone, regardless of nationality. It is also noteworthy that in an area supposedly divided by national enmity, the non-national Partisans enjoyed the mass support that the nationalist Ustase and Cetnik groups failed to achieve.

Before turning to the specific political program that Tito and his Partisans promoted, a discussion of the events within wartime Macedonia helps to explain why the people of that region also supported the Partisans. The Bulgarians, ever hungry for revenge and that portion of Macedonia they felt they deserved, had joined the Germans. At first their alliance seemed to yield tangible results because, after the German invasion of Yugoslavia, the Nazis allowed the Bulgarian troops and administrative personnel to occupy large portions of Macedonia in 1941. With the young woman would become
Mother Teresa now far away and ensconced in her missions work in India, the city of Skopje suffered yet another military occupation. At first the local population within Yugoslav Macedonia welcomed the Bulgarians, as the history of the Serb occupation, the cultural affinity between many local inhabitants and the Bulgarians, and the interwar propaganda efforts of groups like VMRO, had created or allowed pro-Bulgarian sentiments among many of the inhabitants.86

The Bulgarians, however, maintained hopes of eventually incorporating Macedonia into Bulgaria. As a result, they began a formal program designed to convince the occupants of Macedonia to demand official annexation. Kofos relates, “A major educational program was initiated whereby Bulgarian elementary and secondary schools staffed with teachers from Bulgaria were established in almost all towns and villages.”87 Throughout the competition for the national loyalty of the Macedonian Slavs it is interesting to note the role that education has played in developing the consciousness of the people. It seems that one of the most powerful ways of formulating national identity involves controlling the educational system. The Bulgarian occupation, however, also employed far harsher methods in order to sway the population. In fact, the Bulgarian soldiers acted less like liberators and more like occupiers. For example, when the population supported a Partisan uprising in the Monastir-Prilep area, the Bulgarian Gendarmerie reacted by executing many villagers, men and women alike.88

The harsh policies of the Bulgarian occupation force emphasized the divisions between Bulgarians and the inhabitants of Macedonia, rather than their similarities. Furthermore, as the Bulgarians engaged in reprisals against the Partisans, they drove more Slavs into the camp of the Communists who increasingly claimed to fight for a
Macedonian state within Yugoslavia. Just as Cetnik violence created increasing support for the Partisans, Bulgarian repression effected the same results. In addition, just as the Serbian occupation of Macedonian before the war convinced the local population of the differences between themselves and the Serbs, the Bulgarian actions began to call into question the people’s allegiance to Bulgaria. Just as the fight for Macedonia before the Balkan wars had helped to establish a group of “others” or enemies against which to define oneself, the post-WWI activities of Macedonia’s neighbors followed in the same pattern. Their actions thus continued to prove the truth of Danforth’s observation that people frequently define their identity first in terms of what they are not.

In the course of these military struggles, the various Communist groups operating within the territory of Yugoslavia met at the town of Bihac in 1942. They then formed a Partisan-sponsored parliament of sorts, which served as the political counterpart to the military resistance within the country. The new organization called itself the Anti-Fascist Council for the National Liberation of Yugoslavia (AVNOJ). In 1943 the AVNOJ met at the town of Jajce in order to formulate the eventual political structure of liberated Yugoslavia. The resulting Jajce Resolution stipulated:

On the basis of the right of all nations to self-determination including the union with or secession from other nations...the Anti-Fascist Council of the National Liberation of Yugoslavia passes the following decisions:...Yugoslavia is being built up on a federal principle which will ensure full equality for the nations of Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The AVNOJ thus articulated, for the first time, the idea of an independent state of Macedonia. In addition, as already noted, the Partisans, under Tito and through the AVNOJ repudiated the idea of decisive national politics based on Serbian or Croatian ethnicity and promised equality within the proposed federal structure. At the same time,
the AVNOJ could not break-away from nationalist politics all together and thus based their concept for the new states on the equality not of all people, but of the six nations. As we have seen before, the reliance on the vagaries of nationality as the basis for a political ideology can create enormous problems, from which the country of Yugoslavia would not escape throughout the entire course of its existence.

The story of the German defeat is well known. It is perhaps less well known that Tito’s Partisans won the civil war that had further divided Yugoslavia. Lest too much emphasis be placed on the social justice mission of the Communists and Tito’s commitment to universalism, it is important to point out that the Partisans engaged in deplorable violence following the conclusion of WWII. Although Pavelic himself escaped, the Partisans executed 50,000 Croatian Ustase soldiers as well as 30,000 refugees, many of them women and children. The Communists eventually caught, tried and executed Mihailovic, the leader of the Cetniks as an alleged war criminal. The new Communist leadership then persecuted the Cetniks and drove many to become fugitives. Perhaps even more devastating in the long run, Tito, committed to the development of a unified state, refused to publicly admit or discuss the true nature of the civil war that had torn the country apart. According to Balkan journalist Chuck Sudetic, Tito’s failure to acknowledge the reality of the horrific crimes of nationalism that had occurred during the war eroded his legitimacy and ultimately helped to create the conditions for the country to collapse once again into a state of ethnic violence, a series of occurrences that will be discussed more fully in the next chapter.

It is somewhat ironic that Tito and the Communists created a federal structure for Yugoslavia based on nationalist politics because they held the socialist belief that once
the population found its basic needs met, as they would within a socialist state, the
necessity of nationalist rhetoric would dissipate. According to one scholar of Balkan
politics, Sabrina Ramet, Tito and the other Yugoslav politicians held that “[t]he
anticipated process of homogenization would, therefore, erode the basis for the federal
system. No doubt in the ripeness of time national differences would wither away – a
prerequisite for the withering away of either federalism or the state.”95 The Communists
in general, and Tito in particular, acknowledged that the violation of people’s basic
human rights contributed to the strength of national and ethnic identity. They thus
theorized that if a country protected the population’s basic human rights, they would not,
therefore, need nationalism. As Ramet points out, Tito thus envisioned the federal
structure of Yugoslavia, based on the existence of six separate nations, to serve as a very
temporary remedy. Tito seems, however, to have underestimated the degree to which
nationalism serves not only as a recourse for the persecuted, but also as a political tool of
the powerful and the power-hungry, and national problems would continue to plague
Yugoslavia.

In 1946, however, immediately following the conclusion of the war, elections
determined the make-up of a new Constituent Assembly and confirmed Tito as the
country’s leader. The Constituent Assembly abolished the Monarchy and approved a
new constitution for the Federal Peoples Republic of Yugoslavia [FPRY], which,
according to Vucinich, “sanctioned and legalized the political, social, and economic
reforms of the new regime.”96 The first article of the Constitution recognized that the
right of self-determination of the peoples, including the right of each of the six states to
secede, would provide legitimacy for the new country. The second article officially
recognized the existence of those six states proposed by the AVNOJ some years earlier (see Map 4 on page 109). Recognizing the possibility of conflict between the idea of self-determination and the existence of six previously determined national states, Article 13, drawing no doubt upon the ideas of the Minority Treaties, stated, “[n]ational minorities in the FPRY enjoy the right to and protection of their own cultural development and the free use of their own language.” Finally, Article 23 drew upon the language of universal protection of rights, proclaiming:

All citizens of the Federal People’s Republic of Yugoslavia are equal before the law and enjoy equal rights regardless of nationality, race, and creed.

No privileges on account of birth, position, property, status, or degree of education are recognized.

Any act granting privileges to citizens or limiting their rights on grounds of difference in nationality, race, and creed, and any propagation of national, racial, and religious hatred and discord are contrary to the Constitution and punishable by law.97

Clearly an inherent conflict existed within these articles of the Constitution. On one hand the Constitution created six states, each with their own measure of sovereignty, including the right to secession, based in large part on ethnic, national identity. On the other hand, the Constitution promised equality for all, regardless of nationality. The conflict between the universalism of rights on the one side and the particularity of nationalism on the other would continue to create tension within the new state.

In the meantime, the Constitution did establish the Republic of Macedonia within the new structure of Yugoslavia. In fact, in a tribute to the legend of the fighters who struggled against the oppression of the Turks for a “free Macedonia,” the republic was proclaimed in 1944 on August 2nd, the anniversary of the Ilinden Revolt. In addition, the leadership established a standard literary Macedonian language as the official language of
Map 4

Yugoslavia, 1945-1991

the new republic. Just as it had in the other Balkan states, Danforth acknowledges that
the official designation of a Macedonian language served as a major contributor to the
development of a definitively Macedonian identity. He then points out, however, that
“[t]he decision to establish Macedonian as the official language of the Republic of
Macedonia in 1944, therefore, confirmed what was already de facto in practice. It did not
create a language out of the air, rather it granted recognition to a literary language whose
modern development began in the nineteenth century.”98 The question then becomes
whether a general Macedonian national consciousness existed prior to this time, as
Macedonian nationalists would eventually claim it did, or rather, as the Greeks claim,
Tito “created” a Macedonian identity on August 2, 1944. Danforth, acknowledging the
subjective nature of national identity, recognizes the difficulty, if not impossibility of
answering the question.99

Danforth then points out that whether or not a Macedonian nation existed, “the
Communist Party of Yugoslavia had important political reasons for declaring that one did
exist and for fostering its development through a concerted process of nation building,
employing all means at the disposal of the Yugoslav state.”100 Given the emphasis on the
self-determination of peoples, the Yugoslavs needed to eliminate any remaining sense of
Bulgarian consciousness among the people. The Bulgarian occupation of Macedonia no
doubt helped the Yugoslavs with this task. Furthermore, the interwar period had proved
the impossibility of calling the inhabitants Serbs. Thus, Danforth concludes, “the only
alternative was to recognize the Slavs of Macedonia as something else – as
Macedonians.”101 The ability of the Yugoslavs to “decide” on the existence of a
Macedonian nation and then to “foster” its development, suggests yet again the
subjectivity and malleability of nationality in general. At the same time, the
establishment of a Macedonian nation, irrespective of whatever national consciousness
may or may not have already existed, also provides another example of politicians
exploiting nationality in pursuit of a political agenda.

At almost the exact same time, prompted by the enormous suffering wrought in
part by militant nationalism during the Second World War, concerned citizens of the
world met to determine an objective standard, in contrast to the subjective nature of
nationalism, with which to discuss human rights. Following the establishment of the
United Nations, in 1946 the General Assembly decided to support the creation of an
International Bill of Rights. Eleanor Roosevelt would eventually head the newly-created
Commission on Human Rights, which sought the perspectives of philosophers,
academics, cultural and religious figures, and other experts from around the world to
participate in this endeavor. Finally, in 1948, after two years, numerous individuals, non-
governmental organizations (NGO’s), the UN, and the governments of all states who
claimed membership in the UN, produced a draft declaration articulating the human
rights that all people in the world deserved. On December 10, 1948 the General
Assembly voted on the document and forty-eight of the delegates voted in favor of
accepting it, none opposed the declaration, and only eight abstained. Thus the Universal
Declaration of Human Rights came into existence. ¹⁰²

In its preamble the Universal Declaration of Human Rights acknowledged, as
Wilson had following WWI, the connection between human rights abuse and violence, a
pattern that repeatedly played out over the course of history in the Balkans. In fact, the
preamble states, “It is essential, if man is not to be compelled to have recourse as a last
resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected
by the rule of law." In the Balkans, "rebellion against tyranny" had often taken the
form of nationalist discourse that called attention to the mistreatment of minorities.
Wilson had hoped to avoid such problems through the Minority Treaties, which provided
legal protection for people on the basis of their minority status. As we have seen,
however, the subjective nature of national identity and hence minority status created
problems with enforcement of the Minority Treaties.

The Universal Declaration, therefore, states in Article 1 that "All human beings
are born free and equal in dignity and rights," thus recognizing the universality of the
rights owed to all people. Article 2 continues, "Everyone is entitled to all the rights and
freedoms set forth in this Declaration without distinction of any kind, such as race, color,
sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property,
birth, or status." Unlike the Minority Treaties, the Universal Declaration of Human
Rights does not base the protection of rights for minorities on something as illusive and
difficult to define as minority status. Instead, all people irrespective of, among other
things, their ethnicity, deserve the same basic rights. The Declaration then enumerates
thirty articles that spell out the basic rights to which all people are entitled, including the
"right to life, liberty, and the security of person," and the "right to recognition before the
law." Until this point our discussion of human rights has necessarily been somewhat
vague; although people intuitively understand the concept of human rights, before 1948
no internationally recognized definition of human rights existed. Following the writing
of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, however, the peoples of the world had
agreed upon an objective list of basic rights that did not depend on an individual’s perspective or a cultural point of view.

In sharp contrast, as we have seen in the Balkans and in Macedonia, national or ethnic identity always involved some measure of individual perspective. In fact, the Declaration even officially recognizes the subjectivity of national identity. Article 15 states first, “Everyone has the right to a nationality,” and then, “No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality nor denied the right to change his nationality.” In other words, to a certain extent the decision to change one’s nationality does depend, and should depend, on the individual. The Declaration thus recognizes the subjectivity inherent in nationalism and, in contrast with the divisive power of national ideologies, proclaims an objective definition of the rights to which people everywhere are entitled simply by virtue of their humanness.

The Cold War Era

In addition to the creation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which proclaimed the unity and commonality of people everywhere around the world, the post-WWII era also witnessed the dawn of the Cold War, which divided the globe into two, distinct, armed camps. Just as the Balkan wars saw former allies turn to enemies, shortly after fighting together during WWII, in the post-war setting the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. faced each other as adversaries. When the end of the war brought Tito’s communist government to power, it seemed a foregone conclusion that Tito’s Yugoslavia would stand shoulder to shoulder with Joseph Stalin’s U.S.S.R. That assumption, however, overlooked the degree to which Tito favored Yugoslav national interests over and above
the dictates of Soviet strategy. Stalin, in turn, deeply resented Tito’s independence and disliked his attempts to organize Balkan politics on his own. The tension eventually came to a head in 1948 when Stalin denounced Tito and the Soviet Union ceased all cooperation with Yugoslavia.\textsuperscript{107}

Although Stalin hoped that his policies would force Tito back into the Soviet-dominated Communist fold, Tito developed other plans. He increased trade with the West, although without abandoning his country’s socialist ideology. Furthermore, he used the spirit of Yugoslav nationalism as a force to mobilize and encourage his country in the face of Soviet bullying.\textsuperscript{108} Yet again outside pressure and aggression stimulated the development of national sentiment. Tito’s stance and policies paid rich dividends because Yugoslavia began to play a unique role in the Cold War world, as it became, in Glenny’s words, “one of the most respected international actors outside the two power blocs.” For example, after Turkey and Greece joined NATO in 1952, in spite of Yugoslavia’s socialist orientation, Tito signed a five-year “Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation,” with the two countries in 1953. The three states supplemented their political agreement with a military alliance, concluded in 1954, in which they agreed that they would consider any act of aggression against one state as an aggressive action taken against all three.\textsuperscript{109} The Soviet Union’s policy toward Yugoslavia only changed in 1955 when Stalin’s death brought Nikita Khrushchev to power. The two countries then normalized their relations, but by that time Tito had carved out a place for Yugoslavia as an independent actor within the socialist camp still capable of maintaining good relations with the West.\textsuperscript{110}
In spite of employing Yugoslav nationalism in the service of his foreign policy, Tito continued to fear nationalism in general. As Sabrina Ramet explains, Tito and Yugoslavia’s Marxists believed that “nationalism was the social relationship in which distinct national communities faced each other with mutually exclusive demands fired by collective arrogance and tinged with resentment of the unmatched gains of the other.” They had hoped that “economic equality [would cause] nationalist temper to abate.” Tito’s Marxists thus recognized the inherently divisive and competitive nature of nationalism and feared its ability to create tensions among peoples. They hoped that by removing the economic grievances that had played such an important role in generating the violence that wreaked havoc across the Balkans they could thus eliminate nationalism.

By 1964, however, Tito had to accept the reality that the various nations of Yugoslavia were not on the verge of disintegration in favor of socialist unity. Following the Eighth Congress of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia (LCY) Tito thus allowed for a greater degree of federalism and political decentralization within Yugoslavia as the separate republics gained greater authority. Nevertheless, nationalist tensions continued to occur, particularly between Serbs and Croats, the old political enemies of the interwar years. Within the Republic of Croatia, Croats feared that not only was the central government of Belgrade exploiting them economically, but also that they were being exploited merely by virtue of being Croats. As evidence they pointed to the gradual demographic displacement of Croats by Serbs, and what they felt was the Serbianization of the Croatian language. Ramet points out that although other
factors could have accounted for these developments, the overwhelming majority of Croats viewed them as evidence of a Serbian menace.\textsuperscript{113}

As language had always played an important role in determining the national identity of Balkan peoples, in 1967 unsurprisingly language served as the focal point for the first major dispute in over twenty years between Serbs in Croats. Since 1954 an understanding called the Novi Sad Agreement had regulated the literary language for the country by establishing a blend of dialects as a language known as Serbo-Croat or Croato-Serb. In 1967, however, Croats had begun to feel that the standard that regulated their language unduly recognized the Serbian dialect. Glenny relates, "Croat intellectuals argued that by choosing the Serbian variant as the literary language, the Agreement had relegated Croatian to the status of a regional dialect, thus ignoring its rich literary history."\textsuperscript{114} The Serbs eventually conceded many of the points demanded by the Croats during the dispute, and in return asked for special rights for the Serbs living in Croatia.\textsuperscript{115} Nationalism thus continued to emphasize the differences, real or perceived, between two of the groups living in Yugoslavia.

As nationalist feelings continued to grow within Croatia, by 1969 they sparked a political outpouring as newspapers began to write critical articles about subjects previously considered off-limits. Over the next few years these newspapers, such as Hrvatski tjednik (Croatian Weekly), wanted to know why, when the Serbs made up only fifteen percent of Croatia's population, "even in Zagreb, the capital...there were 56.5 Serbs and only 40.8 percent Croats on the city police force in 1971."\textsuperscript{116} Ramet explains that as the Croatian renaissance increasingly exhibited anti-Serb overtones, the Serbs living in Croatia questioned their own status in the republic as they wondered about the
“impact of heightened Croatian national consciousness on their rights of national self-expression.” The Croatian cultural awakening quickly took on an exclusive character. Although the newspapers asked important questions beneficial to all citizens of Croatia, by employing anti-Serb sentiment the movement alienated an important minority of the population.

Glenny then comments on the awkward nature of questions such as these because:

For the largely rural Serb population in Croatia, numerical supremacy in Croatia’s security forces was a guarantee against any resurgence of Ustase ideology. For the Croats, it was a permanent reminder that Yugoslavia had never escaped its Greater Serbian origins. This conundrum lay at the heart of Yugoslavia’s national question: the status of Croats as a minority in Yugoslavia, and of the Serbs as a minority in Croatia.

The problems within Yugoslavia during the early 1970’s demonstrate the extremely divisive nature of nationalism, as well as the difficulties in basing a country’s politics on national identity. Militant nationalist ideologies that had developed as a result of the policies propagated by terrorist leaders such a Pavelic during WWII had convinced the people that real and frightening differences existed between them. Thus the existence of minority populations, whether in Yugoslavia as a whole or in the Republic of Croatia alone became a serious political problem.

Tito responded to the poignant questions being asked in Croatia in particularly brutal fashion. As noted earlier, he had never allowed the country to engage in honest dialogue about the divisive affects of nationalist ideology during WWII. Similarly, in 1971 he denounced the Communist leadership of Croatia, declaring that they had lost control of the Party. Tito then demanded their resignations and the police and army arrested and imprisoned the “ringleaders” in Zagreb. Tito next forced out liberal Serbian politicians as well and eventually purged the Communist Party within
Macedonia. Misha Glenny harshly criticizes Tito’s course of action. Instead of allowing the resolution of nationalist problems through a steady democratization of the Yugoslavian system, Tito and his closest advisors “were playing Zagreb against Belgrade, stirring up animosities in order to consolidate their own authority.” In other words, while cracking down on the democratic values and freedom of expression that had begun to emerge in Croatia, Tito also exploited nationalist tensions between Serbs and Croats to increase his own power. His actions provide yet another example of a leader exploiting nationalism as tool for private ends and hidden agendas. Tito used nationalist fears as an excuse to rid the Communist party of its most liberal members. As a result, his purges in 1971 and 1972 did not lead to the recentralization of political power in the government and the Party, but simply the consolidation of authority in the hands of Tito and his small group of trusted advisers. During the remainder of his reign, Tito’s use of nationalism to consolidate his own power would not have serious consequences for the human rights of the inhabitants of Yugoslavia, but within several decades the long-term effects of Tito’s policies would contribute to massive human rights violations.

With the Croatian crisis resolved for the moment, yet another nationalist issue arose to challenge the politicians of the country. After much debate, in 1971 the leaders of Yugoslavia decided to recognize “Muslim” as a national group on par with the other five recognized by governmental policy: the Serbs, Croats, Slovenes, Macedonians, and Montenegrins. While the Republic of Bosnia approved of this policy because it accepted the religiocultural heritage of the majority of people within the Republic as sufficient basis for national identity, the League of Communists of Macedonia insisted that “Muslims who speak Macedonian are Macedonian,” and emphasized that they viewed
themselves as "Macedonians of Islamic faith." They declared, "Muslim ethnic affiliation cannot be connected with this or that republic or spoken language because every citizen, without regard to where he or she lives, enjoys the same freedom of expressing her or his national or ethnic affiliation, which cannot be confused with religious affiliation." Ramet then explains that Kosovo’s position challenged that of Macedonia by contradicting the claim that those who spoke the Macedonian language were necessarily ethnic Macedonians and asserted instead the right of each individual to choose an ethnic affiliation. Their position allowed for the possibility that the inhabitants of Macedonia who spoke a Slavic dialect but practiced the Islamic faith might choose to identify themselves as Muslim in the ethnic sense as opposed to declaring an ethnic identity as Macedonians.

The debate reveals two important aspects of the nature of national or ethnic identity. First, there is no fixed upon idea of what determines one’s national identity. Clearly in the Balkans religion, language, and location have all played important roles, but when they do not necessarily point to one ethnicity or another, who then makes the determination? As we have seen throughout the course of Macedonian history, an individual’s subjective choice plays an important role in the decision-making process. At the same time, when political power and authority rest, to a certain extent, on issues related to the population’s nationality, politicians and military leaders often attempt to either force the population into the desired ethnicity, or eliminate them all together. The leaders of Macedonia did not, therefore, wish to see a segment of their population able to claim a different nationality other than Macedonian. Second, as Ramet points out, “the
position advanced by each republic – whether Bosnia, Macedonia, Croatia, or Kosovo – is the theory most appropriate to its own conditions. Each unit attempted to impose its own theory on the others even though that theory was only appropriate to its own republic.” In other words, political leaders yet again used the issue of national identity to further their own agendas.

The controversy ended when the League of Communists of Yugoslavia declared that everyone in Yugoslavia must be free to decide upon their own ethnicity. Ramet comments, “This vaguely formulated declaration amounted to a reprimand of Macedonia and Croatia and succeeded in brining this particular episode to a close.” The LCY thus officially endorsed the subjectivity inherent in ethnic identity by declaring that anyone could choose to identify himself or herself in whichever way he or she felt most comfortable. Objective and external methods for determining ethnic identity simply do not exist. Somewhat ironically, once the matter had been concluded, Professor Esad Cimic, the first to question openly the idea of “Muslim” as a nationality, left the multi-ethnic city of Sarajevo, declared himself a Croat, and moved to Zadar, a town located on the Croatian coast. He thus graphically demonstrated the ability of each individual to determine his or her own nationality, as well as the divisive power of nationalism.

Following the Muslim controversy, Titoist nationalities policy recognized six different peoples, or nations: Serbs, Croats, Slovenes, Macedonians, Montenegrins, and Muslims. The government also acknowledged various groups of “protected nationalities,” which included Albanians, Hungarians, Turks, Slovaks, Bulgarians, Romanians, Ruthenes/Ukrainians, Czechs, and Italians. The second group consisted of 2,200,000 persons, or 10.8 percent of the 1971 population. Although, as noted earlier, the 1946
Constitution had recognized each republic’s right to secede, the 1974 Constitution, which Tito developed following the Croatian crisis, accorded the right of secession to the peoples of Yugoslavia, that is to say, to each national group. The 1974 Constitution, therefore, did not grant the right to secede to groups such as the Hungarians or the Albanians as the government did not consider them as legitimate national groups within Yugoslavia.127

Furthermore, the 1974 Constitution did not provide any means of reconciling potential conflicts between the “peoples” and the republics. On one hand, the constitution suggested that states formed within the territory of Yugoslavia should be based on the right of self-determination of the peoples, and hence on their ethnicity or national identity. On the other hand, the same constitution attributed sovereignty and statehood not to the “Serbs,” “Croats,” and “Macedonians,” but to the six republics, regardless of the nationality of their populations. As Tito centralized all political power in his own hands, he ruled out the possibility of any outside or federal institution serving as an arbiter of the republics’ conflicting demands.128 Thus, in 1980, when Tito died at the age of eighty-seven, Glenny relates, “Yugoslavs of all nationalities went into demonstrative mourning, barely able to conceive of how their country could govern itself without their stern grandfather at the helm.”129 Up until the time of Tito’s death, therefore, politics based on nationality had only caused bickering, acrimony, and tensions between people and groups of people. The power vacuum created as a result of Tito’s shortsighted reliance on the politics of nationalism and governmental structures based on the vagaries of national and ethnic identity, however, would have disastrous consequences for the human rights of people all across the country of Yugoslavia.
Conclusion

In spite of the wars, extreme violence, and repeated occurrences of genocide, the twentieth century also witnessed the development of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Declaration attested to the universality of rights that all people deserve simply by virtue of their humanity. As concrete testimony of that universality, a huge variety of individuals, organizations, cultures, and governments contributed to writing and eventually signing the Declaration, thus providing, for the first time, the beginnings of an objective definition of universal human rights. In stark contrast, twentieth-century politics in the Balkans consistently demonstrated the malleability and subjectivity of nationalism. It is thus almost impossible to determine from an outside perspective the original nationality or ethnicity of Mother Teresa. It is only possible to state that when she was born, Skopje, the city of her birth was located in the Ottoman Empire.

The vagueness inherent in any definition of nationality means that basing any sort of political policy on national identity can cause significant problems. At the same time, the vagaries of national identity allow nationalism to serve as a tool for political leaders to rally mass support for their own, often secret, agendas. Thus while aspects such as language, religion, location, education, cultural traditions, and the existence of an enemy all seem to influence the development of a particular national identity, certainly the political considerations of leaders also play an incredibly important role. Through a focus on all these particulars, the process of developing a specific national identity then leads to an emphasis on the vast differences that exist between groups of people. As a result, though human rights violations undoubtedly also contribute to national sentiment, strong nationalism in the twentieth-century Balkan Peninsula, regardless of its source,
almost invariably led to human rights violations, and particularly genocide. The
particularism and divisive effects of nationalism constantly conflict with a universal
understanding of human rights and serve to hamper those who seek the protection of
basic rights for all people.

2Ibid.


4Brailsford, *Macedonia*, 152.


6Ibid., 205.

7Ibid., 185-186.

8August Kral, as quoted in ibid., 201.

9Ibid.


12Ibid., 215.


14Enver Pasha, as quoted in ibid.

15Gendarmerie commander, as quoted in Glenny, *The Balkans*, 216.


18Ibid., 528.


21James Bourchier, as quoted in Stavrianos, *The Balkans Since 1453*, 532.

23 Stavrianos, The Balkans Since 1453, 534-535.

24 Ibid., 536.

25 Evtuhov, History of Russia, 252.


27 Glenny, The Balkans, 246.

28 Ibid.

29 Stavrianos, The Balkans Since 1453, 539.

30 Glenny, The Balkans, 247.

31 International Commission, Carnegie Inquiry, 95.

32 Ibid.

33 Ibid., 148.

34 Ibid., 16-19.

35 Stavrianos, The Balkans since 1453, 539.


37 Ibid., 164.

38 Ibid., 206.

39 Glenny, The Balkans, 312.

40 Ibid., 333.

41 Stavrianos, The Balkans Since 1453, 561.

42 Glenny, The Balkans, 335.

43 Lauren, International Human Rights, 87.
44 Glenny, The Balkans, 326-27.

45 Lauren, International Human Rights, 86.

46 Ibid.

47 Ibid.


49 Lauren, International Human Rights, 93-94.


51 Lauren, International Human Rights, 93-94.


54 President Woodrow Wilson, as quoted in Lauren, International Human Rights, 94-95.

55 Lauren, International Human Rights, 95.

56 Minority Treaties, as quoted in ibid.


58 Stavrianos, The Balkans Since 1453, 579.


60 Stratis Myrivilis, as quoted in Danforth, Macedonian Conflict, 65.

61 Danforth, Macedonian Conflict, 65.


63 Ibid.
64 Danforth, Macedonian Conflict, 65.


66 Kofos, Nationalism and Communism in Macedonia, 47.

67 Ibid.

68 Elizabeth Barker, Macedonia: Its Place in Balkan Power Politics (London and New York: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1950), 38.

69 Kofos, Nationalism and Communism in Macedonia, 46.

70 Ibid., 51-52.

71 Pribichevich, Macedonia, 139.

72 Barker, Macedonia, 38, 45; Kofos, Nationalism and Communism in Macedonia, 52; and ibid., 141.

73 Pribichevich, Macedonia, 143.

74 Stavrianos, The Balkans Since 1453, 614-615.

75 Ibid., 615.

76 Ibid.


78 Glenny, The Balkans, 423.

79 Ibid., 474-476.


81 Glenny, The Balkans, 486-489.

82 Cetnik Manifesto, as quoted in ibid., 489.

83 Glenny, The Balkans, 486, 529.

84 Ibid., 486-487.

86Kofos, Nationalism and Communism in Macedonia, 98, 108.

87Ibid., 108.

88Ibid., 109.

89Ibid.

90Danforth, The Macedonian Conflict, 56.


921943 Jajce Resolution, as quoted in Kofos, Nationalism and Communism in Macedonia, 117.

93Glenny, The Balkans, 530-531.


99Ibid., 65.

100Ibid., 66-67.

101Ibid.


103Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as quoted in ibid., 299.

104Ibid., 300.

105Ibid., 300-303.
106 Ibid., 301.


108 Ibid., 535.


112 Ibid., 51-52.

113 Ibid., 99, 101.


115 Ibid.

116 Hrvatski tjednik, as quoted in ibid., 591.

117 Ramet *Nationalism and Federalism*, 111-110.


119 Ibid., 592-593; and Ramet, *Nationalism and Federalism*, 134.


121 League of Communists of Macedonia, as quoted in Ramet, *Nationalism and Federalism*, 182; and Ramet, *Nationalism and Federalism*, 180-182.


123 Ibid.

124 Ibid., 183.

125 Ibid.

126 Ibid.
127 Ibid., 55, 73.


Chapter III


Even after we had come to Macedonia, there was no rest for this body of ours. Far from it; we were beset by hardship on all sides, there were quarrels all around us and misgivings within us.

-2 Corinthians 7:5

Just as the twentieth century began with violent wars in the Balkans, the last years of the millennium also witnessed extreme violence in the region. Undoubtedly, nationalism played an important role in the human rights violations that occurred during the disintegration of Yugoslavia, which, incidentally, was one of the few states that had elected in 1948 not to sign the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The new and independent country of the Republic of Macedonia would emerge unscathed by war from the ashes of Yugoslavia, but would face considerable challenges regarding both nationalism and the protection of human rights in the first years of its existence.

The key to understanding Macedonia’s independence and, of course, more recent history, lies in the violent collapse of Yugoslavia. At Josip Broz Tito’s funeral in 1980, many present debated the future stability of Yugoslavia without Tito’s authoritative leadership. Balkan historian Misha Glenny explains that many articles in the Western press predicted the imminent likelihood of civil war and the resulting demise of Yugoslavia. Their views, however, ignored the important Cold War position of Yugoslavia, as both NATO and the Soviet Union benefited from an intact and stable Yugoslavia. Furthermore, the institution of the Yugoslav Federal Army (JNA) served to unite the various republics, and the communist leaders of the six states remained unified in their fight against liberalism. At the same time, Tito left a confusing political legacy.
As noted in Chapter 2, the 1974 Yugoslavian Constitution did not provide a way to reconcile differences either between the six republics or between the conflicting ideas of "peoples" and states. Although Tito feared nationalism and, following the conclusion of WWII, had attempted to repress all memories of the nationalist violence that had occurred, he had, ironically, created a state in which nationalism played a prominent role. As Slovenian journalist Miha Kovac explained, "You could be active within the existing political structure only on the basis of defending the interests of your republic or province....Nationalism is produced within the very structure of the Yugoslav system."

Although the post-Tito Yugoslavian government avoided any major crises in the years immediately following his death, the system that he had created began to show signs of strain. In 1981 the Albanians in Kosovo, an autonomous province technically within Serbia, revolted and demanded equal status with the other six republics. Although the federal government forcibly repressed their demands, the event set off alarm bells in Macedonia, which also contained a large minority of ethnic Albanians. At the same time the wealthier republics, Croatia and Slovenia, began to resent the government’s redistribution of wealth in favor of the poorer regions of Yugoslavia. In addition, the massive corruption within the government, high unemployment levels, and persistent strikes led Glenny to state, "Yugoslavia’s government was under siege in the mid-1980’s from its constituent parts," and yet support from both the West as well as the Federal Army allowed the country to continue to function. In spite of all the problems, Glenny concludes, "In the absence of overt nationalist agitation, the majority of Slovenes, Serbs, and Croats had no reason to bring down the federation."

The rise to power of Slobodan Milosevic, however, provided exactly that nationalist agitation.
The Break-Up of Yugoslavia

In the mid 1980’s Milosevic was elected as the president of the Serbian League of Communists. From this position, he began to challenge the Titoist system by provoking and promoting Serbian nationalism with the conscious intent of using nationalism as a means to achieve and consolidate his own personal power.\(^5\) Glenny explains that beginning in 1987 Milosevic played on the fears created by the earlier Albanian demonstrations in Kosovo to provoke Serbian nationalism among Serbs living within the province. In 1989 he used the pretext of concern for the Serbian population to embark on what he termed an “anti-bureaucratic” revolution, which effectively rescinded Kosovo’s autonomous status and incorporated the province completely within the Serbian Republic. His actions stemmed not from concerns for the Serb populations within Kosovo or even his own feelings of nationalism. Instead, Yugoslavia’s cumbersome federal structure provided for the government to be headed by an eight-member Federal Presidency, with representatives from each of the six republics as well as the two autonomous provinces. As a result, the other republics could outvote Serbia on any issue. Ending the autonomy of Kosovo and Vojvodina, the second autonomous province, allowed Milosevic to control three of the votes within the Presidency, and thus outvote the other republics. Once he had completed his political maneuvering, Milosevic completely lost interest in the state of affairs within Kosovo, and turned his attention to tensions with the Croatian Republic.\(^6\) Milosevic, like many other leaders before him, used and manipulated nationalism to serve his own private purposes.

At almost exactly the same time that Milosevic rescinded Kosovo’s autonomy, the Cold War ended with the collapse of the Berlin Wall. As a result, in January of 1990 the
Communist Party of Yugoslavia disbanded, bringing a final end to the fragile Titoist system. Elections were then scheduled for April and May in Slovenia and Croatia to form the first post-Communist governments of those republics. Within Croatia, the nationalist leader and former general, Franjo Tudjman, followed a course of action similar to that of Milosevic. In order to quickly build a power base, Tudjman developed a platform of Croatian nationalism that recalled the events of World War II, when the Croatian Ustase had conducted a campaign of genocide against the Serbs. During the election campaign Tudjman capitalized on many of the powerful symbols from that era as he adopted the “chessboard pattern” red and white flag of the Ustase state.

Anthropologist Bette Denich relates that the choice of that symbol, “served simultaneously to erase the regional distinctions among Croats and to emphasize the exclusion of those who associated that symbol with fascism and genocide.”

Tudjman’s actions reveal several important aspects of nationalism in general. First, the manipulation of Ustase symbols emphasized the particular, exclusive, divisive nature of nationalism. Second, the Ustase mythology provided an enemy, namely the Serbian minority within Croatia, to aid in the rallying of Croatians to the nationalist cause. Third, it is important to note that in the 1990’s most nationalists emphasized the divisions that had existed between the people during the World War II era. Particularly regarding the tensions between the Croatians and Serbians, the nationalists’ focus on the hostilities and abuses that occurred in the middle of the twentieth century further suggests a lack of “ancient ethnic hatreds.” Finally, as has happened throughout Balkan history, the growth of exclusive Croatian nationalism sparked a nationalist response from the Serbs living within Croatia. Denich explains, “Serbs in Croatia started to hold mass
rallies and organized a nationalist party to oppose the degradation of their constitutional status within Croatia.»8

The elections that followed the collapse of Communism thus brought ethnically-based parties to power in Croatia, Serbia, and all the other republics except for Macedonia, the only republic to exit Yugoslavia peacefully, a topic that will be returned to shortly. Regarding the elections, the last American Ambassador to Yugoslavia, Warren Zimmerman, commented, “By bringing nationalism to power almost everywhere, the elections helped snuff out the very flame of democracy that they had kindled. Nationalism is by nature uncivil, anti-democratic, and separatist because it empowers one ethnic group over all others.”9 Watching the actions of nationalists such as Milosevic and Tudjman, it is no surprise that Zimmerman harshly criticized the effects of divisive nationalism and viewed it as fundamentally opposed to democratic practices. Before too long, those nationalist leaders he had criticized would plunge the country into a war that entailed some of the worst human rights violations Europe had suffered since WWII.

Following the elections, Milosevic also gained control of the JNA. With his nationalist rhetoric, he threatened to use the army in order to further the cause of all Serbs living outside Serbia, especially in Croatia and Kosovo. Journalists Laura Silber and Allan Little explain that Milosevic “was able to present the other nations in Yugoslavia with a simple sinister choice: either stay in Yugoslavia on my terms, or fight a war against one of the largest armies in Europe.”10 Slovenia, the most homogenous as well as the wealthiest state took on the challenge. After a referendum in which the population voted for autonomy, Slovenia declared its independence from Yugoslavia. A short war ensued with relatively minor casualties before Milosevic allowed Slovenia to depart from
the federation so that he could focus his energies elsewhere. When Croatia followed Slovenia’s lead and declared independence, war ensued between the two republics over the status of their borders. Allowing Croatia to become an independent country, with the same borders that the Yugoslav Republic of Croatia had enjoyed, would have meant creating a substantial Serbian minority within the new state. Ostensibly to protect the rights of those Serbs living within Croatia, Milosevic contested the boundaries that would encompass the two states, and war began between Croatia and Serbia.

The outbreak of more sustained fighting placed the Yugoslav Republic of Bosnia in a very delicate position. Zimmerman explains that before the war began, Muslims, Catholics, and those practicing the Orthodox faith had coexisted fairly peacefully. In fact, he notes that Bosnia boasted the highest percentages of ethnically mixed marriages out of all the republics. In an effort to bolster their claims for the territory of Bosnia, however, Milosevic and Tudjman claimed that Bosnian Serbs and Bosnian Croats should live apart from Muslims. Their focus on divisive nationalism laid, in the words of Zimmerman, “the philosophical groundwork for a separate Muslim entity.” Once again particular and exclusive nationalism provoked a nationalist response. Bosnia thus declared its own independence and a vicious, three-way war began among the various groups that had previously lived together peacefully within the federal structure of Yugoslavia.

The war quickly claimed the lives of both civilians and combatants, brutally destroyed homes and villages, and created a large number of refugees. Following a pattern set in the early part of the century during the First and Second Balkan Wars,
nationalist leaders worked to rally the populations behind their war aims. Glenny explains that those leaders,

sought to instill fear less in “enemy” ranks than in their community. If ordinary Serbs believed that the Ustase were about to return, or if the Croats in the mixed areas of Croatia could be convinced that their neighbors were preparing for a Cetnik onslaught, then it would be much easier to mobilize them for war, according to the principle “kill before you are killed.”

Just as the nationalism of the earlier Balkan wars had resulted in extremely bloody conflicts and loss of civilian life, the nationalist leaders’ use of propaganda resulted in a similar pattern of events in this more recent Balkan conflict.

After Bosnia had declared its independence, nationalist Serbian leaders within Bosnia, with the backing of Milosevic and the JNA, declared their own Serbian mini-state within Bosnia. It is interesting to note that the man who became the political leader of this mini-state, Radovan Karadzic, did not begin his political career as a nationalist, or even as a Marxist. Instead, after the collapse of the Titoist system Karadzic attempted to found Bosnia’s first Green Party. When environmental issues failed to provide a powerful rallying cry, he, like many other leaders before and since, only then turned to nationalism as a way to further his personal ambition. Under Karadzic’s leadership, military figures attempted to physically carve an “ethnically pure” Serbian state out of the remains of Bosnia. Towards that end, they waged war on the Bosnian defense forces as well as against Muslim civilians.

Journalist Samantha Power cautions against viewing the large number of resulting refugees as a simple by-product of war. Instead, she writes:

[T]he purging of non-Serbs was not only an explicit war aim of the Serb nationalists; it was their primary aim. Serb gunmen knew that their violent deportation and killing campaign would not be enough to ensure
the lasting achievement of ethnic purity. The armed marauders sought to
sever permanently the bond between citizens and the land... Theirs was a
deliberate policy of destruction and degradation.¹⁴

Exclusive, particular nationalism that played on the people’s fears, thus led not only to
war but also to grave human rights abuses. It is important to note at this point that,
although all three sides engaged in war, the evidence agrees that the Serbian military
forces committed the vast majority of these abuses.¹⁵

As war and violence continued to escalate within Yugoslavia, the outside world
struggled to find a response. Led by Germany, the European Community recognized
Croatia as an independent state in 1991. By spring of 1992, all three breakaway republics
had won international recognition from Europe, America, and the United Nations,
thereby changing the conflict from a civil war to an international war. Thus, before new
international boundaries had been established, the areas of Bosnia and Croatia began to
be referred to in general as simply “the former Yugoslavia.” The international
community responded to the situation with a variety of attempts to stem the tide of
violence. Various mediators proposed peace-plans, which the participants then ignored.
In a move that would become important for Macedonia, the United Nations imposed
sanctions against Yugoslavia in an effort to coerce Milosevic and the other belligerents
into ending the conflict. In addition, UN peacekeepers deployed to various parts of the
former Yugoslavia. Although none of these polices showed any signs of bringing the
war to an end, within the U.S. various politicians argued against any forceful American
action to end the hostilities. Authorities such as George Kennan and George Bush’s
Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger cited the existence of “ancient ethnic hatreds,”
as a justification for this American policy of inaction.¹⁶
According to many journalists, even Bill Clinton fell under the spell of the "ancient ethnic hatreds" idea after reading Robert Kaplan's book, *Balkan Ghosts: A Journey Through History*. Kaplan portrays the Balkans as a region steeped in hatred and violence and in fact opens the book with the astounding and unsubstantiated claim: "Nazism, for instance, can claim Balkan origins. Among the flophouses of Vienna, a breeding ground of ethnic resentments close to the southern Slavic world, Hitler learned how to hate so infectiously." How then is it possible to reconcile the views of those who believe that "ancient ethnic hatreds" have colored the Balkans for centuries with the evidence against the theory amassed in this thesis? Several factors both help to account for the difference in views and shed light on the dangerous nature of nationalism.

We have seen that various leaders throughout the course of Balkan history have manipulated nationalism to serve their own agendas. Regarding the conflict in the early 1990’s, Bosnian historian Noel Malcolm explains that the leaders who terrorized Bosnia during the war actively propagated the myth of ancient enmity. They "wanted the world to believe that what they and their gunmen were doing was done not by them, but by the impersonal and inevitable historical forces beyond anyone’s control." U.S. policymakers who preferred a course of American inaction in the Balkans, for whatever their own personal reasons, could then grasp the logic of "ancient ethnic hatreds" as a convenient excuse. In addition, as Balkan leaders such as Milosevic and Tudjman manipulated nationalism to serve their own quests for power, part of their nationalist rhetoric involved convincing the people that the current enemy had always been an enemy. Glenny observed a similar pattern during the Second Balkan War, as was
discussed in Chapter 2. Thus rather than exploring historical evidence, politicians as well as journalists such as Kaplan, took the current rhetoric about history as historical fact.

It is telling that, in contrast with figures such as Kaplan and Kennan, much of the analysis that has emerged since the onset of the war places the blame for the violence not with the bloodthirsty populations at large, but rather with the leaders. For example, in 1992 Warren Zimmerman wrote in a confidential cable to Secretary of State James Baker, “Historians can argue about the role of the individual in history. I have no doubt that if Milosevic’s parents had committed suicide before his birth rather than after, I would not be writing a cable about the death of Yugoslavia. Milosevic, more than anyone else, is its gravedigger.” Historian Dennison Rusinow agreed with Zimmerman’s sentiment, only expanding slightly to note:

Yugoslavia disintegrated primarily because of megalomaniac and ruthless demagogic politicians (most of them ex- or pseudo ex-Communists) and nationalist intellectuals (often, also ex-Communists) who discovered that nationalism was a more potent tool to mobilize support and to gain or retain power than Marxism had ever been. Nationalism can easily serve as a powerful tool for the power hungry, and that nationalism can then so quickly lead to gross abuses of human rights.

War, however, and the commission of human rights abuses clearly engulfed a large number of people within Yugoslavia. The question then becomes why, if the people did not nurse ancient grievances against other ethnic groups, did so many permit and participate in the violence. Ambassador Zimmerman speaks to that issue, noting, “The breakup of Yugoslavia is a classic example of nationalism from the top down – a manipulated nationalism in a region where peace has historically prevailed more than war.” The nationalist leaders thus used symbols, such as the Ustase flag, to instill fear
in the people and convince them, as discussed earlier, of the need for violence.

Furthermore, an important part of this process involved the manipulation of the media in order to propagate the nationalist message the leaders desired. Glenny explains:

Television played a seminal role in preparing people not just for war but for the spiral of massacre that was to come. Day after day RTV Belgrade and Croatian Television (HTV) emitted images of atrocity, while historical documentaries and movies about the Second World War romanticized each nation's soldiery. One friend from Belgrade described RTV Serbia and HTV as the two greatest war criminals of them all.

Following a similar pattern as that of the propaganda machines during the Second Balkan War, nationalist leaders manipulated the media to instill violent feelings and fear in their populations.

Lest the comparisons between the Second Balkan war and the disintegration of Yugoslavia be taken as evidence that in fact the Balkan people have nursed grievances against one another for at least a century, it is important to point out that while the process is the same, the people involved differed completely. During the Second Balkan War, the propaganda devices created enmity between Greeks and Bulgarians, not between Serbs and Croatians. As further testimony to the recent nature of the tensions between the latter two groups, Glenny again points to the World War II era as the source of most of the images of violence broadcast on television. Tito's repression of the events following those conflicts, so that no comprehensive and truthful version of the facts emerged, in some ways allowed later leaders to manipulate those same events for their own ends. These twin issues of the responsibility of individuals and the importance of establishing a truthful historical record of events will be returned to at the end of the chapter.
Macedonian Independence

Before the war in the former Yugoslavia had come to an end, one republic, Macedonia, managed to declare its independence and establish itself as a full-fledged member of the international community without resorting to violence. On the eve of the collapse of Communism, the Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia contained a population of mostly ethnic Slav Macedonians with a substantial minority of ethnic Albanians, along with a considerable number of other, smaller, minority groups. Albanian demands within Kosovo concerned Macedonian leaders, as they feared the growing discontent of Albanians within Macedonia. These officials worried that radical elements within Kosovo would create instability and undermine authority inside Macedonia.24

When the Yugoslav Communist Party disbanded in 1990, ethnic groups within Macedonia scrambled to form political parties, just as they had in Croatia. A variety of both Albanian and Macedonian nationalist parties quickly sprang up. One Macedonian group, following the pattern of exploiting symbols and events from the past to strengthen a nationalist platform, adopted the name of the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization – Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity (VMRO-DPMNU).25 As was discussed in Chapter 2, the original VMRO had served as a terrorist organization ostensibly dedicated to the formation of a “free” Macedonia. As evidence of the particularist nature of these ethnically based political parties, Henryk J. Sokalski, the man who would later lead a UN mission in Macedonia, explains, “Few or no ethnic Albanians, Turks, Roma (Gypsies) or Serbs have joined ethnic Macedonian parties and vice versa. In their efforts to gain public support most Macedonian political parties have given
priority to ethnic interests, contributing to the growing nationalism of all ethnic groups in the country."

In contrast to the situation in Croatia and Serbia, however, in Macedonia no single party won a clear majority of seats in the parliament, even after three rounds of voting. Although VMRO had won the largest number of seats, 38 out of 120, various coalition governments proved short-lived. Finally, in January of 1991 the parliament elected the former Communist, Kiro Gligorov, as president, and in March he formed a cabinet of non-party experts. Regarding the character of the new government, historian Aleksandar Pavkovic remarks, "The failure of the nationalist parties to win outright control of the government and the inclusion of Albanian party leaders in successive Macedonian governments probably prevented the escalation of inter party conflict into an inter ethnic conflict." If politics based on nationalism led to war in the other parts of Yugoslavia, then politics within Macedonia that escaped somewhat from the narrow confines of nationalist rhetoric contributed to the republic's peaceful transition to independence.

Originally the new president and government of Macedonia had not supported the nationalist parties' demands to proclaim independence from Yugoslavia. Once the fighting escalated in Croatia in 1991, however, the Macedonian government decided to hold a referendum on independence. Anthropologist Loring Danforth points out that during the referendum not only did citizens of the Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia vote on independence, but people who identified themselves as Macedonians, regardless of their country of origin or residence, also participated, albeit unofficially, in the process. Danforth writes, "The extension of the right to vote – even unofficially – to Macedonians who were not citizens of the republic reveals a blurring of the distinction between two
crucial categories, citizens of the Macedonian state, on the one hand, and members of the Macedonian nation, on the other.” While citizenship within Macedonia proves a relatively easy category to describe objectively, as has already been discussed, much more subjective factors determine national identity. In fact, it seems that within the Balkans there is little to no difference between an “ethnic identity,” or one that is associated with a specific ethnic group, and a “national identity,” which is related to a particular “nation.” The ethnic group and the nation usually refer to the same concept, although the concept itself is vague and subjective.

Following the referendum in which the voters indicated their desire for independence, the Gligorov government proclaimed the country a sovereign and independent state and successfully negotiated the peaceful withdrawal of JNA forces. In 1991 the city of Skopje thus changed hands yet again, this time serving as the capital of the independent Republic of Macedonia (see Map 5 on page 145). One year after Mother Teresa had celebrated her eightieth birthday, her birthplace entered the jurisdiction of yet another new state. As leaders within Macedonia began to write a constitution and define the nature of the new state, they continued to struggle with the differences between national identity and identity based on citizenship. The preamble to the constitution referred to both the Krusevo Republic and the decisions of the AVNOJ, discussed in Chapter 2, thus demonstrating again the importance of symbols and establishing a historical continuity in the nationalist process of forming a new state.

Furthermore, the preamble provided a privileged position for members of the

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*The name of the new country ignited a fierce debate with Greece and, consequently, elicited much international attention. The tensions with Greece over the name “Macedonia” will be dealt with shortly. In the mean time, and for convenience sake, the terms “Macedonia” and the “Republic of Macedonia” are used interchangeably to refer to the newly independent country. The choice of words does not imply any conscious political stance.
Map 5
Republic of Macedonia

Macedonian nation. It states, “Macedonia is established as a national state of the Macedonian people, in which full equality as citizens and permanent co-existence with the Macedonian people is provided for Albanians, Turks, Vlachs, Romanics and other nationalities living in the Republic of Macedonia.” The preamble thus proclaimed Macedonia first and foremost as the state of the Macedonian people, and only after that as the state for all other minority groups.

Similarly, Article 7 of the constitution established the Macedonian language as the official language of the Republic of Macedonia. The article then allowed the mechanisms of local self-government in areas dominated by inhabitants of a “nationality” to use their own language in addition to the Macedonian language. Regarding education, Article 48 allowed members of nationalities “the right to instruction in their language...[but] in schools where education is carried out in the language of a nationality, the Macedonian language is also studied.” The constitution thus followed the pattern established by Yugoslavia, in which one predominant “nation” enjoyed a higher status and greater benefits than other groups of “nationalities” living within the country.

Unsurprisingly, the minority groups within the country objected to many aspects of the constitution. A policy analyst for the Balkans relates, “Opposition to the definition of the state articulated in the preamble was evident from the outset.” The Albanians rejected their secondary status, behind that of Macedonians, while Serbian leaders felt their group deserved a more official minority status on par with the other groups. By its emphasis on the national distinctions between the peoples, the constitution exacerbated

*Although many different terms are used to officially designate the group unofficially referred to as the “Gypsies,” the word “Roma” will be used throughout this thesis except for where it occurs in direct quotations.*
the tensions and differences that existed between the various groups living within Macedonia. The constitution thus provides one more example of the way in which a reliance on politics based on nationalism can cause a multitude of problems.

In addition to the politics of particularist nationalism, however, the leaders of Macedonia also emphasized a more universal conception of the human rights deserving to all the people within Macedonia. In September of 1991 the newly elected National Assembly of Macedonia declared, “The Republic of Macedonia, as a sovereign and independent state, shall strive for persistent respect of the generally adopted principles of international relations contained in the documents of the United Nations, the Final Document of CSCE [Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe] from Helsinki and the Paris Charter.” The Helsinki document had come about when a large number of states met at the CSCE in 1975. The participants at the conference recognized the important connections between security among states and the respect for human the rights of individuals. The resulting Helsinki Final Act not only referred to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by name, but also, as human rights expert Paul Lauren explains, “it contained very explicit language recognizing ‘the universal significance’ of human rights.” By referring to the Helsinki Final Act in their declaration of sovereignty, the leaders of Macedonia pledged to uphold the universal human rights of all people within the country. In addition, in spite of the rhetoric of nationalism in the preamble to the constitution, the preamble also declared the importance of “the guaranteeing of human rights, citizens’ freedoms and ethnic equality.”
The government matched actions to rhetoric as Macedonia acceded to all major international instruments created to promote the protection of human rights. Furthermore, as Sokalski reports:

[T]he National Assembly has built a comprehensive legislative network to comply with the provisions of the International Covenants on Human Rights and other binding international standards. By virtue of the constitution, international agreements duly ratified – including human rights instruments – have permanently become incorporated into the domestic legal order, immune from acts of Parliament.36

In addition to testifying to the universal nature of human rights, the Macedonian legislation regarding international protection of human rights speaks to the objective nature of those rights. Since the signing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, a vast number of organizations, institutions, and binding international documents have all focused on the universal aspect of human rights. That these independent and international bodies can make laws for the people of Macedonia, laws that even their own Parliament cannot challenge, suggests that these rights exist outside of and independent of specific cultural practices and norms. Part of the justification for this universalism stems from the idea that, in the words of Sokalski, “gross violations of human rights go hand-in-hand with situations that may threaten the peace and security and are likely to degenerate into confrontation.”37 In addition to Macedonia’s avoidance of excessive nationalism in the government, her promotion of universal human rights perhaps contributed to her successful and non-violent bid for independence. Nevertheless, in addition to troubles created by the ongoing war in the former Yugoslavia, the particularist nationalism in the Macedonian Constitution and Government would continue to create problems both internally and externally for the fledgling state.
External Problems Resulting from Macedonian Independence

Upon declaring independence in 1991, Macedonia immediately faced significant problems in gaining international recognition. The constitutional emphasis on the connection between the Macedonian nation and the newly established Macedonian state created difficulties with those countries whose populations included a Macedonian minority. Greece and Bulgaria both protested against the establishment of an independent Macedonia because, as was discussed in Chapter 2, they had incorporated portions of Ottoman Macedonia into their states. Greece and Bulgaria feared that Macedonian leaders hoped to expand their territorial boundaries to encompass all the regions in which they could claim that Macedonians comprised the majority of the population. The Macedonian Constitution in some ways helped foster this belief as Article 49 stated, “The Republic cares for the status and rights of those persons belonging to the Macedonian people in neighboring countries.” In contrast to promoting the universal human rights of everyone within the state, Article 49 promised to look after the interests of specifically Macedonian people, wherever they might live. Thus, Glenny explains, “The Slav Macedonians, poor and small in number, have been branded as ruthless expansionists by three of their four neighbors, Serbia, Bulgaria, and Greece.”

Perhaps in part to counter possible Macedonian claims to the Bulgarian territory inhabited by Macedonians, the Bulgarian Government refused to admit the existence of any Macedonian minority, asserting instead the Bulgarian nationality of the entire population. Glenny explains, however, “You may find many areas, both in Macedonia and Bulgaria where the peasants do not really know whether they are Macedonians or Bulgarians (and in some places they think they may be Serbs).” The situation in late
twenty-first-century Macedonia thus appears strikingly similar to that of the early twentieth century. Ethnic or national identity is a subjective and confusing category, certainly difficult to determine from an outside and objective perspective. Nevertheless, politicians do not hesitate to claim the existence of a particular ethnicity in order to bolster support for their political goals. In spite of the tension regarding minority issues, in 1991 Bulgaria became the first country to recognize Macedonia’s independence. Significantly, though, Bulgaria recognized Macedonia only as a state and refused to admit the existence of a separate Macedonian nation.41

In contrast with Bulgaria, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) refused to recognize Macedonia until 1996, preferring instead to view the border between the two states as simply administrative.42 In 1991 Milosevic even put forward a proposal to dismember the country and partition it with Greece. The Bulgarian and Greek leaders, however, rejected Milosevic’s proposition. Nevertheless, reliable sources within Macedonia continuously warned of the possibility that Milosevic would attack the new country. And, indeed, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia had attacked Slovenia, Croatia, and Bosnia upon each republic’s declaration of independence. Furthermore, within Serbia leaders began to call for the protection of the rights of the Serbian minority within Macedonia.43 Rather than a concern for the rights of the Serbs, however, nationalist leaders in Serbia used the situation in order to provide a possible excuse for their southward expansion.44 The situation thus further demonstrates the dangers of a policy that promotes the rights of a particular group of people, rather than an appreciation of the universal rights that all people deserve, regardless of their nationality.
In addition, before Yugoslavia began to disintegrate, Serbia had served as Macedonia’s largest trading partner. Although not yet a UN member in 1992, Macedonia agreed to support the UN sanctions levied against Yugoslavia in an attempt to bring the war there to an end. As a result of ending trade with Serbia, Macedonia lost approximately $1.8 billion in revenue, a deficit that hurt the small country deeply. The sanctions caused the beginning of an economic crisis within Macedonia, which then placed further strain on tensions between ethnic groups. Historian Gus Xhudo comments, “The worsening economic crisis will not bode well for its ethnic minorities who are already causing unrest.” Xhudo thus links economic problems with the existence of nationalist agitation, providing further evidence for the idea that the lack of stability and economic distress contribute to the rise of nationalism. The link between the two has been a standard part of the development of Balkan nationalism since the decay of the Ottoman Empire in the eighteenth century.

In spite of political tensions, a high degree of cultural affinity existed between the Macedonian and Serbian populations. Sokalski explains, “Much of Macedonia’s intelligentsia graduated from leading Yugoslav universities. Their common Slavic background and religious tradition in the Orthodox Church, numerous intermarriages, and very close ties in all walks of life throughout the federation’s existence have left a lasting imprint of their own.” In spite of all these cultural similarities, in 1967 Macedonians had followed a Balkan precedent of establishing a national church, and unilaterally declared the existence of an autocephalous Macedonian Orthodox Church. The Serbian Patriarchate insisted, and in fact continues to insist, that Macedonians are Serbs and therefore the Macedonian Church has no reason for existence. In addition, since the
break-up of Yugoslavia, the Belgrade-based head of the Serbian Orthodox Church has declared that all churches and monasteries built prior to 1967 within Macedonia actually belong to the Serbian Church.\textsuperscript{48}

The tensions between the two churches graphically demonstrate the divisive nature of nationalism. In spite of the vast number of similarities between the two groups of people, the nationalist emphasis on establishing a separate and distinct church created divisions between the two groups of people. Furthermore, the rhetoric from both sides demonstrates the way in which nationalism serves as a tool to disguise ulterior motives, as each side's position on the existence of a Macedonian Orthodox Church depended on their political goals. Finally, the example reveals the continued vagaries and subjectivities of national identity as Serbian leaders once again made the claim, as they had during the interwar period, that Macedonians were really Serbs.

If relations between Macedonia and Serbia proved difficult, those with Greece quickly became far worse. Shortly after declaring its independence, Macedonia appealed to the European Community (EC) for recognition. It is important to point out that Macedonia sought recognition from other countries and international organizations not simply for the practical benefits, although those considerations undoubtedly also played a role, but also for psychological reasons. Danforth explains:

\begin{quote}
[\textit{I}dentity involves both self-ascription and ascription by others. This is just as true for states as it is for individuals. In order to establish its identity as the Republic of Macedonia, it is not enough for this Former Yugoslav Republic to declare its independence under that name; it must also be recognized under that name by other states and by major international organizations as well. Only in that way will its identity be legitimated in the world of international affairs.]\textsuperscript{49}
\end{quote}
The process of ascription by "others" that Danforth describes serves as an important corollary to the subjective nature of national identity. The evidence clearly demonstrates that a person's own imagination plays a crucial role in determining his or her identity. What happens, however, when a person's decision regarding how to identify him or herself does not agree with an outsider's determination? We have seen that in Macedonia, outside actors' attempts to impose an identity on Macedonians not only contributed to their own development of their identities as something different and unique, but also caused many political problems for the territory in general. Modern Macedonia would continue to experience similar problems due to the attitudes of her neighbors.

When Macedonia appealed to the EC for recognition, Greece, as a member of the EC, lobbied against the request. Part of the dispute stemmed from Greece's belief that Macedonian leaders wanted to annex part of northern Greece. Because of Greece's strenuous objection to Article 49 of the Macedonian Constitution, Macedonian leaders drafted two amendments that stressed Macedonia's peaceful intentions and desire to remain within established borders. Furthermore, President Gligorov even offered to join Greece in signing a bilateral agreement attesting to the permanence of their shared international border. An EC Arbitration Commission, created in order to investigate the possibility of recognizing the former Yugoslav republics, advised the EC that Macedonia had fully complied with all EC guidelines. Nevertheless, as a result of Greek pressure, the EC ignored the recommendations of its own Arbitration Commission and decided not to grant recognition to Macedonia.50
Following the EC rejection, the Republic of Macedonia then set its sights on the United Nations. When France proposed that the UN admit Macedonia under the provisional name, “the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia” (FYROM), both sides agreed to compromise and postponed the decision of an official name for the country. The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia thus became an official member of the United Nations, seated alphabetically in the General Assembly under the letter “T.” One year later, in December 1993, the EC finally followed suit and recognized the Republic as well.51

In spite of the conciliatory position adopted within the Macedonian government, as well as the international recognition Macedonia succeeded in attaining, Greece persisted in her dispute with the new country. In addition to objections regarding the Macedonian Constitution, Greece also rejected the country’s use of the name “Macedonia,” as well as the new country’s use of many symbols associated with the ancient land of Macedonia. Following the Macedonian referendum, a great debate had taken place within Macedonia regarding the symbols that the new state should adopt. Although almost everyone agreed upon the importance of making a decisive break with Communism, leaders then sought symbols behind which the entire population of Macedonia could rally.52

In 1978 an archeologist had excavated the royal tombs of the ancient Macedonian family located in Vergina, currently part of northern Greece. The excavation established that a 16-pointed sun or star design had been the symbol of the royal house of ancient Macedonia. The most famous of all ancient Macedonians, Alexander the Great, had used the symbol as his own emblem. After much discussion, the Macedonia Parliament
adopted the device as part of the state flag for several reasons. First, in contrast with the
Ustase flag chosen by Croatians that emphasized the exclusion of the Serbian
populations, the symbol appealed to the many different ethnic groups within Macedonia.
Scholar Keith Brown explains:

Vlachs...now fly an eight-pointed star and claim descent from Philip II by
various dubious arguments...Albanian parties, by contrast, claim
Alexander because he was the son of Olympias, the Illyrian queen, and
they claim descent from the Illyrians....The spirit of the selection of the
16-pointed star by a parliament drawn from different ethnic groups seems
to evoke this past diversity....Within FYR Macedonia it remains one of
the more inclusive symbols from the past.53

Rather than choosing a symbol that emphasized the particularities of one ethnic group,
the Macedonian government succeeding in finding a symbol with which everyone could
identify, which in itself was no small accomplishment. Furthermore, as has occurred
throughout the history of the region, the government sought legitimacy by emphasizing
their continuity with the past. Thus, they referred to the Krusevo Republic in the
preamble to the constitution and sought to associate themselves with the legend of
Alexander the Great.54

The Greeks, however, strenuously objected to the Macedonian use of what they
considered exclusively Greek symbols. Greek leaders claimed that Alexander the Great
was Greek, and for the Macedonians to appropriate his name, legend, and symbols
amounted to cultural thievery. In spite of the ambiguity of the evidence regarding the
actual facts of Alexander's life, as was discussed in the introduction to this thesis, as well
as the very different meanings of the words “Macedonian” and “Greek” in ancient times,
in the modern world both Macedonia and Greece vied for the exclusive rights to the
cultural legacy of Alexander the Great. It is ironic that the actual symbol on the flag has

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different names in the two countries. While the Greeks call it a star, the Macedonians see it as a sun. Nevertheless, the nationalist rhetoric has created a situation in which the two sides cannot share the symbol; one or the other must forgo their claims to Alexander’s legacy. Their dispute emphasizes the divisive nature of nationalism and demonstrates both sides’ interest in ignoring history and the subjectivity of national identity, in favor of an oppositional and black and white view, which starkly divides one side from the other.

Greek anger at her neighbor’s supposed theft of Greek cultural identity manifested itself in a variety of political actions. As already noted, Greek leaders lobbied against the EC recognition of the Republic of Macedonia. In an even more damaging move, the Greek government imposed a devastating unilateral trade embargo on Macedonia. Since the UN sanctions against Yugoslavia had ended all trade with the north, the Greek embargo from the south almost completely isolated the new state of Macedonia. In addition, following the nationalist pattern of demonizing the enemy, the Greeks waged a propaganda campaign against the inhabitants of Macedonia. Glenny thus relates, “[T]he innocent visitor arriving from Greece or Bulgaria may imagine Skopje to be inhabited by a sub-human species. In fact, if one had to choose an interior city in the southern Balkans to live in, Skopje would come out on top with ease.” Part of the nationalist process of identifying an enemy or an “other” thus often involves the depiction of that enemy as somehow less than human.

Although a full exploration of the reasons behind the Greek position on Macedonia is beyond the scope of this thesis, several observations suggest possible causes for the Greek perspective and further reveal aspects of the divisive nature of nationalism in general. Historian Evangelos Kofos, a Greek-Macedonian himself,
explained his intense and personal dislike of the Republic of Macedonia's appropriation of the history of Alexander the Great. He said, "It is as if a robber came into my house and stole my most precious jewels – my history, my culture, my identity." On a personal level then, Kofos viewed the legend of ancient Macedonia as exclusively Greek; allowing Macedonia to use the symbols associated with Alexander would necessarily mean that those symbols somehow did not belong to Greece.

At the same time, politicians within Greece used the issue of the debate with Macedonia in their bids for power. In 1993 the Greek politician Andreas Papandreou and his party ran an election campaign based on the promise to stand firm on the issue of Macedonia. The tactic worked, and both he and his party gained control of the Greek government. The extremely nationalist party of Antonis Samaras used similar tactics to win seats in the government.

Keith Brown provides yet another explanation for the Greek position on Macedonia. He points to the friendly relationship between Greece and Serbia that persisted in spite of UN sanctions against the Milosevic regime. By closing the Greek border, the Greek government forced Macedonia to ignore the sanctions and continue to trade illegally with Serbia.

Much evidence suggests that in spite of official rhetoric in support of UN sanctions, Macedonian firms continued to do business with Serbia out of economic necessity. Western officials confirmed that Macedonia, in fact, served as the biggest leak in the UN embargo. The deputy head of the international monitors stationed in Macedonia, Brathen Kjersti complained, "When we're there, they send the trucks two, three, four kilometers back from the border....But as soon as we leave the trucks go through. Actually...they're monitoring us." Thus Brown concludes, "The flag, in this
light, appears merely as a useful pretext to disguise the Greek-Serbian axis; if the Macedonians were to yield, another would easily be found.\textsuperscript{61} In both examples politicians made use of nationalist rhetoric in order to further their own agendas.

**Internal Problems Resulting from Macedonian Independence**

In addition to tensions that arose as a result of Macedonia's relationships with her neighbors, the Macedonian government also had to face significant problems that resulted from the internal composition of the new state. As already noted, the Macedonian constitutional description of the state involved both a nationalist aspect, or a definition of Macedonia as the state of the Macedonian people, and a civic aspect, which focused on the rights equally due to all those residing within the state of Macedonia. For Slavic-speaking ethnic Macedonians, no contradiction existed between the two different conceptions of the state. Ethnic Albanians and other minority groups, however, resented their secondary status within a state that defined itself primarily as the state of the exclusively Macedonian nation.\textsuperscript{62}

Practically speaking, the ethnic Albanian groups within Macedonia objected to governmental actions that they viewed as discriminatory. For example, various policies restricted the use of the Albanian language for official business, and the government refused to confer legal recognition on an Albanian university. Furthermore, Albanians resented perceived inequalities in the election laws and felt they were underrepresented in state institutions. One policy analyst explains:

All the ethnic Albanian parties and factions are pressing for greater cultural equality, for expanded local self-government and ultimately for the establishment of what amounts to a binational state in which the
Albanian population would be elevated constitutionally to a status equal to that of the Macedonian nation. Following the usual pattern in the Balkans, exclusive nationalism on the part of the Macedonian government sparked nationalism in return. Albanian political leaders thus began to press for rights and privileges to be granted to their particular ethnic group or nation. Rather than calling for equal protection under the constitution for all people, regardless of ethnicity, Albanian politicians sought the same status for their particular group as that enjoyed by the particularly Macedonian ethnic group. Albanian leaders argued their case so strenuously that the neighboring country of Albania managed to block Macedonia's entry into the CSCE. Although Albania had recognized the Republic of Macedonia, the Albanian government then claimed that the Macedonian government was denying basic human rights to the ethnic Albanian minority and thus did not deserve membership in the CSCE.

Macedonian leaders, however, did not view the Albanian demands as a legitimate response to the inequalities in the governmental system. Instead, Macedonians feared that the Albanians were planning to secede and form their own, even smaller state, or join with the neighboring state of Albania. Furthermore, the Albanian position also called into question the viability, if not the very existence of the Macedonian state. One scholar notes, "To concede to Albanian demands might weaken their [the Macedonian government's] control over the state’s institutional defenses against perceived threats to Macedonian identity from Bulgaria and Greece, as well as Albania, not to mention Serbia. Yet this resistance to accommodation appears to be making matters worse." Attempting to repress Albanian nationalism, therefore, only served to encourage it.
The exclusive nationalism on both sides then led to increased tensions between the two major ethnic groups within Macedonia. In 1992, riots in Skopje prompted the Macedonian police to arrest an Albanian youth. The arrest in turn touched off further riots in which four people died and thirty more were injured. One year later, Macedonian authorities arrested eight ethnic Albanians, including the state’s deputy defense minister, on charges of organizing paramilitary groups and seeking to destabilize the state. In fact, in response to the repression of their demands, some ethnic Albanians had formed a terrorist organization in Western Macedonia known as Unikom. Unikom promoted the use of violence to solve the political problems faced by ethnic Albanians. The formation of the Albanian organization then spurred some ethnic Macedonians to organize their own terrorist group, the VMRO Defense Committee, with the stated mission of killing Albanian leaders seeking to establish autonomous Albanian areas.

Although the spiral of exclusive nationalism led increasingly to the potential for violence and human rights abuses, ethnic war did not erupt in Macedonia as it did in Bosnia, where Serbian paramilitary organizations wreaked havoc on the Muslim civilian populations. Before turning to some of the reasons for the different situations in Macedonia and Bosnia, a few further comments on the nature of ethnic identity within Macedonia are necessary.

In spite of the existence of very real tensions between Macedonians and Albanians, on many levels in the early 1990’s the population of Macedonia enjoyed a level of stability unknown throughout the rest of the former Yugoslavia. Glenny even notes that Albanians within Macedonia were “without question the most prosperous of the three component territories in which Albanians live [Macedonia, Kosovo, and
Albania]...True they do not have full access to the organs of power, but the harsh repression of the pro-Serb communist leadership in Macedonia has been rapidly eroded since the elections of 1990." Furthermore, by 1994 the major Albanian political party was cooperating with the government to combat divisive nationalism. The Macedonian Parliament had also created an interethnic council and an interethnic commission to protect minority rights. Political scientist Lenard Cohen thus observes, "Macedonia’s political development has actually been remarkably peaceful and relatively democratic." If the country of Macedonia made so much positive progress towards the establishment of a functioning and inclusive democratic system in the early 1990’s, the question then becomes why did so much tension persist between the ethnic groups?

An important part of the explanation lies in Macedonia’s dire economic situation. As a result of the UN sanctions and the Greek embargo, Macedonia’s per capita GNP fell from approximately US$1,800 to less than US$760. The drastic drop in standard of living led Cohen to remark, "Such economic deterioration contributed to renewed internal tensions within the country, particularly between the country’s ethnic Macedonian majority and the large Albanian minority." Cohen thus echoes the arguments of other scholars who linked the economic situation in Macedonia with the development of nationalism. Following a well-established pattern within the Balkans, economic distress directly stimulated nationalist development and nationalist friction.

Another source of tension involved the role of the media. Although the Macedonian government published both an Albanian and a Turkish newspaper nationally, at the same time the government also controlled the powerful national daily *Nova Makedonia*. Some observers criticized the way in which the national government
could present only its own version of events through the large, powerful, government-supported newspaper. In addition, the media in general tended to attribute a nationalist significance to ordinary events. An official with the UN Commission on Human Rights reported that on June 18, 1994, a Macedonian youth died in Tetovo, a larger city in the Western portion of Macedonia, during a street fight between Macedonian and Albanian gangs. Although a relatively minority incident, it received intense and nationalist media coverage. The Macedonian newspaper that reported on the event failed to mention that the Macedonian had instigated the fight, and that an Albanian later drove the injured victim to the hospital. The UN report then stated, “Thus the media manipulated an unfortunate incident to promote ethnic distrust and tension.”

Just as Milosevic and Tudjman used the media to build their own power bases, the UN report on the use of the media in Macedonia came to similar conclusions regarding Macedonian politicians’ manipulation of the media. The report explained, “The situation in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia appears to be characterized by attempts on the part of the political forces to assert their influence over the major media outlets in order to secure political power.” Furthermore, the report then linked control of the media with the dire economic outlook in Macedonia because “the poor economic situation is hindering the development of private media to rival the state-dominated media outlets.” Thus, the two factors of economic difficulties and political manipulation came together in Macedonia to foster particularist nationalist sentiments through the use of the national media.

In addition to controlling the media, yet another tool political leaders can draw upon in order to exploit ethnic differences in the service of their own agendas involves
the use of the census. In 1991, as it faced disintegration, the government of Yugoslavia had embarked on a census to determine the exact numbers and proportions of the different ethnic groups within the country. Within the Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia ethnic Albanians boycotted the census, claiming that the government would purposefully undercount them. The statisticians involved in the census then used earlier figures combined with other information such as population growth to project the approximate number of ethnic Albanians located within Macedonia.76

Before the preliminary results of the census had even become public, leaders of the ethnic Albanian community claimed that the census had miscounted them. They stated that in fact Albanians constituted as much as 40 per cent of the population of Macedonia. A curious situation arose in which representatives of the other minority groups followed the Albanian example, and cited larger figures for the total number of inhabitants belonging to their ethnic group. In fact, as one senior policy analyst remarked, “Added together, these claims surpassed the total number of inhabitants of Macedonia, even without counting Macedonians. These claims clearly sacrificed statistical accuracy to an effort to gain political power and hegemony.”77 By boasting increased numbers of their particular ethnic groups, the political leaders of each group hoped to argue for a greater share of political power in a country that based its government, to a certain degree, on politics based in the concept of ethnicity.

The ethnic Albanian leaders then began a publicity campaign designed to draw international attention to their plight. Their tactics worked and, in 1992, a German diplomat began to organize a census in Macedonia that the “international community” would supervise. In 1994 when the internationally sponsored census of Macedonia got
underway, senior policy and political analyst Victor A. Friedman was working for the United Nations’ peacekeeping force then stationed in the former Yugoslavia. He traveled to Macedonia and observed not only the process of the census, but also the international monitors who oversaw the census.

Friedman explains that the 1994 census,

\[\text{gave implicit legitimacy to Albanian claims for special treatment, in addition to legitimizing Albanian politicians’ right to claim discrimination and to demand a recount, as it were. At the same time, the proposals [for the 1994 census] helped reify as a Macedonian-Albanian conflict tensions that had been building since the riots in Kosovo in 1981 but that were not an inherent feature of Macedonian life at all periods.}\]

Friedman’s observations reveal several important aspects of the ethnic tensions within Macedonia. First, he suggests that the Albanian politicians used the census to further their own political agendas. In fact, Friedman explicitly states that the census “was clearly linked to a political issue, namely the claim of Albanian politicians for special (nonminority) status for Albanians within Macedonia based on their large numbers.”

Even more importantly, he explains that the international community’s decision to hold the census gave legitimacy to the claims of tension between the Macedonians and the Albanians, when in fact the two groups had coexisted peacefully at many points in their history together.

In addition to revealing the ulterior designs of local politicians, the 1994 Macedonian census also demonstrated that the concept of ethnic identity remained just as subjective at the end of the twentieth century as it had at the end of the nineteenth century. For example, the group of Macedonian Muslims, that is to say those within Macedonia who spoke a Slavic language but followed the Islamic faith, had difficulties identifying their ethnic identity on the census forms. Did their language make them
“Macedonian,” or did their religion mean they were actually “Albanian,” or even “Turkish?” Many of these Macedonian Muslims lived in isolated, underdeveloped parts of the country where their precarious economic situation left them vulnerable to manipulation at the hands of ethnically based political parties. Regarding the economic plight of the Macedonian Muslims, Dzevad Dzuliovski, the president of the Cultural and Scientific Association of Macedonian Muslims commented, “The Macedonian state has little interest in us, and gives us no economic, educational or social help....Most of our people live in western Macedonia in villages with no roads; our people do the hardest work.”

Friedman explains that as a result of Macedonian Muslims’ economic vulnerability, Albanian and Turkish politicians had “convinced some of them that they [were] Slavicized Albanians or Turks rather than Islamicized Slavs and that they could therefore rely more on Turkish or Albanian political parties to support their economic interests.” Just as the nineteenth-century Macedonian peasants had shifted identities between Serbian, Greek, and Bulgarian in order to respond to the changing economic situation, so too at the end of the twentieth century the inhabitants of Macedonia adjusted their ethnic identity depending on the economic conditions. The political leaders thus exploited a situation of economic need in order to gain support for their ethnically based political parties. One of the most notable ironies in the whole process occurred when Macedonian-speaking Muslims demanded census forms in Albanian or Turkish. Since those Muslims could not read Albanian or Turkish, they then had to also demand an interpreter to translate the forms into Macedonian.
Following the conclusion of the census, the German diplomat who had organized the whole endeavor explained his view that the different nationalities disliked each other. As evidence to support his claim, he pointed to the lack of mixed marriages in the country and the private and public tension between ethnic Albanians and Macedonians. Friedman directly refutes that claim as he states:

"The statement itself is an exemplary instance of a present construction being projected onto the past. It imposes a view of Macedonian reality that at the same time serves the interest of the local political elite...and promotes a version of the history of Macedonia that is at variance with concrete evidence— for example, the assistant minister of education is the son of an Albanian father and a Macedonian mother, the prime minister’s brother-in-law is a Turk, a Macedonian friend of mine who used to work in the government has an Albanian wife."³

Just as the “ancient ethnic hatreds” claim surfaced in Bosnia as an excuse to obscure all kinds of different political agendas, so too in Macedonia claims of a history of ethnic tension ignored a reality of more or less peaceful co-existence. Furthermore, an important part of nationalist rhetoric in general involves convincing both the participants as well as the outside observers of the historical, long-term nature of the quarrels between groups.

It is interesting to note the similarities between observations regarding the Macedonian census and those that deal with other censuses, taken at different times in different geographical locations. Benedict Anderson, a scholar of nationalism, explored the role of the census in colonial East Asia. He found that before 1850 both colonial and earlier local authorities had counted people simply for the purposes of taxing and levying armies. By 1870, however, colonial authorities began to classify and quantify the people under their control by placing them into specific ethnic groups, but those authorities ignored the blurred and subjective nature of the people’s identities. Anderson writes,
"The fiction of the census is that everyone is in it, and that everyone has one — and only
one — extremely clear place. No fractions." As the colonial authorities then organized
the societies under their control based on their own classification systems, in many ways
they then brought these different groups into existence.

Anderson's analysis has bearing on several aspects of Macedonian history. It is
interesting that the shift from a system that counted people based on a practical necessity
to one that attempted to quantify ethnic groups occurred at roughly the same time that
governments began to shift from a system of jurisdictional sovereignty to territorial
sovereignty, a process that was discussed in Chapter 1. During the latter half of the
nineteenth century, many Balkan peoples experienced a transition from the old Ottoman
system, which had followed a policy of jurisdictional sovereignty, to a more modern
nation-state that employed a concept of territorial sovereignty. At almost exactly the
same time, the colonial powers of the Western World were developing a new kind of
census that did not measure a person's capacity to work, a concept that would be
important under a system of jurisdictional sovereignty. Instead, they developed a census
that would count people based on their ethnic identity, a concept important for the
emerging idea of the modern, territorially bound nation-state, with a population
theoretically comprised of people from the same "nation."

Both Anderson and Friedman point out the difficulties inherent in attempting to
use a tool such as a census, that relies on an objective system of quantification, to
measure something as patently subjective and confusing as national identity. In both
cases, the census had less to do with the real nature of ethnic identity, and more to do
with the political purposes of those who organized the census in the first place. In any
event, Friedman concludes his analysis by noting, "The census solved nothing and the question of language use at the federal level continued, in 1995, to serve as a source of federal tension." Based on Friedman's observations of the way in which the census helped to solidify the tensions between Albanians and Macedonians, and the way the Albanian leaders used the census to further their own goals, another policy analyst noted, "[T]he manner in which it [the 1994 census] was carried out, and even the fact that it was carried out at all, probably intensified the conflict between ethnic Albanians and Macedonians rather than moderating it." The census thus provides yet another example of the subjectivities inherent in ethnic identity. The lack of objectivity then allows politicians to exploit ethnic identity for their own reasons and in the process polarize groups of people into mutually exclusive and particular ethnic groups.

Solutions for Macedonian Independence

The early years of Macedonian statehood did not witness violence and human rights abuses of the kind that occurred in other areas of the former Yugoslavia. At the same time, politics based on particular nationalist politics created a situation of tension within the state, with the potential to explode into nationalist violence of the kind in the rest of Yugoslavia. If tools such as a census do not work to solve problems of ethnic tension, how then can these serious problems be addressed? By appealing to the United Nations in 1992, Macedonian President Kiro Gligorov successfully pursued one aspect of a non-nationalist solution to the immediate problems facing the Republic of Macedonia.

After Macedonia had declared her independence, President Gligorov found himself at the head of a country facing serious ethnic tensions, as well as considerable
external difficulties. Following the withdrawal of the JNA, Macedonia lacked an army or any kind of a significant defense force to protect her boundaries from external aggression. Sokalski explains:

> When it left Macedonia the Yugoslav army took home practically everything that could be considered defense-related. An unverified story has it that the Yugoslavs actually left four tanks behind, but only because they could not start them.  

Given the utter lack of military capabilities, President Gligorov could easily have followed the pattern established by Tudjman, Milosevic, Karadzic, and others, and used nationalism as a rallying cry. He could have then built militia forces unified behind exclusive nationalist ideologies, and dedicated to creating a state for ethnic Macedonians alone. Instead, Gligorov remained committed to the heterogeneous state that had emerged following the disintegration of Yugoslavia. Rather than invoking particularist nationalism, Gligorov instead appealed to the United Nations, a truly international and ethnically diverse organization committed to human rights, for help. The United Nations Security Council paid heed to Gligorov’s request and, in 1992, Resolution 795 authorized “the Secretary General to establish a presence of the United Nations Protection Force in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.” Instead of a nationalist paramilitary force, the UN provided Macedonia with an international force that would help ensure the new state’s stability.

The UN Protection Force (UNPROFOR) in Macedonia deployed with a dual mission. Since Yugoslavia and Macedonia had not established a clear border between them, according to Sokalski, UNPROFOR monitored “the border areas and report[ed] to the UN Secretary-General…any developments that could pose a threat to Macedonia.” In fact, several encounters between patrols from the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and
those of Macedonia did occur, but UNPROFOR troops mediated an agreement between the forces and successfully achieved the withdrawal of both sides' soldiers. Throughout recent Balkan history the establishment of borders between new states has led to further wars. In fact, Serbia and Croatia went to war over conflicting ideas about their borders. The political justifications for establishing borders has also led to the manipulation of nationalism as politicians tried to claim a particular identity for a certain group of people in order to justify their incorporation into another country. By its mission, then, UNPROFOR worked against these kinds of developments. Indirectly perhaps, it helped guard against the spread of particularist nationalism in the service of politicians eager to redraw international boundaries.

The second aspect of UNPROFOR's mission involved deterring potential threats to the country's stability; simply by its presence it served as a symbol of the international community's commitment to uphold Macedonia's territorial integrity. UNPROFOR proved successful in this aspect of its mission as well. Because of the deployment of three hundred U.S. troops as part of UNPROFOR's Macedonian mission, in 1994 U.S. President Bill Clinton commented on the status of the mission. In a letter to the House of Representatives, Clinton wrote, “Through observation and monitoring operations along the FYROM [former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia] border with Serbia, UNPROFOR Macedonia continues to be effective in preventing a spillover of the conflict.” UNPROFOR Macedonia thus provides a marked contrast to the situation elsewhere in the former Yugoslavia where UN troops deployed only after the onset of the conflict and belatedly attempted to “keep the peace.” In Macedonia the timely deployment of
international troops served as an effective deterrent to all aggressors and played a
significant role in that country’s avoidance of hostility.

Nevertheless, Macedonia still continued to face problems. Although
UNPROFOR successfully deterred any form of external conflict, the force had a much
more limited mission regarding internal tensions. Xhudo explains, “These UN troops
cannot, in any event, act against the internal forces at work, primarily the Albanian illegal
groups of Kosovo and Macedonia....They and Western observers have not the slightest
ability to handle this threatening trouble from within.” The evidence suggests that
tensions between ethnic groups within Macedonia provided at least as serious a threat, if
not a greater one, than frictions with Macedonia’s neighbors. If an international military
force helped Macedonia to alleviate external tensions with her neighbors, the question
both for politicians within Macedonia and for the international community at large
quickly became how to resolve the internal tensions peacefully and democratically.

In 1995 a group of policy analysts and scholars known as the South Balkans
Working Group, from an American organization called the Center for Preventative
Action, traveled to Macedonia, Kosovo, and Albania to assess the ways in which those
states could solve their internal problems. They developed many practical
recommendations designed specifically for each area, but most importantly they noted,
“In formulating these recommendations, the working group developed one guiding
principle: Uphold the full package of Helsinki norms as they have evolved since 1989.”
The South Balkans Working Group thus proposed the protection of universal human
rights as a solution to the divisive politics of nationalism that plagued Macedonia
throughout her first years of independence. The Group specifically stressed the
importance of universal protection of human rights as they stated, “Helsinki principles are thus often treated as if they were a menu of options. The Working Group concluded that the Helsinki principles as they have evolved since 1989 must be treated instead as a coherent package that imposes obligations as well as rights on all parties to these disputes.” In contrast to nationalist leaders who sought rights and privileges for members of their specific, particular ethnicity, this group of outside analysts recommended that the solution to the problems of nationalism involved protecting the rights of everyone involved, regardless of their particular ethnicity.

Many other individuals and organizations shared the views of the South Balkan Working Group. Sociologist Bogdan Denitch points to the inherent contradictions between a functioning democratic government that promotes rights for all citizens and nationalist politics that promote the rights of one particular group. He writes, “[T]he only possible kind of decent, modern, democratic state is one that is, at the very least, defined as the state of all its citizens, irrespective of national origin or religion.” The very foundation of the modern, democratic system of government, then, lies in the universal protection of rights, regardless of nationality or ethnicity. Denitch examines the disintegration of Yugoslavia and the violations of human rights that occurred as a result of particularist nationalism. He then concludes, “The only concrete beginning of a solution to these kinds of questions and dilemmas is an internationally supervised and enforced bill of rights for minorities and for human rights in general.” Denitch thus joins the South Balkans Working Group in calling for the protection of universal human rights as a solution for tensions that arise from particularist nationalist politics.
An important part of Denitch’s analysis involves the participation of the international community in promoting rights within the area of the former Yugoslavia. Since the formulation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, most of the countries of the world have accepted that the objective nature of universal human rights makes it possible and legitimate for people and organizations anywhere to take an interest in and comment on human rights practices everywhere. Furthermore, the Declaration also spelled out the connection between human rights and international peace and stability. Thus it is not only possible, but also important for the countries and organizations of the world to involve themselves in the promotion of human rights anywhere those rights are threatened. As Alexander the Great discovered so long ago, protecting human rights often has practical benefits for everyone involved. Since particular nationalism threatened the peace within Macedonia, it thus follows logically that many intergovernmental, non-governmental, and governmental organizations would devote resources to monitoring the protection of human rights inside the new state.

In response to the violence perpetuated as a result of nationalism in the former Yugoslavia, in 1992 the United Nations Commission on Human Rights established the office of a Special Rapporteur to monitor the protection of human rights in the territory of the former Yugoslavia. In 1994 the Special Rapporteur traveled to Macedonia and met with the President, the Prime Minister, and many other high-ranking officials, which in and of itself testifies to the Macedonian government’s commitment to the promotion of human rights. The Rapporteur stated, “[V]arious steps have been undertaken in order to improve the human rights situation in the country. Nevertheless, the situation is still not satisfactory. Mainly due to the slow legislative process, effective legal means for the
protection of human rights still do not exist.\textsuperscript{98} If the solution to ethnic tensions within Macedonia involved the protection of universal human rights, then it is important that the Macedonian government continue to translate ideals regarding human rights into concrete measures designed to protect the rights of all people within the state.

The non-governmental organization known as Helsinki Watch also monitors human rights practices around the world. In 1978 Helsinki Watch was established to monitor adherence to the 1975 Helsinki Final Act. Helsinki Watch’s mission thus similarly testifies to the objective and universal nature of human rights. In their January 1994 report on the situation within Macedonia, the organization noted, “Current human rights problems in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia include...discrimination in the treatment of ethnic minorities.”\textsuperscript{99} Importantly, the Helsinki Watch recommendations do not include special treatment for particular minority groups, such as that called for by some ethnic Albanian leaders. The report instead recommended that:

\begin{quote}
[T]he government of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia...[e]nd all discrimination in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and assure that all minority members receive equal rights without discrimination...[a]ssure that everyone in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia has the right to freedom of expression and assembly.\textsuperscript{100}
\end{quote}

The report thus focuses on the rights that everyone deserves, regardless of their minority status or ethnic affiliation. Instead of special treatment for particular groups, the report advocates equal rights for all citizens.

In addition to non-governmental and intergovernmental organizations, individual governments also recognize the importance of the promotion of universal human rights. For example, the U.S. State Department explains:
A central goal of US foreign policy has been the promotion of respect for human rights, as embodied in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The United States understands that the existence of human rights helps secure the peace, deter aggression, promote the rule of law, combat crime and corruption, strengthen democracies, and prevent humanitarian crises.\textsuperscript{101}

The government of the United States thus joins the UN, Helsinki Watch, and many other organizations in pointing to the strong connections between human rights and peace. One way in which the State Department translates those beliefs into actions involves the writing of Country Reports, in which the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor monitors and observes human rights practices within the many countries of the world.\textsuperscript{102} The structure of these reports and the human rights they focus on stem directly from those enumerated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.\textsuperscript{103}

The 1993 U.S. State Department Report entitled \textit{Macedonian Human Rights Practices} thus notes, "Minorities, including Albanians, Turks, and Serbs, have raised various credible allegations of human rights infringements and discrimination at the hands of the ethnic Macedonian population."\textsuperscript{104} While the American report does not outline specific policy recommendations to solve the problems and human rights abuses that occurred as a result of nationalist politics, the report does note, "Human rights groups and ethnic community representatives meet frequently with foreign representatives without government interference....The Government did not oppose visits or investigations by international human rights groups."\textsuperscript{105} It seems that the Macedonian government respected the importance of promoting human rights and accepted the objectivity inherent in those rights by freely allowing outside actors to monitor human rights practices. In general, the evidence suggests that the Macedonian Government recognized the importance of protecting the human rights of all citizens. At the same
time, and for a variety of reasons, the government had not yet managed to fully implement all of the necessary measures.

The various individuals and organizations that have pointed to the protection of human rights as part of the solution to nationalist tensions within Macedonia, also focused on the economic situation within the country as contributing to the ethnic problems. As a result, the South Balkans Working Group asserted, “No effort to reduce ethnic conflict is likely to succeed in Macedonia if economic and social conditions deteriorate.” Similarly, Tadeusz Macowiecki, the Commission on Human Rights’ Special Rapporteur for the former Yugoslavia, noted that the sanctions and embargo placed Macedonia in an incredibly difficult situation, “which seriously hampers implementation of the economic and social rights of its citizens.” Macowiecki thus concluded, “[E]ffective international assistance is urgently required in order to remove or alleviate these external factors.” Since the evidence convincingly points to the connections between economic problems and particularist nationalism, with its attendant possibilities for human rights abuses, the solution for Macedonia’s ethnic tensions lies in part in promoting economic development and recovery within Macedonia.

By 1995, then, Macedonia, with considerable outside assistance, had succeeded in peacefully establishing its independence from Yugoslavia, the only one of the six republics to do so without violence. Nevertheless, external relations with the Republic of Macedonia’s new neighbors and internal tensions among the different ethnic groups provided serious challenges to the new state’s stability. While the international military contingent of UNPROFOR succeeded in preventing the external threats to Macedonia’s stability from developing into wars, the monitoring and promotion of human rights for all
citizens, regardless of ethnicity, surfaced as a possible solution to internal tensions. Most importantly, though, the events of the early 1990’s brought massive economic problems to Macedonia, which continued to create the conditions for increased ethnic conflicts.

**Solutions for the Problems in the Former Yugoslavia**

In sharp contrast to Macedonia’s peaceful evolution, the republics of Slovenia, Croatia, and Bosnia all fought wars with Yugoslavia for their independence. As noted earlier, while Milosevic’s Yugoslavia engaged Slovenia in only a brief ten-day war, Croatia and Bosnia became increasingly mired in violent conflict throughout the early 1990’s. In 1992 the UN had imposed sanctions on Yugoslavia in an unsuccessful attempt to coerce the warring parties into negotiations. Although international negotiators had, in 1993, proposed a plan to end the hostilities, first the Bosnian Serbs and then the Americans rejected the plan, albeit for very different reasons. UN peacekeepers had deployed to protect several vulnerable pockets of Muslims inhabitants, but by July of 1995 the Bosnian Serb troops had destroyed these so-called “safe areas” and massacred large numbers of the civilian populations.

Throughout these first years of the conflict, the U.S. decided to remain on the sidelines, preferring to leave the solution of the problem to the Europeans. When the mainly Muslim city of Srebrenica fell, however, and Serbian military forces massacred over 7,000 civilians in one of the worst atrocities in Europe since WWII, the American public began demanding a change in policy. Samantha Power explains:

> Op-ed writers, human rights activists, former diplomats, and journalists had spoken out throughout the war in opposition to Clinton’s policy, but

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nothing ignited their fury quite like the fall of the so-called safe-area [Srebrenica]. The events of mid-July provoked a rare degree of unanimity on the editorial pages in the United States, and those in Paris and London as well.\textsuperscript{109}

Thus, for those interested in the protection of human rights, the media serves as a double-edged sword.\textsuperscript{110} On one hand, numerous politicians in the Balkans have used the media to instigate nationalist violence simply in order to further their own ambitions. Their use of the media led directly to serious human rights abuses. On the other hand, the incredible media pressure on American President Bill Clinton played a significant role in forcing a change in policy, and ultimately ending the human rights abuses in the former Yugoslavia. Media attention forced Clinton to reevaluate the American role in ending the war, and, shortly after the fall of Srebrenica, he assigned senior diplomat Richard Holbrooke the task of negotiating an end to the war.

The combination of the vigorous American commitment to ending the war as well as the military pressure of American-led NATO air strikes against Bosnian Serb forces brought the three leaders, Slobodan Milosevic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro), Franjo Tudjman of Croatia, and Alija Izetbegovic of Bosnia-Herzegovina together for negotiations. With Holbrooke’s guidance the three sides finally agreed upon terms for ending the war. At Dayton, Ohio in 1995, they signed an agreement that drew boundaries between the three entities and established the framework for their relationships to one another. Most importantly, as a tangible sign of Western support for the Dayton Accords, 60,000 NATO troops deployed to the former Yugoslavia to implement the agreement. Just as UNPROFOR troops helped secure peace within Macedonia, the international NATO forces played an essential role in maintaining the cease-fire that the political leaders had agreed upon. Silber and Little explain:
Within the first two months, the warring sides met the deadline to pull back from the zones of separation. After more than four years of war, tens of thousands of people killed, and more than two million made homeless, there was no more shelling, no more fighting. The roads were open, at least formally.¹¹¹

The Dayton Accords and the NATO deployment thus brought the overt hostilities and human rights violations in the former Yugoslavia to an end.

Nevertheless, many problems remained. Implementing the civilian part of the agreement, which called for joining the different parts of Bosnia back together, forming a functioning government, allowing freedom of movement, and providing for the return of refugees, proved much more difficult.¹¹² In fact, the situation in the former Yugoslavia following the end of the most recent wars in many ways resembled that of Yugoslavia following WWII. In both cases serious human rights violations had occurred as a result of divisive nationalist politics. Furthermore, the evidence suggests that during both wars individual politicians manipulated the forces of nationalism in order to further their own personal ambitions. Tito dealt with the situation, as was discussed in Chapter 2, first by murdering many members of nationalist factions, and then by repressing all evidence of the devastating civil war and ethnic violence. As we have seen, however, that approach proved disastrous for the future stability of Yugoslavia. The lack of a truthful historical record allowed later leaders to manipulate the ethnic violence of the Second World War to serve their own purposes. Perhaps even more importantly, by failing to call individual leaders to account for their important role in propagating the violence, Tito allowed a situation to develop in which modern political leaders could hold large groups of people responsible for the atrocities committed. For example, rather than holding a public trial of the Ustase leader Ante Pavelic, Pavelic escaped. The lack of an objective record of
events that established the guilt of individual leaders enabled later Serbian nationalist leaders to blame “all Croatians” for the massacres that had occurred during WWII.

In the 1990’s the international community decided to follow a different course of action regarding the human rights abuses that had occurred within the former Yugoslavia. In August 1992, the UN Security Council expressed alarm at the human rights violations occurring within the former Yugoslavia, particularly within Bosnia. The council condemned the “mass forcible expulsion and deportation of civilians, imprisonment and abuse of civilians in detention centers, deliberate attacks on non-combatants, hospitals and ambulances...[and the] wanton devastation and destruction of property.” The Security Council could take a strong position on the grave human rights violations because, as Lauren explains, the 1949 Geneva Conventions, drawing on the Universal Declaration’s protection of the right to life, had elaborated humanitarian laws “dealing with sick and wounded combatants, the treatment of prisoners of war, and, most innovatively, the protection of civilian populations in time of war.” The council could thus draw upon international and objective criteria to condemn the human rights violations committed during the course of the war in Bosnia.

Having established a standard by which to judge the crimes committed in the region, the Security Council then called for a Commission of Experts to provide “the Secretary-General with its conclusions on the evidence of grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions and other violations of international humanitarian law committed in the territory of the former Yugoslavia.” In December 1992, the five-member War Crimes Commission met for the first time in Geneva. Significantly, the U.S. identified specific individuals that should be brought to trial, including Milosevic, Karadzic, the leader of
the Bosnian state, and Ratko Mladić, the commander of the Bosnian Serb military forces. Although U.S. President Bush and his staff equivocated on whether or not to label the atrocities “genocide,” they did begin to use the term “ethnic cleansing” to refer to the Serbian policies that specifically targeted civilians of different ethnic groups in order to create an “ethnically pure” Serbian state.\textsuperscript{116}

The following year the United Nations, concerned with the many crimes committed in the former Yugoslavia, including “ethnic cleansing,” decided “to establish an international tribunal for the sole purpose of prosecuting persons responsible for serious violations of international humanitarian law committed in the territory of the former Yugoslavia.”\textsuperscript{117} In contrast to the policies Tito had pursued, the international community thus decided to hold the individual leaders accountable for the human rights violations, using an internationally agreed upon standard of judgment. In spite of these historic achievements, Holbrooke, his team, and many others would continue to negotiate with those named as war crimes suspects. Several years would pass before the newly formed tribunal would take historic actions against the individual perpetrators of human rights violations in the Balkans.

\textbf{Conclusion}

Following the collapse of Yugoslavia in the early 1990’s, both the former Yugoslavia as well as the region of Macedonia experienced serious problems due to particularist nationalism. Political leaders used and even created nationalism as a means to achieve personal power. In the process, through their use of symbols, the media, and propaganda to instill fear in their own populations, they created a culture that permitted
massive violations of human rights. In many ways, the subjectivity and malleability inherent in the very concept of nationalism allowed the politicians to manipulate national feelings for their own ends. Part of the nationalist rhetoric then involved viewing the current enemy as a long-term, historical enemy. When nationalist politicians did talk about protecting human rights, they invariably limited the scope of their concern to the people that fell within their particular ethnic or national group.

In contrast, various different solutions to the problems both within the former Yugoslavia and in Macedonia involved protecting the universal human rights due to all people, regardless of their ethnicity. Instead of blaming large groups of people for the atrocities and violence that had occurred within the former Yugoslavia, the United Nations set up a War Crimes Tribunal to establish a truthful historical record and publicly proclaim the guilt of the individual leaders. Along with the Tribunal, many other organizations that had developed since the 1948 signing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights continued to testify to both the objectivity as well as the importance of human rights. The protection of human rights for individuals leads directly to international stability and the maintenance of international peace. In fact, a fundamental aspect of a functioning democratic system involves the universal protection and promotion of the rights of all citizens. The emphasis on universal human rights and the avoidance of some of the worst extremes of nationalist divisions perhaps helped to allow Macedonia to secede peacefully from Yugoslavia. Nevertheless, the persistence of ethnic tensions and the dismal economic situation continued to threaten the stability and development of the new country.
NOTES

4. Ibid., 623.
8. Ibid., 378.
13. Ibid., 643.
15. See for example, ibid., Chapter 9: “Bosnia: ‘No more than Witnesses at a Funeral;’” and Richard Holbrooke, *To End a War*, 23.


37 Ibid., 81.


40 Ibid., 72.

41 Liotta, *Dismembering the State*, 291-292.

42 Ibid., 295.


46 Ibid., 328.


49 Danforth, *The Macedonian Conflict*, 147.

50 Ibid., 149; Pavkovic, *Fragmentation of Yugoslavia*, 151; and Xhudo, “The Trouble Within,” 320.


53Ibid.
54Ibid.
55Ibid.
56Liotta, *Dismembering the State*, 293.
58Evangelos Kofos, as quoted in Danforth, *The Macedonian Conflict*, 35.
63Ibid., 42-43.
64Xhudo, “The Trouble Within,” 322.
65Ibid.
69Glenny, *The Fall of Yugoslavia*, 70.
70Cohen, *Broken Bonds*, 357.
71Ibid., 356.

74 Ibid.

75 Ibid.

76 Friedman, “Observing the Observers,” 89.

77 Ibid.

78 Ibid., 89-92.

79 Ibid., 92.


81 Friedman, “Observing the Observers,” 96-97.

82 Ibid., 97.

83 Ibid., 101.

84 Anderson, Imagined Communities, 165-166.

85 Friedman, “Observing the Observers,” 100.

86 Rubin, Toward Comprehensive Peace, 44.

87 Sokalski, An Ounce of Prevention, 119.


91 Sokalski, An Ounce of Prevention, 97-98.


93 Xhudo, “Trouble Within,” 328.

94 Rubin, Comprehensive Peace, 11.

95 Ibid., 12.

96 Bogdan Denitch, Ethnic Nationalism: The Tragic Death of Yugoslavia (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), 141.

97 Denitch, Ethnic Nationalism, 146.


100 Ibid., 18-19.


102 Ibid.

103 Sokalski, An Ounce of Prevention, 81.

105 Ibid.

106 Rubin, Comprehensive Peace, 19.


109 Power, A Problem from Hell, 430.

110 I am indebted to Professor Paul Lauren for suggesting this insight.

111 Silber and Little, Death of a Nation, 377-378.

112 Ibid.


116 Power, A Problem from Hell, 290-292.

Chapter IV

Nationalist Challenges to Independence, 1995-2002

Macedonia is a nice little country in a high crime neighborhood.

-Chris Hill, former U.S. Ambassador to Macedonia

As the last decade of the twentieth century neared its end, the Republic of Macedonia seemed poised for success. Many of the internal and external problems that had plagued the country during the first years of its existence were slowly resolving themselves, and the economy showed measurable signs of improvement. The good tidings would not last, however, and the nationalist war and accompanying human rights violations in the neighboring province of Kosovo threatened to completely destabilize Macedonia. Although the Republic weathered the original storm, the longer-term effects of the crisis in Kosovo brought the country to the brink of civil war in 2001. The succession of violent challenges to Macedonia’s newly won independence led political leaders, both within the country and without, to continue to wrestle with issues related to nationalism and the protection of human rights.

Greece, as was discussed in Chapter 3, had refused to recognize the Republic of Macedonia, for nationalist reasons centered around the Greek view that their Slavic neighbors had unfairly “appropriated” the symbols, history, and cultural legacy of the most famous of all Macedonians, Alexander the Great. As a result, Macedonia had only been able to join the United Nations under the compromise name, “the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia,” and the Greeks took that compromise agreement very seriously. On April 3, 1995, the Greek permanent representative to the United Nations, Christos Zacharakas, sent a letter to the Secretary-General of the United Nations that alleged:
In his statement before the Security Council, permanent representative of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia to the United Nations, used, when referring to his own country, a denomination that runs counter to the provisions of Security Council resolution 817(1993).

I would like to remind that, according to the second paragraph of the said resolution, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia has been admitted to the United Nations ‘being provisionally referred to for all purposes within the United Nations as ‘the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia,’ pending settlement of the difference that has arisen over the name of the state.’”

Even more damaging than Greece’s strident refusal to allow the country to use any name other than one provisionally agreed upon, Greece, as was discussed in the previous chapter, had also imposed a seriously damaging unilateral trade embargo on her neighbor to the north.

The impasse between the two countries had dragged on in spite of many persistent attempts by international negotiators to break the deadlock. Just months after Zacharakas had submitted his letter to the Secretary-General, however, Richard Holbrooke traveled to the capitals of the two countries and negotiated an Interim Accord. As was discussed in Chapter 3, Holbrooke had brokered the Dayton Accord that had ended the fighting in the former Yugoslavia. In the course of those deliberations, Holbrooke managed to pressure Greek leader Andreas Papandreou into calling off the blockade. In return, Macedonian President Kiro Gligorov agreed that his country would redesign their national flag. Although the dispute over the name continued, and in fact continues to this day, both sides agreed to further negotiations under the auspices of United Nations negotiator former Secretary of State Cyrus Vance. With the economic embargo lifted, business transactions quickly resumed between the two countries and by 1998 Greece had become the largest investor in Macedonia, and her second-largest partner in trade.2
signing the Interim Accord, both sides demonstrated their ability to move beyond the divisive and exclusionary nationalist rhetoric that they had previously employed, and their agreement proved mutually beneficial for both countries.

Similarly, although the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) had originally refused to recognize the Republic of Macedonia as a sovereign state, by 1996 that country also acknowledged the official existence of her neighbor to the south. The two states did not, however, agree on the location of the international boundary that separated them. Nevertheless, the force commander of the United Nations Preventative Deployment force (UNPREDEP, which had succeeded UNPROFOR) negotiated a United Nations Patrol Line in 1995. The head of the UNPREDEP mission, Henryk Sokalski, explains that the patrol line "was accepted by the two parties as a ‘gentleman’s agreement’ with the aim of preventing ‘incidents by accident’ along their border....The new line followed manageable visible features and facilitated UN troop patrols." Both the agreement and the regular patrols by UN troops therefore served to decrease the tension and the likelihood of violence between Serbia and Macedonia. Thus, a non-nationalist and international force mediated against the eruption of potential nationalist tensions over the status of the border.

**Almost a Multi-Ethnic Success Story**

Just as Macedonia’s external problems appeared to be moving towards resolution, it seemed as though many issues of inter-ethnic tension within the country could be resolved peacefully, a fact that would have important bearing on later nationalist violence within the country. Although two major clashes occurred between ethnic Macedonians
and ethnic Albanians between 1995 and 1999, at the same time political leaders from the
two groups were pursuing important non-violent ways of resolving legitimate problems.
The first incident centered on the existence of an Albanian-language university located in
the predominantly Albanian town of Tetovo. In February of 1995 ethnic Albanians
celebrated the opening of the university. The Macedonian government, however, refused
to recognize the institution. When police began to close down the "illegal educational
establishment," violence erupted between police and ethnic Albanian crowds; one man
died while twenty more people were injured.4

Although the incident could be seen as a simple nationalist brawl between ethnic
Macedonians and ethnic Albanians, at the same time much more complicated factors
explain the tension surrounding the Albanian university in Tetovo. Anthropologist
Jonathan Schwartz explains that professors at the state university in Skopje, including
some from minority groups, objected to the university in Tetovo not on ethnic grounds,
but for economic reasons. He writes, "They were not opposed to the project as such, but
it took time and planning to establish a university. Their own university in Skopje was
itself in desperate need of reform and financial aid. The professors and students were
taking steps to increase the proportion of underrepresented ethnic groups, especially
Albanian and Rom [Gypsy] communities."5 In yet another way, then, the difficult
economic situation within Macedonia contributed to ethnic tensions. At the same time,
Schwartz reveals that the university in Skopje had in fact worked hard to include ethnic
Albanians as both teachers and students, thus undercutting ethnic Albanian claims
regarding their access to education.
The question then becomes why some ethnic Albanians remained dissatisfied with the university in Skopje and insisted on opening their own, separate, distinctly Albanian institution. Alice Ackermann, a professor of international relations, explains that issues other than simply the right to education surrounded the school in Tetovo. She believes that the real issue involved the possibility of Albanian becoming an official language on par with Macedonian. Similarly, Schwartz reports:

In speaking with informants from diverse ethnic groups about the Albanian university, the typical judgment was that 'it is politics.' People thus suggested that the demand for a separate Albanian university is not based on legitimate civil needs, but as a method for achieving political power. The men I interviewed in Tetovo were quite candid about this. Ethno-national politics had top priority, even if there was a risk of war.

The issue of the university, then, seems to have less to do with simple ethnic tensions, and more to do with the pursuit of power on the part of individual ethnic Albanian politicians. Following a well-established pattern, those leaders hid their power agenda in the language of nationalism, and rights for their particular ethnic group. Those politicians themselves then made clear the direct connection between nationalist politics that seek to prioritize the rights and privileges of one particular group, and the human rights violations that would definitely occur if their country became embroiled in a civil war. It is important to note, however, that this particular issue did not lead to war or violence between ethnic groups. Instead, the government, with the help and prodding of the international community began taking steps to resolve the problem of higher education for Albanians in their native tongue. In addition to the measures mentioned earlier to encourage Albanian and other minority groups to attend the university in Skopje, which included a fairly strict quota system, another compromise solution took the form of the proposed South-East European University. This university, which planned to
begin offering classes in 2001, would serve as a private institution of higher learning and would offer courses in the Albanian language. 

A similar set of circumstances accompanied the second violent clash between ethnic Macedonians and Albanians, which occurred in the town of Gostivar in July 1997. A United Nations report of the Secretary-General stated that ethnic tensions began heating up when the two major Albanian political parties held a unification congress “in an atmosphere of nationalist fervor....The congress called for parallel government structures, autonomous institutions, a pan-Albanian parliament and ethnic regionalization. The appearance of black-shirted paramilitary guards in Tetovo during the congress was a disquieting manifestation of ethnic extremism.” The politics based in ethnicity on the part of the ethnic Albanian political leaders thus demonstrates the divisive nature of nationalism, as Albanians sought to have institutions that paralleled but remained separate from those of the rest of Macedonia.

In the meantime, municipal authorities in the predominantly Albanian cities of Gostivar and Tetovo had decided to hang the national flags of Turkey and Albania equal to the national flag of Macedonia in front of the municipal halls. In the middle of a debate occurring in the National Assembly involving the use of symbols that belonged to other countries, the local authorities responded to an earlier order from the Constitutional Court and sent police officers to force the removal of the foreign flags. During the course of a violent confrontation between ethnic Albanian demonstrators and the police, three people died and some two hundred others were injured. In the following months the mayor of Gostivar, Rufi Osmani, was convicted on charges related to the flag hanging and sentenced to thirteen years and eight months in prison. Regarding the events in
Gostivar, the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights concluded, “[T]he force used by the police in the Gostivar incident far exceeded the reasonable level required to restore law and order to the situation.”

Nevertheless, just as in Tetovo, this incident was resolved through the normal workings of civil society and without resorting to extra-legal nationalist violence. To resolve the controversy, the parliament approved and enacted a new law regarding the use of flags. The rapporteur then reported:

While imposing no conditions on the design of the minority flags or their use at private occasions, the laws hold that minority flags must be smaller in size than the State flag of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and may be displayed only on national holidays at local self-governed municipalities where a national minority makes up a majority of the municipal population.

The rapporteur concluded, “that the new law on minority flags of 8 July 1997 appears to be a reasonable compromise, taking into account the interests of all sides.”

Furthermore, the imprisoned mayor would be released the following year, as a result of a political process that will be discussed shortly.

In both Tetovo and Gostivar, the Macedonian Government addressed legitimate problems through an established legal process, in other words, through the workings of civil society. Schwartz explains that the true task of a civil society involves allowing citizens the space to express their differences and individual ethnic identities while at the same time maintaining that identity within the established framework of the society. He then goes on to say, “In the context of the Balkans today ethnic and national movements generally threaten the very existence of civil society. Exclusive ethnic membership obviates the common and consensual citizenship.” In other words, while differences are a normal part of human existence, when they become the basis for exclusive
membership in a particular national movement, they threaten the common, or universal premises upon which the concept of citizenship is based. It is important to point out that although Macedonia suffered from several instances of ethnic violence, for the most part tension arising from ethnic differences was resolved through the workings of civil society.

In general, relations between ethnic Macedonians, ethnic Albanians, and other minorities remained productive and positive, rather than destructive and negative. In fact, Ackerman notes, “most ethnic Albanians in Macedonia have lived there for generations – they consider Macedonia their home, and themselves Macedonian citizens....[T]here is no evidence of ancient ethnic hatreds between Slavic Macedonians and ethnic Albanians.” Kiro Gligorov, President of Macedonia until 1998, similarly noted the shared history between the two groups. He explains, “[T]he Second World War as well, we had joint Macedonian/Albanian units which fought against occupation. And the people who were in those units, some of them are still alive.”

Although ethnic differences and tensions persisted, it nevertheless seems as though the absence of militant nationalist agitation helped to create a generally positive situation regarding the protection of human rights. The Special Rapporteur noted, “[T]he Government of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia has made considerable achievements both in the maintenance of peace and in the protection of human rights....All indications are that the government remains committed to implementing policies which will continue this encouraging trend.” While not discounting the difficult problems involving excessive use of force by the police, the rapporteur nevertheless concluded, “On the basis of her observations and the commitments which
the Government has made to her, the Special Rapporteur recommends to the Commission on Human Rights that it remove the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia from her mandate.”17 Thus, one of the most prominent organizations designed to monitor the protection of human rights within Macedonia determined that it was no longer necessary to have a special mandate to observe human rights practices within the country. If Mother Teresa still followed events in the town of her birthplace, one can only imagine that in the last years of her life, before her death in 1997, she rejoiced to see the progress that coalitions of different ethnic groups had made towards protecting universal human rights.

The continuing political developments within the country reflect this positive assessment. Researcher Violeta Caceva points out that from the time Macedonia declared independence, an Albanian party had always been a coalition partner in the central government.18 Furthermore, of all the states in the world in which the Roma, or Gypsies, reside, only Macedonia could boast a popularly elected and serving Roma member of the parliament.19 In a very surprising and hopeful development, in the election of 1998 two extremely nationalist and opposing parties decided to collaborate. VMRO, the leading Macedonian nationalist party, which was discussed in Chapter 3, under the leadership of Ljubco Georgievski, joined forces with the Albanian nationalist party of Arben Xhaferi, the Albanian and Turkish Party for Democratic Prosperity (DPA). Together, the two parties formed a coalition government under the leadership of new President Vasil Tupurkovski.20

Anthropologist Keith Brown explains the startling turn of events by pointing to the corruption that had accompanied the previous party’s tenure in office. The socialist
party that had taken over the country following the collapse of Yugoslavia had presided over the transition to a freer market than that which had existed in Yugoslavia. As a result, those people with contacts in the party managed to takeover many formerly public companies. In 1998 VMRO shifted its tactics away from a focus on nationalism as a rallying cry and instead opposed the government because of its corruption. The Albanian party followed a similar course of action, and both groups discovered that by working together they could defeat the ruling party. Just as nationalism had often served as a tool for politicians attempting to gain power, when that tool became ineffective, those same politicians dropped nationalism in favor of a more appropriate and beneficial strategy, in this case attacking corruption. Importantly, VMRO’s behavior in office matched the pre-election rhetoric. A United Nations report explains that the leader of VMRO and the new Prime Minister of the country, Ljubco Georgievski, “underlined that the fostering and development of inter-ethnic relations will be one of the fundamental tenets of his Government.”22 Georgievski matched action to rhetoric and the new government immediately secured the early release of Osmani, the former mayor of Gostivar, and other officials who had been imprisoned following the flag controversy in that city.23

In spite of all the progress that had occurred in the political realm, the dire economic situation continued to present serious problems for political leaders. Macedonian politicians agreed that in spite of ethnic tensions, the economy remained the primary difficulty. Former President Gligorov in fact stated, “The most important thing for us would be for Macedonia to be developed economically.”24 Scholar P. H. Liotta explains that President Vasil Tupurkovski held exactly the same view as Gligorov. Liotta
writes, “His long-term expectation, both for the survival of Macedonia and for the recovery of the Balkan region, is that Western governments and businesses must provide economic aid, infrastructure support, and direct investment.” Furthermore, the Special Rapporteur describes the connection that exists between economics and human rights:

The economic situation in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia remains difficult, and continues to limit the Government’s progress in providing for full enjoyment of economic and social rights. As elsewhere, it is evident that economic problems in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia have negative repercussions on the overall human rights situation.

Although nationalist agitation is often blamed as the primary source of violence and human rights violations, the history of Macedonia demonstrates that economics often has as much, or more, to do with the root of the problems.

Perhaps the serious economic difficulties influenced the new coalition government to make an extremely poor political decision. When Taiwan offered Macedonia $300 million in cash and more than $1 billion in aid and investment in return for diplomatic recognition, the leaders of Macedonia accepted the deal. The decision to recognize Taiwan embroiled Macedonia in an entirely different kind of nationalist struggle: the serious antagonism between Taiwan and the People’s Republic of China. When it came time for the Security Council to discuss extending UNPREDEP’s mandate, therefore, Qin Huasun, the Permanent Representative from China voted against the extension. He argued in the Security Council, “The situation in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia has apparently stabilized in the past few years, its relations with neighboring countries have been improved, and peace and stability there have not been adversely affected by developments in that region.” While the first two arguments provided by Huasun appear plausible, it would have been difficult to marshal convincing
evidence to prove that regional stability, or lack thereof, was not adversely affecting Macedonia. In fact, events would graphically demonstrate that regional stability played the critical role regarding peace within Macedonia.

In the meantime, few believed the Chinese representative’s reasons for voting against extending UNPREDEP’s mandate. During the same discussion in the Security Council, Mr. Calovski, the representative from Macedonia, stated, “the extension of its mandate is supported by all – I repeat all – member states except one, and that because of bilateral considerations, something that we all consider to be in full contradiction of the Charter of our organization.”

In addition, Henryk Sokalski, the head of the UNPREDEP mission commented, “Most observers agreed that the real reason for China’s veto was the establishment of diplomatic relations between Macedonia and Taiwan, and there is no question of a direct cause-and-effect relationship.”

In addition, former Macedonian President Gligorov criticized his government’s actions, “which he called ‘the direct trigger’ of China’s veto.”

Sokalski then points out that Gligorov’s reference to a “direct trigger” implies the existence of an indirect trigger as well. He theorizes that, especially as the security situation in neighboring Kosovo began to disintegrate in 1997 and 1998, leaders within Macedonia began to consider ways in which to invite a stronger military presence, such as NATO, into the country, and in the process advance their country’s hopes of one day joining that military alliance. Sokalski quotes a leading Macedonian politician who said, “There was no way to avoid replacing UNPREDEP with NATO in its new role...[but] we should have found a more sophisticated method.” In other words, the goal of
recognizing Taiwan had ultimately been to replace UNPREDEP with NATO, even though the strategy employed contained some serious flaws.

In any event, Prime Minister Georgievski did indeed allow 12,000 NATO troops to be stationed in Macedonia and to deploy along the border with Kosovo. Sokalski reports, however:

UNPREDEP’s departure left a vacuum of its own. Before long an increasing number of public figures realized that NATO was primarily preoccupied with Kosovo and had neither a mandate nor any immediate intention to operate in Macedonia. NATO’s stationing of a logistical support base for the Kosovo operation fell short of Macedonia’s expectations for an active NATO presence in the country.”

Similarly, in his last report before the end of UNPREDEP’s mandate, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan noted, “Peace and stability in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia continue to depend largely on developments in other parts of the region, particularly in Kosovo.” Annan’s words not only directly refuted the rationalization given by the Chinese representative regarding UNPREDEP, but they would prove ominously prophetic in light of the nationalist agitation and human rights violations that would destabilize Macedonia just three short years later.

**War in Kosovo Begins**

Ethnic diversity and ethnic tension within Kosovo, a province that borders Macedonia, has proved both similar and yet very different to the situation within Macedonia. As was discussed in Chapter 3, Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic had ended Kosovo’s autonomy in 1989 and fully incorporated the province into the Serbian

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*While the international community and most ethnically Slavic groups refer to the province as “Kosovo,” the ethnic Albanians call their home “Kosova.” For the sake of using the internationally accepted and familiar term, this paper will refer to the province as “Kosovo.”*
Republic. Anthropologist and humanitarian aid worker Janet Reineck explains that the legislation Milosevic adopted “placed effective control of Kosovo’s police, judiciary, economy, and political life, in the hands of the Serbian government. The vast majority of Albanians in public service were dismissed to be replaced by Serbs, who then launched an organized campaign of repression against them.” In response, Ackermann relates, “Resisting Serbian repression, Kosovo Albanians set up alternative political and social institutions as a major element of their strategy of non-violent resistance and noncooperation.” As elsewhere, on the surface it appeared as though ethnic divisions played the primary role in the tensions between the ethnic groups that began to mount in Kosovo in the 1990’s.

As in other parts of the Balkans, however, the reality turned out to be much more complicated. Milosevic had originally rescinded Kosovo’s autonomy for reasons that had less to do with ethnicity and more to do with his own personal pursuit of power. At the same time, a brief description of the longer-term relations between the two groups belies the idea that simple ethnic conflict served as the primary cause of the violence and human rights abuses. Just as Macedonian nationalism developed as a response to the propaganda efforts of Greeks, Bulgarians, and Serbians, as discussed in Chapter 1, Albanian nationalism also developed in response to other nationalist efforts. Policy analyst Barnett Rubin explains:

Albanian nationalism defined itself in resistance to Serbian and other Slavic and Greek nationalist claims, and its founding symbolic event also occurred in Kosovo. In 1878 Albanian intellectuals convened the League of Prizren, the first Albanian nationalist organization, named for the Kosovo town where it first met. The league contested Serb claims to Kosovo and other territories and asked the ‘Great Powers’...to support an Albanian state, which gained recognition in 1913, though without Kosovo or the Albanian-majority areas in Macedonia.
Rubin thus provides further evidence regarding the oppositional nature of nationalism. In other words, people often form a national identity in opposition to competing claims from other national groups, which thus emphasizes the divisive nature of nationalism.

Further evidence regarding the nature of ethnic identity in Kosovo comes from anthropologist Ger Duijzings' extensive research into the nature and history of the ways in which Kosovars have identified themselves and formed relations with one another. He describes an extremely complex society with many more facets than the simple opposition of Albanian and Serbian ethnic identities. He writes:

Yet Kosovo also has a history of coexistence with considerable movement across its ethnic and religious frontiers, through trade, cultural diffusion, religious exchange, and conversion. Many cultural traits were and still are shared across group boundaries, and throughout its entire history the ethnic and religious barriers have been anything but watertight. Thus, a reliance on the oversimplified idea of ethnic tensions between groups, much less on “ancient ethnic hatreds,” to explain the violence in Kosovo in the 1990’s ignores the much more complicated picture. This is not to say that group differences and diversity do not exist or do not matter. In fact Duijzings notes:

In Bosnia, Serbs, Croats, and Muslims speak basically the same language (religion being the main distinction), whereas [in Kosovo] Albanians and Serbs – or for that matter Turks and Gypsies – all speak different languages. In addition, among Albanians there is a threefold religious divide into Muslims, Catholics, and a substantial community of Shi’a oriented dervish orders, whereas Serbs are Orthodox.

Mother Teresa serves as an example of this diversity. Although she came from an Albanian-speaking family, her family practiced the Catholic faith.

Religious differences, however, did not necessarily produce religious hatreds. Just as throughout the Balkans members of different religions coexisted and even shared
traditions with one another, as discussed in Chapter 1, in Kosovo as well “Muslims and
Christians of different ethnic backgrounds have visited each other’s sanctuaries,
worshipped each other’s saints, and ignored the evident theological objections of
religious orthodoxies.” The discussion of religion in Kosovo thus serves as a reminder
that many factors other than ethnicity have served to distinguish groups of people from
one another. Duijzings explains:

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the main lines of division were
between Albanian landlords and the rest of the population....In fact other
divisions have been much more salient in daily life and local contexts than
the ethnic one, such as clan or tribal loyalties, religion, the urban-versus-
rural dichotomy, language (which is not always coterminous with ethnic
division) or gender.

Duijzings thus draws the same conclusions regarding the lack of “ancient ethnic
hatreds” in Kosovo that have been discussed throughout the paper, as well as in many
other places, regarding Macedonia in particular and the Balkans in general. Rather than
a simple construction of ethnic or national identity, a variety of other factors played an
important role in influencing the behavior and ideology of people in the Balkans.
Duijzings also agrees with findings regarding the subjectivity of ethnic identity. He
writes, “[E]thnic and religious identities are not as fixed as our experience in Western
Europe suggests. One can have more than one ‘exclusive’ identity, and one can change
identity more easily and more drastically [than in Western Europe].” The personal
nature of ethnic identity, and people’s ability to change and manipulate those identities,
进一步削弱了“古代仇恨”引发暴力冲突和
human rights abuses.

Nevertheless, in Kosovo in the 1990’s a violent conflict indeed erupted and
brought misery and human rights abuses to many Kosovars. The question then becomes,
why in fact did this violence occur? As discussed in Chapter 2, Albanians had held a secondary political status within Tito’s Yugoslavia, although they enjoyed a large measure of local autonomy within Kosovo. Their position only worsened when Milosevic rescinded their autonomy and dismissed large numbers of ethnic Albanians from state employment. Milosevic’s actions, which he undertook to promote his own personal power, had disastrous consequences for Kosovo. Reineck explains, “[T]he massive firings had catastrophic effects on Albanian lives, catapulting many families into poverty and wreaking havoc on civil life. Professional people – engineers, actors, professors – have tried to make ends meet by selling cigarettes and vegetables in the marketplace and doing hard labor.”

Thus, an economic crisis developed in Kosovo in which many lacked the basic human rights defined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In particular, Article 23 states, “Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favorable conditions of work.” It is telling, however, that during this economic crisis, Albanians continued to engage in business with Serbians, thereby further undermining the argument of “ancient ethnic hatreds.”

Actors both inside and outside of Kosovo attempted to deal with the worsening situation. In Kosovo, a movement of parallel institutions and passive resistance developed under the leadership of Dr. Ibrahim Rugova to deal with the economic distress. At the same time, an Italian humanitarian organization known as St. Egidio sponsored negotiations that began in 1993 and culminated in 1996 with high-level negotiations between Rugova and Milosevic. Rubin explains, “Part of the reason for their success, in St. Egidio’s estimation, was that it had built up relations of trust with both sides through years of humanitarian effort....[At the meetings in 1996] the
discussions focused first on humanitarian issues.” Just as the solution to many of the nationalist problems in Macedonia, as discussed in Chapter 3, involved the promotion of universal human rights, a similar pattern began to appear in Kosovo.

The Rome Agreement, signed in September 1996, dealt with the educational system in Kosovo. Rubin highlights the agreement’s significance, noting, “Milosevic effectively recognized Rugova as the leader of his people. Rugova had agreed to discuss an issue of immediate practical importance, not simply the independence of Kosovo.” Rugova thus let go of nationalist issues, such as the status of Kosovo, and focused instead on human rights, in this case the right to education. Shortly after the signing of the Rome Agreement, a United Nations’ report on minorities noted, “The recent agreement between President Milosevic of Serbia and Dr. Rugova on the question of education is a major step forward. Both sides should take the opportunity to continue and broaden this dialogue, including through direct talks.” It is important to note that in dealing with minority issues, the report stressed the importance of universal human rights, such as the right to education.

Sadly, neither Rugova’s campaign of passive resistance nor the groundbreaking steps taken through the Rome Agreement succeeded in mitigating the conflict. Rubin explains that when it came time to implement the agreement, the two sides disagreed on the practicalities. At a moment when the West might have stepped in to exert some leverage, the West in general ignored the agreement. Similarly, when Rugova’s resistance movement failed to win international support, a group of militant ethnic Albanians within Kosovo decided to form the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) to harass Serbian police and military forces in Kosovo. At the same time, Milosevic’s regime
continued to suffer a loss in legitimacy following the failure of his war in Bosnia and Croatia, and the signing of the Dayton Accords in 1995. Sociologist Eric Gordy thus explains, “Since the signing of the peace accords in the winter of 1995 it [the Milosevic regime] no longer had a war with which to justify its continuation.”

Milosevic thus increasingly turned his attention to Kosovo. “Many in the Belgrade opposition,” according to Reineck,

believe that Milosevic is waging a campaign to maintain his sovereignty in Kosovo in the wake of the Bosnian tragedy and his failure to create the Greater Serbian state he championed. The aggression in Kosovo is not about preserving the ‘cradle of Serbian culture.’ It is about saving face, about defending a precarious political career with an anachronistic, contrived nationalist crusade.54

Just as Milosevic originally provoked the crisis in Kosovo in 1989 for personal reasons, he continued to contribute to the worsening state of affairs not out of extreme nationalist sentiments, but rather as a way to bolster his own repressive regime. Milosevic thus directed the Serbian forces to engage in an increasingly violent and repressive campaign against the KLA.

The KLA had begun as a fairly small group, and Dr. Rugova had originally publicly disassociated himself from their activities and refused to allow his government to provide support for their tactics.55 The first factor that served to dramatically increase the KLA’s power came with the collapse of the neighboring Albanian state in 1997. Albania had provided large amounts of inexpensive war materials and supplies for the black-market. With the country’s collapse following a financial crisis, cheap weapons surged onto the market and flooded into Kosovo. Rubin concludes that the arms “finally enabled the Kosovo Liberation Army to field a militarily significant force.”56 By the beginning of 1998, then, the KLA regularly attacked and killed Serbian officials and
policemen. The KLA had, in addition, secured complete military control of several areas within Kosovo.

Rubin then relates, "The decision by Belgrade to take back one of these areas led to the first major massacre of the war, that of the Jashari clan in Drenica in an operation extending from February 28 to March 5, 1998." Rubin’s account reveals two important aspects of the violence. First, by implicating Belgrade he provides support for the idea that Milosevic directed the campaign. Second, he notes that the Serbian forces not only attacked the insurgents, but also in fact massacred a whole family of civilians. Journalist and genocide expert Samantha Power explains that the Serbian attack turned the tide for the KLA. Following the massacre popular support for the guerilla organization increased dramatically. Other sources agree with Power’s analysis and as one scholar notes, “The death of Adam Jashari, a regional KLA commander, added a sense of martyrdom on the part of the ethnic Albanians. There was a significant increase in the ranks of the KLA and a spread of hostilities.” Following an established pattern of nationalist activity in the Balkans, then, repression and human rights violations, such as violent attacks on civilians, created an upsurge in militant nationalist activity.

Several United Nations reports confirm the extent to which the Serbian police and military ignored the basic human rights of the insurgents and directed their attacks against ethnic Albanian civilians. A 1997 report on the situation of human rights observed, “The Special Rapporteur has continued to receive reports of serious ill-treatment and torture committed in Kosovo against persons in police custody.” One year later a report of the Secretary-General stated:

The desperate situation of the civilian population remains the most disturbing aspect of the hostilities in Kosovo. I am particularly concerned
that civilians increasingly have become the main target in the conflict. Fighting in Kosovo has resulted in a mass displacement of civilian populations, the extensive destruction of villages and means of livelihood, and the deep trauma and despair of displaced populations. Many villages have been destroyed by shelling and burning following operations conducted by federal and Serbian government forces.61

Many observers likened these disturbing events in Kosovo to the similar tactics of “ethnic cleansing” that had occurred in Bosnia and Croatia.62

Duijzings contrasts the policies of “ethnic cleansing” with the reality of the diverse and multi-faceted population that had lived in Kosovo before onset of hostilities. He explains:

[T]he war fought in former Yugoslavia, and the process of national homogenization and ‘ethnic cleansing’ that have accompanied the war seem to have been primarily motivated by the necessity to forge single and unambiguous identities out of a population that is very much mixed and of diverse origins....It seems that the violence in former Yugoslavia is in the end not only the result of opposite and incompatible identities, it is perhaps even more the means to achieve them.63

The danger of extremist nationalist ideology, then, lies not only in its ability to convince people of the existence of “ancient ethnic hatreds,” but through violence to actually bring into being a state of hatred based in ethnicity where none had existed before. Particularist and exclusive nationalist ideology of this kind cannot help but serve as a serious impediment to those interested in promoting universal human rights.

**War in Kosovo Ends**

The situation in Kosovo continued to worsen, and by the end of 1998 sources showed a sharp build-up of Serbian forces in Kosovo.64 In January of the following year, Serbian troops massacred a number of ethnic Albanians at the village of Racak, causing a large number of people to become refugees. At this point, the West finally became
seriously involved in the situation and demanded that the parties gather at the French town of Rambouillet for negotiations. The leading Western powers, and the U.S. in particular, used the threat of NATO air force strikes to back their demand that the leaders negotiate with one another,\textsuperscript{65} employing the same tactics of coercive diplomacy that had proved successful in ending the war in Bosnia and Croatia, as discussed briefly in Chapter 3.

The U.S. and the West thus threatened violence in order to halt human rights violations. It is only unfortunate that the U.S. had not entered the conflict sooner, either to support Rugova’s campaign of non-violent resistance, to pressure both sides to implement the Rome Agreement, or to insist on further negotiations regarding the promotion of universal human rights for all those involved in the problems in Kosovo. By 1999, however, given the human rights abuses that had already occurred, Milosevic’s track record of “ethnic cleansing” in Bosnia and Croatia, and the alarming build-up of Serbian forces in and around Kosovo, it does seem as though the West had few options other than to threaten Milosevic with the use of force to try and compel a political settlement, and then to use force when that settlement proved elusive. It is also important to note that after the Rambouillet negotiations had failed, the U.S. and NATO felt that they had exhausted all other non-violent options for resolving the situation. In the end, however successful the NATO war against Milosevic might have been in ending the atrocities that Milosevic had organized against Kosovar Albanians, as we shall see the use of violence in the defense of human rights abuses proved an imperfect, though perhaps necessary, solution for the broader problems of regional stability.
In spite of the complex set of circumstances that had preceded the atrocities in 1999, to many observers it appeared as though the U.S. and the other western states participated in the negotiations at Rambouillet on the "side" of the ethnic Albanians. In particular, Annex B of the draft agreement that the U.S. was urging both ethnic Albanian leaders and Serbian leaders to sign stated:

NATO personnel shall enjoy, together with their vehicles, vessels, aircraft, and equipment, free and unrestricted passage and unimpeded access through the FRY [Federal Republic of Yugoslavia] including associated airspace and territorial waters.66

By signing the agreement, Serbian leaders would be allowing NATO free access to their entire country. Regarding Annex B, analyst Rubin notes, "This curious provision seems almost designed to force a war, if it did not simply result from careless drafting."67

By the time the Albanian and Serbian leaders gathered in Rambouillet, the conflict had become so polarized and black and white that the major powers had no choice but to appear to "choose sides." Attempting to improve the human rights of suffering ethnic Albanians placed the U.S., in the minds of many observers, necessarily on the "side" of ethnic Albanian extremists, thus further demonstrating the difficulties that arise as a result of exclusive nationalist ideologies. Of course, the U.S. did not help the situation by drafting Annex B of the Interim Accord.

In addition, the American media contributed to the problem by its oversimplified portrayal of the complex history of the region. Following the pattern of selective victimization, discussed in Chapter 1, in general American media sources omitted references to the KLA as a guerrilla force that had killed Serbians as part of its own campaign of resistance. The media not only helped to garner American support for the war, but also contributed to a process whereby, in historian Misha Glenny's words, "little
sympathy is expressed for the victims of the conflicts if they belong to a national
community which is considered the original aggressor.”68 The media’s omission of
Serbian suffering in Kosovo thus also contributed to the perception that NATO was on
the “side” of the Albanians.

In any event, the Serbian delegation, which Milosevic had not authorized to
negotiate any aspects of the agreement, refused to sign, and when the ethnic Albanian
delegation finally did sign the agreement, the NATO governments had no choice except
to either commence a bombing campaign against the Milosevic regime, or else to
seriously lose credibility by demonstrating to the world the lack of force behind NATO’s
threats. Some detractors of NATO’s actions accused the alliance of using the language
of human rights as smokescreen for their own ulterior motives, in this case the defense of
NATO’s credibility and important role in Europe. While many historical examples,
from the time of Alexander the Great to the Great Power actions in the Balkans of the
nineteenth century, provide instances in which human rights rhetoric did indeed obscure
self-centered motives, during the war in Kosovo NATO went to great lengths to combat
this perception. It is again important to point out that NATO leaders also had exhausted
all non-military options before proceeding with the air strikes.

Throughout the conflict NATO leaders attempted to overcome the image that the
alliance was on the side of ethnic Albanian guerrillas, and stressed instead that their goals
included the protection of universal human rights. For example, when NATO threatened
the use of force before the Rambouillet negotiations, one analyst explains that it “sought
to ensure that its demands corresponded precisely to those uttered by the Security
Council. While this fact did not provide a legal justification for the threat in itself, the
alliance was less vulnerable to pursing its own goals and agenda through violent means.” Similarly, in a “Statement on Kosovo” made by the Heads of State and Government at a summit that occurred after the bombing campaign had begun, NATO leaders stressed their commitment to universal principals in their humanitarian intervention, as opposed to the perception that they had chosen sides. The statement declared, “The crisis in Kosovo represents a fundamental challenge to the values for which NATO has stood since its foundation: democracy, human rights, and the rule of law.”

In addition, NATO leaders worked hard to minimize the unavoidable contradictions between the tactics of war, and an operation with the stated goal of protecting human rights. Samantha Power explains, “The Geneva conventions prohibited the bombing of dual civilian-military sites if the ‘incidental loss of civilian life...would be excessive in relation to the concrete and direct military advantage’ of the strike. American and European lawyers had almost as much to say about the conduct of the operation as their political supervisors.” As noted in Chapter 3, the Geneva Accords, which regulate the conduct of warfare, drew directly on the ideas of the Universal Declaration in their prohibitions against employing violence towards civilians. NATO’s deliberations regarding specific bombing targets suggest both the objectivity of universal human rights as well as the power of those rights to impact international conduct. NATO’s actions thus contrasted starkly with the policies of the Milosevic regime, which directly targeted civilians in the course of its repression of the KLA.

To almost everyone’s surprise, Milosevic did not quickly cave into the NATO demands after the bombing began, and the war dragged on for several months. While
NATO’s military sought to coerce Milosevic into surrendering, international diplomats attempted to formulate a settlement that would bring the hostilities to a close. After several months of a lack of diplomatic progress that corresponded to an ever-increasing military campaign, Russian President Boris Yeltsin suggested that Russia and the United States work together to find a solution. Faced with pressure from his own associates, unhappy soldiers and their families, as well as from Russia, Milosevic finally surrendered on June 3, 1999, and seventy-eight days after it had begun, the bombing campaign ended. Samantha Power notes that Milosevic had surrendered in part because he was “afraid that if NATO indeed staged a ground invasion, he would be arrested for war crimes.” If Milosevic did surrender because he feared the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), his actions then provide further testimony of the power of international organizations dedicated to protecting universal human rights.

The resulting agreement between Milosevic and NATO stipulated that all Serbian troops and police would leave the province of Kosovo and 50,000 NATO peacekeepers would instead ensure the area’s security. More than one million of the ethnic Albanians who had become refugees during the war returned home and began the hard work of putting their lives back together. Although NATO had brought the military conflict to an end, upon Milosevic’s surrender the United Nations passed a resolution that stipulated exactly how the province would be governed. In particular, and of great importance to later developments within Macedonia, UN Security Council Resolution 1244 demanded:

[T]hat the KLA and other armed Kosovo Albanian groups end immediately all offensive actions and comply with the requirements for demilitarization as laid down by the head of the international security presence....[And decided] that the responsibilities of the international security presence to be deployed and acting in Kosovo will include:...conducting border monitoring duties as required.
In addition, the Resolution declared “that the main responsibilities of the international civil presence will include:...protecting and promoting human rights.” To address a problem of abuses of minorities, Resolution 1244 stipulated the protection of human rights, not the protection of the rights of one particular group of people over and above all others.

Although Milosevic remained in power, by September 2000 the Serbian people had grown tired of their leader’s reckless military adventures. The citizens thus voted him out of office in favor of Serbian economics professor Vojislav Kostunica. Although Milosevic attempted to contest the results of the election, large numbers of workers, police, students, and soldiers marched non-violently to Belgrade, demanded the end of Milosevic’s tenure in office, and secured the transfer of power to Kostunica. Some months later, in return for a large pledge of economic aid, the Kostunica government handed Milosevic to the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY). Finally, the individual responsible for so much nationalist violence and so many abuses of human rights would be required to answer for his crimes in front of an objective and international court of justice. The topic of the ICTY will be returned to at the end of the chapter.

Immediate Impact on Macedonia

In the meantime, neighboring Macedonia had suffered immensely as a result of the war next-door. Once NATO had begun the bombing campaign against Milosevic, Serbian forces began rounding up at gunpoint all the ethnic Albanians in Kosovo and herding them to the border. In what they termed “Operation Horseshoe,” Serbian troops
forced more than 1.3 million Kosovars from their homes and into Macedonia and Albania. Macedonia proved unable to cope with the unraveling humanitarian disaster and at one point Prime Minister Ljubco Georgievski even closed the border to keep further refugees from entering. Many ethnic Albanians then found themselves trapped in an uncertain and dangerous wasteland in between Kosovo and Macedonia.

Georgievski did not govern the country by himself, however, and his coalition partner, the ethnic Albanian leader Arben Xhaferi pursued a somewhat different policy. In addition to making strong statements in favor of the NATO campaign in general, he called on ethnic Albanians to take Kosovars into their own homes to avoid having the Kosovars resettled in yet a third country. At the same time, even though Macedonian police had treated some Kosovars very harshly at the border, Xhaferi exercised a policy of moderation and restraint. According to Ackermann, he “called on ethnic Albanians not to let themselves be provoked because that would play into the hands of Milosevic.” The Macedonian government eventually did reopen the border, and in early May Prime Minister Georgievski promised Secretary-General Kofi Annan that the border would remain open. All in all, over a quarter of a million refugees arrived in Macedonia, one refugee for every eight citizens of the Republic of Macedonia.

Although most of these ethnic Albanians would eventually return to Kosovo following the conclusion of NATO’s bombing campaign, a 2002 U.S. Country Report on Human Rights Practices noted that, “approximately 8,000 remained in the country at year’s end, and the Government believes that there may be about an equal number of unregistered refugees.” The policies Xhaferi promoted in response to the refugee crisis contrast starkly with those employed elsewhere by other nationalist leaders. It is easy to
imagine that Xhaferi could have used the situation of massive destabilization in Macedonia to call for a militant nationalist crusade to right all real and perceived wrongs against ethnic Albanians. It is impossible to prove a definitive connection, but Xhaferi did not follow such a course of extreme nationalist rhetoric, and Macedonia did not descend into ethnic violence, in spite of the amazingly difficult situation that landed on her doorstep.

Nevertheless, in addition to the huge number of refugees, the NATO campaign affected Macedonia in many other ways as well. Ackermann explains:

The economic spill-over effects from the Kosovo crisis therefore hold the potential of negatively affecting inter-ethnic relations, not only because Slavic Macedonians were blaming Kosovar Albanians for draining the economic system, but also because in times of economic stress existing inter-ethnic divisions become magnified as ethnic groups are forced to compete over the allocation of scarce resources.82

Ackermann’s conclusions thus provide further evidence for the links between difficult economic situations and ethnic tensions. Macedonia’s economy, which had been in a precarious enough position before the war, took yet another blow as a result of the crisis in Kosovo. Scholar Robert Hislope recounts, “In 1996 Macedonia had registered its first year of economic growth since independence. A steady upturn commenced but was cut short by the crisis in Kosovo in 1999.”83 A U.S. State Department report similarly notes, “The crisis cut many firms off from customers in Serbia and made the transportation of goods to and from other parts of Europe more difficult and expensive. The overall economic effects of the Kosovo crisis are not clear yet, but the initial impact on the economy was quite negative.”84

Saddened by the desperate economic situation within Macedonia as well as the host of other problems that would continue to plague Macedonia following the onset of
the crisis in Kosovo, Saso Ordanoski, editor of a Macedonian magazine remarked, “Macedonia was forced to end up paying the bill for Serbia’s injustice against Kosovo’s Albanians. In the end...if NATO countries had used only a small proportion of what they had spent on bombs to modernize Macedonia and other Balkan countries, the region would have had a far better chance not only for integration but for survival.”

Ordanoski’s observations do not necessarily condemn the NATO actions in Kosovo, rather, they allude to the complex nature of both the problem and the necessary solution. Since the violence did not arise out of simple ethnic hatred, any solution to the tensions must deal with the wider roots of the conflict. Since economic distress undoubtedly contributed to the tension, it seems that alleviating the economic problems should be as central to a final solution as the use of military force to halt the immediate violation of human rights.

Many others within Macedonia shared Ordanoski’s negative assessment and, immediately after the onset of NATO’s bombing campaign against Milosevic, protestors in Macedonia took to the streets. Demonstrators gathered outside the American Embassy, chanting slogans denouncing NATO. By nightfall the crowd had grown and threatened to turn violent. Demonstrations also spread to the German and British embassies. As the American Ambassador and his staff took refuge in the embassy vault, a phone call to NATO brought the arrival of American military forces, who diffused the situation. After less than an hour the situation calmed down and the ambassador freed himself and his staff from the vault. A brief analysis of this episode reveals the dangers in an over-reliance on ethnicity to explain events, as well as the complicated nature of ethnic identity in general.
General Wesley Clark, the Supreme Allied Commander of NATO, had learned of the demonstrations when US Ambassador to Macedonia, Chris Hill, called him from the embassy vault to ask for assistance. After the NATO troops had dispersed the crowd, Hill explained to Clark “that the pro-Serb crowd had been bused down to the capital from a northern town that had a largely Serb population.” Clark then concluded, “This last fact confirmed my view that this was a planned attack designed to spark resistance to NATO in Macedonia and contribute to destabilizing a friendly democratic government. It was part of the way Milosevic would fight back against NATO and his neighbors.”

Unfortunately, Clark does not share any evidence that would explain how he made the leap from a “pro-Serb crowd,” to the deliberate provocation on the part of Milosevic. In contrast, several major newspapers characterized the crowd in a somewhat different fashion as they reported on the event.

John Nadler with the Ottawa Citizen provides the most convincing evidence that might support Clark’s assertion regarding the nature of the crowd. He writes, “In Skopje, a mob of about 2,000 ethnic Serbs attacked the U.S. Embassy.” In contrast, the Agence France Presse did not specify the ethnicity of those gathered as it announced, “pro-Serb demonstrators protesting NATO air strikes in neighboring Yugoslavia yesterday laid siege to the U.S., British, and German embassies.” Alessandra Stanley from the New York Times had a similar take on the event: “[T]housands of sympathizers with Serbia marched on the American Embassy.” The American and French papers thus refused to identify the exact ethnicity of the demonstrators, pointing instead to the fact that either they sympathized with those of Serbian ethnicity or with those currently living in Serbia.
Macedonian politicians presented a slightly more nuanced depiction of events. Regarding the demonstration, Prime Minister Ljubco Georgievski told the *Boston Globe*, “The two biggest problems the country is facing at the moment are the inflow of refugees from Kosovo and the emergence of anti-NATO and anti-American feelings among the Macedonian public.”91 Similarly, though not referring to the protests directly, former Macedonian President Kiro Gligorov said in an interview, “It is obvious that after seventy years of common life there are many friendly business and family ties [with Yugoslavia] that play a very important role. That is why the Macedonian population accepted very unheartedly [sic] the strikes against Yugoslavia.”92 Both politicians allude to the fact that while the demonstrators might have had strong ties with Serbia and sympathies for people living in Serbia, they in fact belonged to Macedonia.

My own personal experience corroborates the assessments of the politicians. I was working in Macedonia at the time as an English teacher, and found out later that one of my students, a young woman named Zorica, had in fact skipped my class to go throw stones at the American Embassy. She saw no contradiction in returning to class to continue learning English the next week. Although she carries a Macedonian passport and would probably in her first response identify herself as Macedonian, further discussions revealed that her family considers themselves Serbian, even though they live in Macedonia and have done so for some time. Similarly, another close friend named Zoki participated in the demonstrations outside the British Embassy before police wielding teargas forced him to return home to his British fiancée! They are now happily married, have two children, and live in France. One can only wonder how their children will eventually define their ethnic identities. Furthermore, in the weeks that followed the
event, I heard many Macedonians explain that in fact students in a high school located next-door to the embassy had served as the primary source of protestors, as many wanted to avoid the day’s lessons and tests.

The story of the protest outside the American Embassy thus demonstrates yet again the difficulty in determining a person or a group’s ethnic identity. Does their language, citizenship, country of residence, family history, or political sympathy play the greatest role in determining their ethnic identity? From an objective, external standpoint, it is impossible to say. Each individual person present at the embassy that night would have to answer the question of their ethnicity for him or herself. Furthermore, the complicated nature of identity makes it almost impossible to conclude that individuals or groups of people acted or felt a certain way simply because of their ethnicity.

In all these different ways, then, the crisis in Kosovo contributed to massive destabilization within Macedonia. The economy suffered considerably and ethnic tensions grew worse in a region that had been making steady progress on ethnic problems through the workings of civil society. In addition, a country that had previously welcomed NATO’s presence began to witness serious signs of anti-American sentiment among the population. Adding to the general difficulties, over a quarter of a million ethnic-Albanian refugees streamed into the small country of Macedonia, which by itself could only claim a population of just over two million. Of great importance for later developments, many scholars testify that along with the flood of refugees, guerrillas from the KLA also made their way into Macedonia. Although NATO’s military solution undoubtedly halted the “ethnic cleansing” and potential genocide on the part of Serbian
forces, the operation fell short in dealing with the broader context and longer-term effects of the operation, particularly with regard to the situation within Macedonia.

Nevertheless, the Macedonian politicians refused to let the crisis bring down the government. Although Macedonian authorities worried about the effect of the KLA in Macedonia, Ackermann relates, “The Macedonian authorities have responded mostly with preventative rather than repressive measures, such as the monitoring of the movements of KLA members.” The Macedonian government thus did not contribute to the same cycle of violence that had occurred in Kosovo, where Serbian forces had launched a harsh counter-attack against KLA forces, violated the human rights of many in the process, and thereby increased the popularity of and support for the KLA troops.

At the same time, ethnic Albanian politicians also exercised a policy of moderation. As was already noted, Xhaferi had called for restraint regarding the refugee situation. In general, Rubin notes, “Albanians by and large continued to pursue their goals peacefully through the country’s political process.” In her final assessment, however, Ackermann notes rather ominously, “But whether there will be continued KLA activities again depends on finding a political solution for Kosovo.”

**Longer Term Impact: Almost a Civil War**

In 1998 the Republic of Macedonia seemed poised for success as a multi-ethnic democracy; by 2001 nationalism was on the upsurge, and accompanying violence and human rights violations dragged the country to the brink of a major civil war. The question then becomes, with all the ways in which the Macedonian government had progressed towards resolving ethnic conflicts and tension through the workings of civil
society, how did this startling change come about? An examination of both the immediate and longer-range causes for the violence and human rights violations within Macedonia sheds further light on the divisive nature of nationalism, as well as the lack of compelling evidence for “ancient ethnic hatreds” as the direct cause of that violence.

The violence in Macedonia began in late February 2001 when a group of ethnic Albanian insurgents launched an attack in the border village of Tanusevci, ushering in several months of conflict between Albanian rebels and government forces, who were primarily ethnic Macedonians. Hislope explains that the immediate impetus for the attack involved the official delineation of the border between Serbia and Macedonia, which had been established just several weeks earlier and threatened the Albanian nationalist project of a greater Albania. Scholar Justin Eldridge similarly notes, “Skopje and Belgrade’s efforts to delineate the border between Kosovo and Macedonia probably led some ethnic Albanians in the area to believe that the government would soon threaten family ties and cross-border business, to include the lucrative smuggling of cigarettes and other commodities.” Sokalski also writes, “The signing of the Macedonia-FRY agreement on the final demarcation of their mutual border irritated radical politicians in Kosovo, who believed they should have been involved in the negotiation process since some of the disputed territory was situated along the Kosovo section of the border.”

The Albanian forces thus sought to control the village themselves in order to protect the people’s business, family, and political connections with ethnic Albanians living on the other side of the border. Although the issue and nature of borders and their connections with nationalism was discussed more extensively in Chapter 1, it is useful to
note here that borders by their very nature divide people from each other. While those divisions in and of themselves do not necessarily have negative implications, feelings of nationalism, rooted in the concept of a territorially defined nation state, stand in opposition to an understanding of universal human rights, which seeks to view all people as equally deserving of the same rights regardless of the particular location in which they may reside, or the state in which they claim citizenship.

Yet another way in which the nature of the border between Macedonia and Yugoslavia contributed to the violent conflict involved the patrolling of that border. As was noted earlier, until the end of its mandate first UNPROFOR and then UNPREDEP had patrolled the borders between Macedonia and Yugoslavia. A 1997 United Nations report testifies to the importance of those patrols, noting:

In the past three months they [UNPREDEP] conducted over 200 patrols per week and observed an average of some 153 patrols each week by the armed forces of Albania, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the host country. Observed illegal smuggling incidents decreased substantially during the period from early spring 1997.100

As already discussed, in contrast to UNPREDEP, NATO had no intention of dealing with problems inside Macedonia, as its interests and mandate instead led NATO to focus primarily on Kosovo. Once NATO’s air war with Belgrade had ended, however, UN Resolution 1244 had authorized NATO’s forces, dubbed KFOR, to enter Kosovo and charged them with securing the border. Eldridge explains that in reality, “the increased fighting [in Macedonia] belied the hollow claim that it [KFOR] had effectively secured the border. Both U.S. and German troops, whose zones of responsibility in Kosovo border Macedonia, came under the harshest criticism.”101 While UNPREDEP managed to decrease smuggling incidents, KFOR’s inability to effectively guard the border
allowed weapons and insurgents from Kosovo to cross the border and continue their actions in Macedonia. The country thus continued to suffer from the poor political decision to officially recognize Taiwan. Macedonian political leaders did in fact recognize the magnitude of their mistake, however, and in June 2001 the government quietly discarded Taipei in favor of Beijing, thus clearing the way for eventual United Nations support for a peacekeeping mission.102

In the meantime, over the course of spring, the violence spread from Tanusevci to other villages situated near the border between Macedonia and Kosovo, as the group of ethnic Albanians, who began to call themselves the National Liberation Army (NLA), secured an increasing amount of territory, killing several Macedonian soldiers and policemen in the process. In March, clashes began to occur in the areas surrounding the fairly sizeable city of Tetovo, which contained a majority of ethnic Albanian inhabitants and was also located fairly close to the border. “By summer,” Sokalski writes, “a sizeable part of Macedonia’s northern and western territory, consisting of at least eighty mostly ethnically mixed villages, had fallen prey to NLA units. Some sixty Macedonian soldiers and policemen lost their lives in ambushes or in combat. Civilian victims, including thousands of displaced persons, have yet to be fully accounted for.” Regarding UNPREDEP’s role in stabilizing Macedonia and effectively preventing violence, Sokalski then concludes, “Indeed, two years following UNPREDEP’s termination, peace in Macedonia was breached; by a stroke of bitter consolation, peace in Macedonia was vindicated – too late.”103

The end of the UNPREDEP mission and the demarcation of the border thus provided some of the causes for the violence. At the same time, one NLA commander
admitted, “We have been planning this for years. We are not some new group that was just cobbled together.” An examination of the broader, longer-term causes of the violence further demonstrates the connections between events in Kosovo and violence in Macedonia. At the same time, an analysis of the roots of the conflict shows the difficulty in pinning the violence and human rights violations directly on ethnic tensions or “ancient ethnic hatreds.” Many other factors including the difficult economic situation and the ambitions of individual politicians played an equally important, if not a much greater role, in the outbreak of hostilities.

Particularly following the crisis in Kosovo, as has already been discussed, Macedonia suffered from a dismal economic outlook. Even after the outbreak of renewed violence, political analyst Brenda Pearson explains, “The majority of ethnic Macedonians and Albanians believe that the biggest problems in the country are poverty and unemployment – they view turbulent inter-ethnic relations and renewed violence as less urgent than shoring up the economy.” A United Nations Development Program (UNDP) poll, conducted in January 2001, one month before the conflict began, supports Pearson’s conclusions. The people surveyed by the UNDP ranked the importance of the problems confronting the country: “unemployment (70.4 percent), low salaries (61.7 percent), poverty (59.2 percent), high prices (50.2 percent), crime (48.7 percent), corruption (46.9 percent), health (40.9 percent), instability in the region (38.3 percent), and ethnic problems (37.6 percent).” Hislope then concludes that the combination of a high number of unemployed ethnic Albanian men faced with a bleak economic future and who did not particularly trust the Macedonian state contributed significantly to the onset
of hostilities. Significantly, this analysis has more to do with the economic situation than relations between ethnic groups.

A further problem with the hypothesis that violence developed directly as a result of ethnic tensions arises from the way in which this argument overlooks the complex realities of ethnic identity. Although the economic situation brought hardship to the people of Macedonia, everyone did not suffer equally from the crisis. In particular, since the socialist system of Yugoslavia had historically marginalized ethnic Albanians, they had had a greater experience with the private sector. Those experiences then proved a considerable asset for many, but not all, ethnic Albanians as Macedonia made the painful transition to a free-market economy. The majority of rural Albanian farmers and those Albanians who remained in small industry did not share in the prosperity enjoyed by others of their ethnic group. These economic differences provided important class distinctions among ethnic Albanians. Thus, just as it had during Ottoman times, economic status played an important role in differentiating people. Moreover, differences existed between ethnic Albanians living in different regions. In general, Albanians living in Macedonia enjoyed a higher standard of life and less government repression than those in Albania or in Yugoslavia. In a telling insight, one scholar notes, “There are more shared experiences between Macedonian Albanians and ethnic Macedonians than between Albanians from Kosovo and those from Albania.”

In addition to economic differences, political ideologies also divided ethnic Albanians. By 2001 several different political groups struggled to win the allegiances of ethnic Albanians living in Western Macedonia. As a result, many of those involved in the conflict with the Macedonian government had grown particularly dissatisfied with the
established Albanian political parties. They stated that for them the fight involved challenging the existing Albanian political parties, and they only joined the NLA as an afterthought. Ali Ahmeti, the leader of the NLA, thus provided an alternative for those Albanians who had lost faith in the country’s elected political leaders. According to Pearson, Ahmeti sought to unite the fragmented groups of ethnic Albanians by launching a civil war against the Macedonian state. She explains, “[T]he conflict really was a civil war turned upside down; the inter-ethnic dimension of the conflict became the exit strategy for ethnic Albanians at war with each other.”109

Liotta supports Pearson’s conclusion as he explains, “[T]he insurgency was as much about intra-ethnic Albanian division and rivalry as it was about the fight for civil society and more equitable distribution, administration, and justice within the Republic of Macedonia.”110 U.S. Ambassador James Pardew, who would prove instrumental in finding a political solution to the conflict, similarly testified, “I think the objectives of these people who are running this insurgency are personal power for themselves....At the end of the day, I think they are seeking greater political influence inside the Albanian community both in Macedonia and in Kosovo.”111

Just as in other instances in the Balkans, then, leaders employed and encouraged nationalism to unite a group of people fragmented by many differences including class and political ideology. Their political strategy involved unifying disparate groups of people in the face of a common enemy, in this case the established Macedonian government. Significantly, as part of their bid for power, the leaders of the NLA demanded greater rights for ethnic Albanians within Macedonia. Rather than working for universal human rights, the insurgents fought for the rights of their particular group.
Although the Macedonian government, comprised of both Macedonian and Albanian politicians, had made progress towards the protection of universal human rights, the slow pace of implementing those reforms helped the NLA to label their insurgency as an ethnic conflict. Nevertheless, it is important to remember that according to many external and objective sources, the Macedonian government had indeed taken great steps towards the protection of both minority and human rights, which suggests that the conflict had less to do with civil rights for ethnic Albanians and more to do with other factors such as economics, the political ambitions of individual leaders such as Ahmeti, and the very real human rights abuses that had occurred within Kosovo.

As the war between Ahmeti’s NLA and the Macedonian Government continued, the cycle of violence began to resemble events in Kosovo: ethnic Albanian guerrillas would attack government forces, provoke an overreaction on the part of the government, which would then bolster support for the NLA from the ethnic Albanian community. U.S. defense official and adviser Richard Perle points out that the victims of the government’s reaction included “a great many Albanians who have not in my view decided...to opt for a radical solution.” Ambassador Pardew suggests that Ahmeti and others understood the strong connections between human rights abuses and nationalism and deliberately sought to provoke the government in order to bolster the nationalist feelings of the undecided segment of the population. Individual leaders, then, employed a powerful strategy of violence combined with the rhetoric of rights for a particular group, to polarize groups of people and create ethnically orientated, divisive, nationalist ideologies. Those ideologies provided the background for the serious human rights violations that accompanied the conflict.
An incident that occurred in the ethnic Albanian village of Ljuboten provides an example of the severity with which the Macedonian government attempted to combat the insurgency. Following a landmine explosion that had killed eight government soldiers, Macedonian forces responded by attacking Ljuboten, which was located near the site of the explosion. Human Rights Watch reported:

The operation left ten civilians dead and resulted in the arrest of more than 100 men, many of whom were severely beaten while in police custody. Contrary to assertions by the Macedonian government, a Human Rights Watch investigation on the ground in Ljuboten found no evidence of a presence by the ethnic Albanian National Liberation Army. The evidence available to Human Rights Watch indicates that the attack on Ljuboten had no military justification and was carried out for purposes of revenge.

The Human Rights Watch report thus graphically demonstrates the truth of the statements regarding the government’s overreaction to the campaign of insurgency. The Macedonian government forces clearly violated the human rights of the villagers as they waged a campaign for revenge, killed civilians, and beat prisoners who had been detained.

At the same time, the report also suggests the lack of ethnic conflict that had existed in the village prior to the onset of the military campaign. The evidence that the report provided to disprove the government’s assertion of the presence of the NLA involved an agreement that the village of Ljuboten had entered into with neighboring villages. Community leaders within Ljuboten asserted that it would have been impossible for NLA insurgents to infiltrate the village because larger ethnic Macedonian villages surrounded the ethnic Albanian village of Ljuboten. Furthermore, the report explained, “seeking to avoid conflict with their ethnic Macedonian neighbors, the community leaders had negotiated an agreement with the neighboring ethnic Macedonian...
villages and the security forces to keep the NLA out of their village.” The report then quotes Xhenan Aliu, who negotiated the agreement:

We had talks with the army, the police, and the villages of Rastak and Ljubance [the Macedonian areas]...we agreed that there would be no NLA in the village, and no army or police.

Before the violence, then, ethnic Albanians and ethnic Macedonians had been working together to keep armed combatants out of their area. One can only wonder, however, how many more vicious attacks a village like Ljuboten could take before they began to turn to the NLA for protection against the government forces, and the spirit of collaboration between Macedonians and Albanians would gradually be replaced by feelings of enmity based in the nationalist rhetoric articulated by the leaders of the conflict.

A Particular Kind of Solution

Thankfully, just days after the awful incident in Ljuboten, leaders within Macedonia signed a political accord that ended the violence. The United States’ special envoy James Pardew and the European Union’s Francois Leotard traveled to Macedonia and brought the Albanian and Macedonian leaders together at the resort town of Ohrid in southern Macedonia to negotiate a settlement. Perhaps having learned lessons regarding coercive diplomacy from the earlier operations in Bosnia and Kosovo, the West intervened in the conflict in Macedonia before full-scale war developed. The diplomats used the threat of NATO actions to pressure the warring parties to negotiate, and, just as they had in both Bosnia and Kosovo, they used NATO troops to implement the eventual solution. Importantly, though, those NATO forces asked for and received United
Nations’ approval for their peacekeeping mission. Nevertheless, Pearson notes, “The media of the two main ethnic groups portrayed the conflict in starkly ethnic terms; most of the Macedonian-language media depicted the negotiations as forfeiting Macedonian sovereignty to reward the Albanians.” In spite of the complicated roots of the conflict, then, the local media contributed to the idea that ethnic tensions served as the source of the problem.

At the Ohrid negotiations, Pardew and others did resist partitioning the country along ethnic lines because, as Pardew explained, “A lot of people jump to this idea of drawing lines somewhere in the Balkans as a solution to these kinds of conflicts. We absolutely disagree with that. We have seen this before and it has never worked out. We believe that concepts of individual rights and tolerance are the way to deal with these kinds of minority issues.” In spite of Pardew’s emphasis on individual rights, the resulting Ohrid Agreement in fact called for greater minority rights. Pearson explains:

The agreement mandates that the country adopt sweeping reforms to decentralize the government, increase ethnic minority rights and amend discriminatory passages in the constitution. The Framework thus reflects Western leaders’ belief that inter-ethnic tensions in Macedonia were the central cause of the war, rather than a larger pan-Albanian problem stemming from the Kosovo conflict and the resulting diaspora of ethnic Albanians from the neighboring Serbian province.

In particular, the agreement required the government to change the Constitution so that Macedonian Slavs were no longer the only “constituent people” in the country. The agreement also removed explicit constitutional protections for the Orthodox religion. Furthermore, Albanian would become the second official language of the country, and the state would have to provide higher education in Albanian. In a novel way of ensuring minority power in the government, the agreement stipulated that the parliament could not
pass any new laws without a “double majority vote.” This solution meant that for any new legislation to come into effect, half the lawmakers who voted for it would have to come from one or more minority groups. In spite of Pardew’s words regarding individual rights, the resulting Ohrid Agreement focused on rights for the particularly ethnic Albanian community. As we have seen before, politics based on rights for particular groups of people, especially particular ethnic groups, can create significant problems in the long run. Nevertheless, because of their belief that simple ethnic tensions between Albanians and Macedonians had led to the conflict, the agreement tried to solve the conflict by guaranteeing greater rights for the ethnic Albanian minority.

The immediate impact of implementing the provisions of the Ohrid Agreement demonstrates the continued difficulties in attempting to solve a complicated and multifaceted problem with reference to particular minority rights. For example, since the agreement mandated increasing the status of the Albanian language, part of the solution involved creating bilingual identification documents, such as drivers’ licenses and vehicle registrations. Although the government adopted those requirements, a much larger problem arose over the status of passports. While ethnic Albanian leaders have demanded that passports be issued in Albanian, Macedonian leaders continue to insist that the government should only issue one type of passport, but that the personal information inside the passport could be in Albanian. Macedonian and Albanian politicians remain unable to agree on a solution for this problem.

Although the Albanian minority would eventually gain practical benefits from the Ohrid Agreement, it is important to note that the agreement itself presented more nuanced stipulations regarding minority rights. It states that in any area where a minority comprises at least 20% of the population, their language could be used as an official language. In effect this stipulation allowed Albanian to be used officially only after an international census determined that more than 20% of the population was Albanian. The nature of that census will be discussed shortly.
The language issue reflects the deeper problem involving the confusion between ethnic identity and citizenship that was discussed in Chapter 3. An American consular official explains:

When filling out a form at the Embassy for a new U.S. passport, an ethnic Albanian who was born in Macedonia and has a Macedonian passport, and then who later immigrated to the United States and became an American citizen, when faced with the question, ‘What is your nationality?’ will not write ‘American,’ even though the form he is filling out is for a U.S. passport, or even ‘Macedonian,’ even though his first nationality was Macedonian. He will write, (9 times out of 10) ‘Albanian,’ even if he has never set foot in Albania in his life.\[124\]

Although the Ohrid Agreement in theory attempted to move Macedonia closer to a democratic, civil society, it is easy to imagine that by mandating the use of Albanian on official state documents, the agreement contributed to the confusion between an ethnic identity and the concept of citizenship.

It is interesting to briefly note the connections between the concept of citizenship, the nature of a passport (which defines and identifies citizenship), and the modern, territorially bounded nation-state, which came into being with the transition to territorial sovereignty. Scholar John Torpey has examined the role of the passport for the modern state and he explains:

Because nation-states are both territorial and membership organizations, they must erect and sustain boundaries between nationals and non-nationals, both at their physical borders and among people within those borders. Boundaries between persons that are rooted in the legal category of nationality can only be maintained, it turns out, by documents indicating a person’s nationality, for there is simply no other way to know this fact about someone.\[125\]

Torpey’s analysis first emphasizes the divisive nature of citizenship within a country; the very process of defining citizenship creates boundaries and divisions among groups of people. At the same time, the concept of citizenship is rooted in a somewhat
subjective determination, which in fact necessitates the use of a passport. It is easy to see, then, why one might confuse ethnicity and citizenship as they both involve an element of individual decision. Nevertheless, within our modern system of territorial nation-states, the existence of a passport provides an objective method to determine an individual’s citizenship. An important hallmark of a functioning democracy then involves guaranteeing the same rights for all citizens, regardless of their ethnicity. The Ohrid Agreement, however, concentrated instead on the rights due to people as a result of their ethnic group.

Another important part of the agreement involved determining the ethnic make-up of Macedonia, because implementing many of its provisions depended on such considerations. For example, regarding the question of higher education, the agreement stipulated, “The principle of positive discrimination will be applied in the enrolment in State universities of candidates belonging to communities not in the majority in the population of Macedonia until the enrolment reflects equitably the composition of the population of Macedonia.” 126 Apparently the diplomats who had brokered the agreement had not learned from the fiasco of the 1994 census, described in Chapter 3, because they stipulated that yet another census should be held, once again under the auspices of the international community.

The results, made public at the end of 2003, declared that of the 2,022,547 people living in Macedonia in 2002, 64.18 per cent were Macedonian while 25.17 per cent were Albanian. 127 The country immediately began to debate the results, and Macedonian journalist Branko Geroski commented, “Not a living soul in this country believes that the published results are the result of a precise statistical calculation and that people did not
arrive at them through tedious political negotiations, carried out with foreign mediation." The Agence France Presse explained that although many had hoped that the census would settle a long-standing dispute about the relative sizes of the majority and minority communities, both Albanian and Macedonian political leaders had begun to take issue with the results. In spite of the controversy, in a joint statement the OSCE, NATO, and the U.S. Embassy in Skopje declared their support for the results of the census.

Several weeks after the results had been published, the Chairman of the State Census Commission, Zoran Krstevski, resigned because of doubts regarding the credibility of the census results. Journalists also attacked the viability of the results for a variety of reasons. Igor Ilievski complained that the census included Macedonian citizens who had been living abroad for many years. Branko Geroski noted, "[M]any people take this opportunity to freely ‘change’ their ethnic affiliation to date and to identify themselves as members of the privileged ethnic community." Although it would be difficult to prove Geroski’s assertion, he certainly refers to a pattern of behavior that has occurred time and again in the Balkans, as people manipulated their ethnic identity in order to receive practical benefits. Especially since the Ohrid Agreement mandated much legislation that could be interpreted as conferring benefits on ethnic Albanians, it would be logical for Macedonian Muslims, who were discussed in greater detail in Chapter 3, or even members of the Roma, community to identify themselves as Albanian.

In fact, a similar process had occurred in 1991 when a new ethnic group who claimed to be Egyptian suddenly appeared in both Kosovo and Macedonia and demanded
their own category in the 1991 Yugoslavian census. It seems that prior to 1991, these self-described Egyptians had labeled themselves Albanians, because they spoke Albanian, practiced the Muslim faith, and lacked a better alternative on the census form. Furthermore, prior to the rise to power of Milosevic, the group could in general claim more advantages from being Albanian than from declaring themselves Egyptian, Roma, or members of any other small minority group. By 1990, however, it was no longer advantageous to be Albanian, and so this group began to define, or redraw, an old alternative identity. Unsurprisingly, both the Serbian and the Macedonian governments supported the identity shift, presumably in order to lower the reported numbers of ethnic Albanians. The example of the Egyptians of Macedonia and Kosovo again confirms the subjective and malleable nature of ethnic identity and suggests the degree to which political considerations influence the formulating of an ethnic identity.

In general then, it seems as though the 2002 census, just like the 1994 census, failed to solve the problems associated with determining the exact number of each ethnic minority. Given the evidence amassed here regarding the subjective nature of ethnic identity, an ethnic census seems to be a project perennially doomed to failure. Nevertheless, the NATO-backed Ohrid Agreement did end the violence and the worst of the human rights abuses. It kept Macedonia from a full-scale civil war, which would have undoubtedly involved further polarization of ethnic identities into divisive nationalist ideologies. Even though the agreement delineated solutions based on greater rights for a particular minority group, some analysts feel hopeful that it will indeed help to promote Macedonia’s transition to a full-fledged civil society and functioning democracy.
A More Universal Kind of Solution

Developing alongside political negotiations such as the Ohrid Agreement, a different kind of institution has promised a more universal solution to the nationalist problems and human rights violations in the Balkans. As was discussed in Chapter 3, the United Nations, with the strong support of the United States, had established an International Criminal Trial for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) to deal with questions of atrocities committed in Bosnia. In 1997 NATO made its first arrest of a pair of Serb concentration camp guards. Following those arrests, a steady stream of suspects began to make their way to The Hague. In 1999 the ICTY sentenced Goran Jelisic, a man who had tortured and executed Muslims and Croats in a Serbian prison camp, to forty years imprisonment. One year later the court found Croatian General Tihomir Blaskic guilty of crimes against humanity and sentenced him to forty-five years of imprisonment.\(^{135}\)

As reports of further atrocities in Kosovo began to occur with increasing frequency, the United Nations broadened the mandate of the ICTY to include the province of Kosovo as well. Yugoslavia, however, refused to cooperate with any of the Tribunal’s requests for information. In a dramatic demonstration of this policy of non-cooperation, the border officials refused to allow the Chief Prosecutor of the ICTY into Kosovo to investigate the Racak massacre that had occurred in January 1999. International media recorded the unceremonious refusal and broadcast the images around the world. One analyst notes that the “dramatic footage contributed to a climate making possible the more determined attitude of...NATO, leading to the summons of the parties to the Rambouillet Conference.”\(^{136}\)
Two months into the NATO campaign, the ICTY indicted Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic for actions not only in Kosovo, but also for the role he had played in the Bosnian conflict. As was noted earlier, this indictment may have played a role in Milosevic’s decision to surrender and end the war with NATO. Nevertheless, Milosevic did not escape international justice, and following the election that turned over power in Serbia to Vojislav Kostunica, Serbia extradited Milosevic to The Hague in return for pledges of international economic aid and assistance. Milosevic thus became the thirty-ninth suspect to end up behind bars at The Hague, and he is currently standing trial for grave breaches of the Geneva conventions, violations of the laws and customs of war, genocide, and crimes against humanity.

Regarding the importance of the ICTY, journalist Guy Lesser explains, “During the ten years the ICTY has been in existence, it has completed a score of trials that are bound to have lasting importance... in establishing the specific juridical facts of what happened in Yugoslavia between 1991 and 2000...” While Tito had ignored the existence of human rights violations that had occurred as a result of the nationalist conflicts within Yugoslavia during WWII, as discussed in Chapter 2, the ICTY is establishing an objective record of the nature and responsibility for those crimes. Where Tito’s policies had contributed to later nationalist violence, perhaps by establishing a truthful record of the atrocities, the ICTY will help to break the cycle of nationalist violence in the Balkans.

Another part of the breaking of that cycle involves establishing individual responsibility for the crimes committed. Journalist Samantha Power explains, “Gradually, thanks in part to the Hague’s refusal to go away, Serbia’s population began
to face the atrocities carried out in their name. Many even recognized that because the UN tribunal was establishing individual responsibility, it could do a great deal to rehabilitate Serbia in the eyes of the rest of the world.” Where the Ohrid Agreement tried to solve the problems in Macedonia by legislating greater rights for an entire group of people, based on the idea that the relations between groups of people caused the problems in the first place, the ICTY recognizes individual responsibility for perpetrating crimes carried in the name of nationalism.

While ideologies based in nationalism always contain an element of subjectivity, the ICTY seeks to be objective and pursue justice regardless of the ethnicity or nationality of the defendants. The ICTY can claim to objectively prosecute individuals for violations of human rights because, following the establishment of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, a large body of international treaties and international law has developed to define the nature and extent of universal human rights as well their violations. Furthermore, because of its composition as an international body, the tribunal can claim greater legitimacy in terms of prosecuting defendants of all different ethnicities. A small example of this determination to be as objective as possible occurred in the recent trial of a Serbian official. Instead of addressing the nature of the accused Serbian man's actions, a Serbian witness instead launched into an account of his own persecution at the hands of Croatian authorities. Journalist Guy Lesser notes that it would have been easy for the judge to insist that the witness confine his testimony to his knowledge of the defendant. Instead, Judge Wolfgang Schomburg assured the witness that his allegations would be investigated, stating, “That’s the fundamental reason why the international community decided to set up this Tribunal especially to avoid impunity,
impunity of people of whatsoever ethnicity or religion or from whatever military group.”

In response to the violence that occurred in Macedonia in 2001, ICTY officials claimed jurisdiction over that conflict as well. Rather than assuming that ethnic tensions led directly to crimes against civilians, such those that occurred at Ljuboten, the ICTY is focusing on the actions of specific individuals. Although a Macedonian government official publicly shrugged off the possibility of indictment by the ICTY regarding the violence in Ljuboten, Human Rights Watch points out, “the very fact that he was responding to speculation about an ICTY investigation demonstrates the impact this important international investigation can have.” Human Rights Watch, a group dedicated to the promotion of objective and universal human rights, thus also points to the ICTY as an important part of the solution for the nationalist violence in Macedonia. Rather than promoting a particularist solution of the kind found within the Ohrid Agreement, the ICTY seeks to hold individuals, regardless of their ethnicity or nationality, personally responsible for violating universal human rights.

Conclusion

Both Kosovo and Macedonia experienced violence that resulted from militant and divisive nationalist ideologies. Both areas, however, have histories that belie oversimplified claims that ethnic tensions and hatreds caused the violence and human rights abuses. Although diversity of all kinds existed to differentiate groups of people from one another, ethnicity served as only one, and probably not even the most important, of the determining factors. Religion, economic class, and political ideologies
all contributed to the formation people's identities and their establishment into like-minded groups. Nevertheless, first in Kosovo and then in Macedonia a particular set of circumstances transformed the varied nature of many people's individual identities into polarized, divisive, nationalist ideologies. Poor economic circumstances, leaders' political ambitions and the availability of weapons all contributed to this transition. The cycle of repression and human rights abuses helped to encourage the spread of militant nationalism and to garner support for nationalist groups.

In spite of Macedonia's history of working through civil society to solve ethnic tensions, many international mediators persisted in seeing the violence within Macedonia as simply the result of ethnic conflict. The resulting Ohrid Agreement reflected this belief as it promised concessions and increased rights for the particularly Albanian minority group. In contrast, the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia is seeking to prosecute specific individuals responsible for committing abuses of universal human rights. While nationalism is rooted in a subjective determination, the ICTY is using an objective and internationally agreed upon standard of human rights in its pursuit of justice. Perhaps with time, the Ohrid Agreement, the ICTY, and continued economic investment from the West, will help to bring stability and peace to Macedonia and to the region.
NOTES


3Sokalski, An Ounce of Prevention, 123-124.

4Brown, “Parapolitics in Macedonia,” 130.


6Alice Ackermann, Making Peace Prevail: Preventing Conflict in Macedonia (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 2000), 70.


11Ibid., 12.
Ibid.


14 Ackermann, Making Peace Prevail, 67.

15 Kiro Gligorov, as quoted in Liotta, Dismembering the State, 488.


17 Ibid., 16.


19 Liotta, Dismembering the State, 300n.

20 Ibid., 302-303; and Brown, “Parapolitics in Macedonia,” 133-134.

21 Brown, “Parapolitics in Macedonia,” 133-134.


23 Ibid.

24 Kiro Gligorov, as quoted in Liotta, Dismembering the State, 488.

25 Liotta, Dismembering the State, 304.


29 Mr. Calovski, as quoted in ibid., 4.

30 Sokalski, *An Ounce of Prevention*, 211.

31 Ibid., 214.

32 Ibid., 215.

33 Liotta, *Dismembering the State*, 301.


40 Ibid., 10.

41 Ibid., 2.

42 Ibid., 12-13.

43 Ibid., 13.

44 Reineck, “Poised for War,” 367.


46 Reineck, “Poised for War,” 367.

Rubin, Blood on the Doorstep, 72.

Ibid.


Rubin, Blood on the Doorstep, 72-73.

Ackermann, Making Peace Prevail, 72.


Reineck, “Poised for War,” 379.


Rubin, Blood on the Doorstep, 75-76.

Ibid., 76.

Power, A Problem from Hell, 445.


Duijzings, Religion and the Politics of Identity in Kosovo, 32-33.


72Ibid., 459.

73Ibid.


75Ibid., 318.


77Ibid., 449-450.


79Ibid., 173, 176.


85 Saso Ordanoski, as paraphrased in Liotta, *Dismembering the State*, 305.


87 Ibid., 206.


92 Kiro Gligorov, as quoted in Liotta, *Dismembering the State*, 491.


97 Hislope, "Between a Bad Peace and a Good War," 140.


102 Ibid., 69.

103 Sokalski, *An Ounce of Prevention*, 229-239.

104 NLA commander, as quoted in Hislope, "Between a Bad Peace and a Good War," 140.


106 United Nations Development Program, as quoted in Hislope, "Between a Bad Peace and a Good War," 137.

107 Hislope, "Between a Bad Peace and a Good War," 133.


113 Richard Perle, as quoted in United States, *The Crisis in Macedonia*, 34.

114 James Pardew, as quoted in United States, *The Crisis in Macedonia*, 7.


116 Ibid., 16.

117 Xhenan Aliu as quoted in ibid., 16.


119 Pearson, “Putting Peace into Practice,” 5.

120 James Pardew, as quoted in United States, *The Crisis in Macedonia*, 15.

121 Pearson, “Putting Peace into Practice,” 2.


124 Author’s conversation with an American consular officer, February 16, 2004.


134See for example, Pearson, “Putting Peace into Practice,” 14.


Conclusion

Human Rights, Nationalism, and the World

Since practically the dawn of recorded history visionaries have called for a universal understanding of basic human rights. Some, such as the ancient Greek philosopher Plato, believed in the existence of natural law. That is to say, Plato felt that a higher law transcended the boundaries of human existence, and some truths about justice existed outside and independent of human organization, and the nature of particular states, their laws, and their rulers. Others, such as the leading figures in many of the world’s major religions, came to their universal understanding of human rights because of their belief that God intended people to treat each other with compassion, regardless of the specific circumstances of individual existence. Balkan native Mother Teresa exemplified this tradition as her Catholic faith led her to India, where she worked to promote the human rights of the poorest of the poor, regardless of their economic status, ethnicity, or even their religion. Still others recognized that practical benefits would come from a more universal understanding of human rights, as perhaps Alexander the Great did when he changed his policy regarding Greek mercenaries during the battle at Miletus.

Following the great devastation of World War II, and the enormous amount of suffering and loss of human life that had occurred, a movement developed that would specifically recognize the important connection between a universal understanding of human rights and practical benefits. In 1948, when the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the preamble recognized this essential link between the protection of human rights and international peace, stating,
“disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind....[I]t is essential, if man is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected by the rule of law.”1 If human rights abuses have often led to wars, then protecting human rights can contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security. Since the establishment of the declaration, an enormous body of international law and international treaties has developed that has provided an objective definition of these human rights, and made it possible and legitimate for organizations dedicated to promoting human rights to involve themselves in the fight against human rights abuses wherever they may occur. In particular, in recent years a number of international tribunals have developed to hold individual perpetrators of grave violations of human rights responsible for their crimes before an objective court of law.

While human rights have increasingly been defined objectively, ideologies of nationalism, which are based in the concepts of ethnic or national identity, always contain an element of subjectivity. Although elements of language, religion, culture, family history, place of residence, citizenship within a nation-state, and economic status may all contribute to the formation of an ethnic identity, by its very nature the concept of identity-formation involves individual determination. While those who promote human rights emphasize the aspects of human existence that make all people somehow the same, the process of forming an ethnic or national identity necessarily focuses on the particular elements that differentiate one individual from another. The philosophical tension between that which binds humanity together simply by virtue of our humanness, and that which differentiates us from one another, is a fundamental aspect of all human existence.
The important question then becomes, why is it that in some places at some times the normal differences between people become translated into militant ideologies that sanction and even encourage massive human rights violations?

In an attempt to answer this question regarding specific occurrences of human rights abuses, such as those that have occurred in the Balkans, many have pointed to the existence of “ancient ethnic hatreds,” as the reason why groups of people commit atrocities against one another. The evidence from the history of the Balkans, however, does not support this argument, in large part because of the subjective nature of ethnic identity. Since people are free to identify themselves, or redefine themselves, inhabitants of the Balkans have frequently changed identities based on political agendas or power struggles. Furthermore, the evidence that does exist regarding the nature of identity formation throughout the course of Balkan history suggests that other factors, such as economic status, religion, tribal or clan loyalties, gender, and political orientation have played an equal, if not greater, role in defining people’s identities. Of course, these factors might all contribute to the formation of a particular ethnic identity, but therein lies the problem: ethnic identity is subjective, and it is therefore up to the individual to determine which particular factors will contribute to the definition of a particular identity. Finally, evidence regarding relations between different groups of people in the Balkans, whether those groups are made up of different religions, ethnicities, or economic classes, suggests that these groups tolerated each other and cooperated with each other, just as much as they fought with one another.

If “ancient ethnic hatreds” did not cause the serious human rights violations, the question remains as to what did. It seems that in the course of Balkan history, the very
subjective nature of ethnic identity has allowed individual politicians to manipulate and even create exclusive ideologies of nationalism, rooted in the concept of an ethnic or a national identity. Often these politicians were really pursuing their own agendas and power-struggles that had little or nothing to do with the nationalist ideologies they proclaimed. Nevertheless, through symbols and propaganda, and often by creating a sense of fear through state-controlled media, these leaders placed a heavy emphasis on those aspects of ethnic identity that divide people from one another, and forced an exclusive understanding of a particular ethnic identity that negated a universal conception of humanity. By refusing to see “others” as humans equally deserving of the same basic human rights, these politicians set the stage for serious violations of human rights. In addition, those individual leaders usually organized and actively supported the commission of those abuses. It should also be noted that alongside these power-hungry and manipulative politicians, poor economic conditions contributed to the problems, as the lack of stability and insufficient basic standards of living helped create feelings of hopelessness and desperation.

While the history of the Balkans provides ample evidence to support the reality of the pattern of militant nationalist ideologies created by politicians leading to massive human rights abuses, other parts of the world have also suffered from similar sets of circumstances. In 1994, in just under three months Hutu extremists killed 800,000 Tutsi and Hutu moderates in the African country of Rwanda. Just as they had in Bosnia and Kosovo, the international media and many international politicians articulated the argument of “ancient ethnic hatreds” to explain the violence. For example, in an interview with African studies professor Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja, National Public
Radio interviewer Daniel Zwerdling asked, "Why are things in Africa so bad? Why is tribal violence so deep?" As the interview continued, Zwerdling refused to give up the "ancient ethnic hatreds" argument even as Ntalaja attempted to disprove it, responding:

**Ntalaja:** Most of it has been exacerbated by politicians hungry for more power.

**Zwerdling:** ...Well, of course, politicians can exacerbate what tensions already exist. I mean, you're not arguing, are you, that these tribal hatreds were not already there before modern politicians came along?

**Ntalaja:** I'm saying that the ethnic groups do have prejudices and people do tend to feel they may be different from other groups. But it's not enough to make a person pick up a knife or a gun and kill somebody else. It is when politicians come and excite passion and try to threaten people -- make people believe that they are being threatened by other groups....

**Zwerdling:** Of course, in most of these battlegrounds, though, there is ancient ethnic hatred and something that surprises me actually is that you're blaming modern, contemporary African politicians for this....

In spite of Zwerdling's disbelief, the evidence suggests that, just as they had in the former Yugoslavia, extremist politicians used propaganda to incite hatred in the people. For example, the Hutu radio station, *Mille Collines*, not only named specific Tutsi as targets, but also repeatedly referred to those Tutsi as less-than-human "cockroaches." In addition, much evidence suggests that before the onset of the genocide, the Hutu and Tutsi had intermingled and even, in many instances, intermarried. A recent Human Rights Watch report concurs with the assessment that "ancient ethnic hatreds" were not to blame and agrees with Ntalaja's assessment regarding the reasons for the violence:

The Rwandan genocide did not have to occur, even given the intensity of anti-Tutsi feeling among Hutu in Rwanda. Governmental incitement provided the deadly spark.

The man who perhaps tried the hardest to prevent the atrocities, former UN Lieutenant General Romeo Dallaire, recently gave a speech regarding the tragic events of 1994, in
which he explicitly rejected the particularist mentality that emphasized the differences between people. He referred to UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan's statement that the new millennium would be the "millennium of humanity." He continued, "This is where humanity will move into an era where the differences don't count. Where every human will be considered as an equal to other humans."\(^6\)

In conclusion, then, differences between individuals and groups of people will always exist; they are a normal and essential part of human nature. Nevertheless, since an expression of individual identity, particularly an ethnic identity, emphasizes the particular aspects that differentiate people, it will always be in tension with a universal understanding of humanity that seeks to view all people as fundamentally the same. While that tension presents serious challenges, it is important to understand that differences in and of themselves do not necessarily lead to human rights violations. Legislation and international organizations that attempt to guard against such abuses of human rights by focusing on that which divides people, such as the Minorities Treaties of the interwar years, or the 2001 Ohrid Agreement in Macedonia, are bound to fall short in some ways because they do not address the real root of the problems. Instead, organizations such as the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia recognize the important role that individuals play in instigating violence, and seek to combat that violence by holding those individual people accountable for their actions. Most importantly, those interested in promoting international human rights should seek to do so in a way that emphasizes the universality of humanity, as opposed to the particularities of individual identity, and focus on all people's equal deservingness of the same basic human rights.
NOTES

1Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as quoted in Lauren, International Human Rights, 2nd ed., 305.

2Daniel Zwerdling, as quoted in Power, A Problem from Hell, 355.

3Daniel Zwerdling and Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja as quoted in ibid., 356.

4Power, A Problem from Hell, 330, 334.


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