

**Victor Roudometof: *Nationalism, Globalization, and Orthodoxy: The Social Origins of Ethnic Conflict in the Balkans*. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2001. 304 pages. ISBN 0-313-31949-9. \$72.95. Reviewed by Filip Kovacevic.**

Victor Roudometof's principal claim in this monograph, originally written as a doctoral dissertation at the University of Pittsburgh, is that Balkan rivalries are traceable to the process of the integration of the Ottoman Empire into the Western European system of nation-states, a process that he subsumes under the heading of *globalization*. Hence, from the very beginning he disputes the myth, popularized by the Western media in tandem with conservative Balkan intellectuals and writers, of the Balkans as the place of primordial hatreds and ethnic antagonisms that hearken back hundreds of years. On the contrary, Roudometof shows that, far from having their origin in the depths of antiquity, Balkan rivalries are of recent vintage, no older than 150 years. According to the author, they are a direct product of the nineteenth-century Balkan communities' having to conform to the norms and values of the dominant global system, of their having "to mimic Western history."

Using a classification devised by Held et al., Roudometof divides the globalization of the Balkans into three periods: early modern (1500 to 1840), modern (1840 to 1945), and post-1945 contemporary globalization. He argues that the pattern of Ottoman relations with the West, established in the period of early modern globalization, had a profound effect on the socioeconomic relations within the empire itself. I

Filip Kovacevic is a political theorist who received his Ph.D. from the University of Missouri, Columbia.

think that Roudometof could have been even more explicit in drawing the negative consequences for the Ottomans. It seems reasonable to conclude that frequent trade deficits and fiscal crises, arising out of dealings between the West and the Ottoman Empire, undermined the empire's stability, especially regarding the relatively tranquil coexistence of two major religious groups, the Muslims and the Christians. Roudometof chronicles how the local Muslim notables, or *ayas*, began rebelling against the central authorities and imposed stricter rules and heavier taxes on the Christian peasantry, causing resentment and inspiring the formation of bandit groups. At the same time, interaction with the West led to the establishment of a fairly wealthy Christian, Greek-speaking merchant class, which led to conflicts with the poorer but politically entrenched Muslim elite. However, it seems that these essentially economic struggles could have been resolved within the Ottoman framework had it not been for another intrusion from the West, this time in terms of a new cultural-ideological framework—the framework of nation-state and nationalism.

The author rightly rejects the simplistic division between the “good” Western and “bad” Eastern nationalism. Yet this fatal dichotomy, which has wrecked many otherwise quite persuasive theories of nationalism, resurfaces in his book as well in the distinction between nationalism as a discourse of citizenship and nationalism as a discourse of nationhood.

Nationalism as a discourse of citizenship emphasizes the equality of rights and duties of all members of a political community, while nationalism as a discourse of nationhood emphasizes particular cultural configurations at the expense of others. The former type would be appropriate to a multiethnic polity, while the latter obviously would not. While I agree with Roudometof that this is the case, I nevertheless consider as questionable the idealization of the Anglo-American system as the locus of a discourse of citizenship. There is a great deal of literature of life in American inner cities (such as Zinn's or Parenti's) that raises serious doubts about citizenship equality. I doubt that nationalism as a genuine discourse of citizenship exists in any contemporary nation-state, and it seems necessary to designate this (elusive) discourse formation by another name, if only to bring back that old-fashioned term, *cosmopolitanism*, *cosmos* as one's polity.

One of the most exciting aspects of Roudometof's work is that, contrary to the expectations of many Balkan experts (with or without credentials), he shows that there have in fact been certain articulations of a discourse of citizenship specific to the Balkan peninsula. For instance, one finds in the early nineteenth-century plans of Rigas Velenstinlis or the Philiki Eteria (the Society of Friends) proposals for a Balkan federation based on the simultaneous recognition of ethnic particularities and a universal trans-ethnic political identity. Roudometof describes how these humanistic visions of tolerance and interethnic solidarity later re-emerged in the discourses of Ottomanism and Yugoslavism.

I think that he could have made of these ultimately unfulfilled but nonetheless objectively workable political perspectives a more extended subject of study. This could have helped him to articulate, in his concluding chapter, an alternative to the contemporary Balkan ethnicity-driven fragmentation and hence would have enhanced the normative or prescriptive value of his work. Since he does not do so, his conclusion remains a vague abstraction. In his words, discourse of nationhood will determine the political future of the Balkan Peninsula unless “a major event or long-term force shifts the general foundations of Balkan political culture.” Yet if Roudometof had connected the nineteenth-century Balkan articulations of a discourse of citizenship with a political vision for the Balkans of the twenty-first century, he could have concluded that the Balkan political culture already contains emancipatory tendencies within itself. Rather than these having to be imposed from the outside, that is, more or less coercively from an alien cultural context, they could be recovered as the essential though repressed part of the Balkans’ own heritage. This would certainly make them more enduring components of the Balkan political culture.

In fact, the value of Roudometof’s work as a whole could be pinned on his in-depth analysis of actors and institutions that defeated a discourse of citizenship. The core chapters of his book chronicle the rise of nationally conscious state elites in Greece, Serbia, the Danubian principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia, Bulgaria, Albania, and Macedonia within the time frame of modern globalization (1840 to 1945). His presentation is even-handed, and the examination of his sources reveals that he has consulted all the greats in the contested field of Balkan historiography. Especially important in this respect is his emphasis on the process of “the redeployment” of Orthodox religious symbolism into the key building block of emerging national identities. This process was shaped by the efforts of romanticizing intellectuals, who, being secular and state-dependent, did not mind destroying the universal reference frame of church teachings. As I see it, their actions exposed the fallacy of the Enlightenment claim that the most tolerant are the best educated (a fallacy confirmed again and again by recent events in the Balkans). It seems to me that though tolerance and solidarity provide the best possible environment for the flourishing of intellectual schemes, they cannot be created by such schemes. In concrete terms, this means that depth psychology must become a necessary component of any political science or public policy curriculum.

One regrets that Roudometof’s analysis loses much of its rich detail when he tackles the period of contemporary globalization (post-1945), but this perhaps could be attributed to editorial considerations. However, as pointed out earlier, if Roudometof had been a more attentive reader of his own work, if he had tied together certain insights in a more consistent fashion, he could have concluded by giving us the historically substantiated vision of a tolerant multiethnic Balkan future. Not having done so, he holds forth knowledgeably about the past, but the future, which a more explicitly normative standpoint would have shaped, remains obscured.