

The Balkan Migration Processes in the 19th Century. Cases of Bulgaria and Serbia

The most significant events on the Balkan Peninsula in the 19th century was the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, the formation of the modern nations and the deep social-economic changes. All of these processes were closely linked to the migrations, which changed the South-Eastern Europe in many aspects.

The 19th century was a stormy time for the Balkans. There were many wars, revolts against local liege lords, battles between armed bands, and national uprisings, during which Christians were fighting against Muslims, Christians against Christians, and Muslims against Muslims. The effect of these conflicts was the gradual collapse of the Ottoman Empire. First Serbia gained independence from Turkey, then Greece, Bulgaria, and – at last – Albania. Wallachia and Moldova (later as Romania) and Montenegro gradually gained self-reliance. The events connected with the end of Turkish rule in the region led to the large migrations, which in the scale of the history of the South-Eastern Europe can be compared only to the movements during the collapse of the Medieval Balkan states and the Ottoman conquest in the 13th–15th century. The increase of human mobility in the 19th century was noticed primarily among Muslims. The German historian Wolfgang Höpken said that the situation in the 19th-centurial Balkans can be summarized with the words: “Without a doubt, the Turks are leaving and the Christians are coming”. Between 1821 and 1922 about 5 million Muslims emigrated from Balkan Peninsula and the coast of Black Sea, in 1878–1913 1,7–2 million people left the “European Turkey”. However, we cannot forget about the migrations of the Bulgarian, Serbian or Greek population. During only the “Great Eastern Crisis” (1875–1878) about 1 million Christians arrived in Balkan national states. Not by accident Maria Todorova said that the 19th-centurial migrations were the most significant effect of the creation of the national states in the region and the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. The ethnic map of the present Balkan states is the effect of the 100 years of human mobility. In the 19th century it would be hard to find an ethnically and religiously homogeneous region in the South-Eastern Europe, today it is not a difficult task.

The **aim** of this project is researching the Balkan migration processes in the 19th century based on the cases of Bulgaria and Serbia, but there will also be used examples from the territories of Greece, Bosnia and Hercegovina, Montenegro, Romania, Macedonia, Thrace, and Albania. The first objective of the project is the analysis of a human mobility’s characteristic in the 19th-centurial South-Eastern Europe, sources of the processes’ massiveness, and their political, social, and cultural results for the modern Balkans. Before that, it will be needed to carry out a balance sheet of Polish, Balkans, Turkish and Western historiographies on that topic. It is expected that the project will give a new impulse to researches on the Balkan migrations in Poland, or at least will stimulate a discussion on that topic.

The **research** will be based firstly on the analysis of the historical sources (archival materials, press, memoirs etc.) with the comparison to the specialist literature. It is planned to carry out queries in archives and libraries of the South-Slavic countries: Bulgaria and Serbia.

The main **reason** to conduct the research is linked to the underappreciation of the role of migrations in the historiography, it is too rarely acknowledged that human mobility had a pivotal influence on the epoch-making changes, and the formation of the modern world in his demographical, social, cultural, ideological, and political aspects. Historians analyzing the topic of the Balkan migration processes in the 19th century have not taken into consideration the results of the research from Balkans, Turkey, and West at the same time. There are also many unexamined archival sources about that topic. We can locate a large number of materials in archives, libraries, and institutions in the Balkans, in whole Europe and Turkey as well, which can cast a new light on the 19-centurial human mobility in the South-Eastern Europe. The research conducted under the project will undoubtedly enable us to explain the historical context of the political and social changes in South-Eastern Europe in the 20th century, including the dramatic events which took place in the last quarter of the century and the accompanying phenomena. Also, research on the migrations will lead to better understanding of the contemporary processes of great importance (for example, the European Refugee Crisis).