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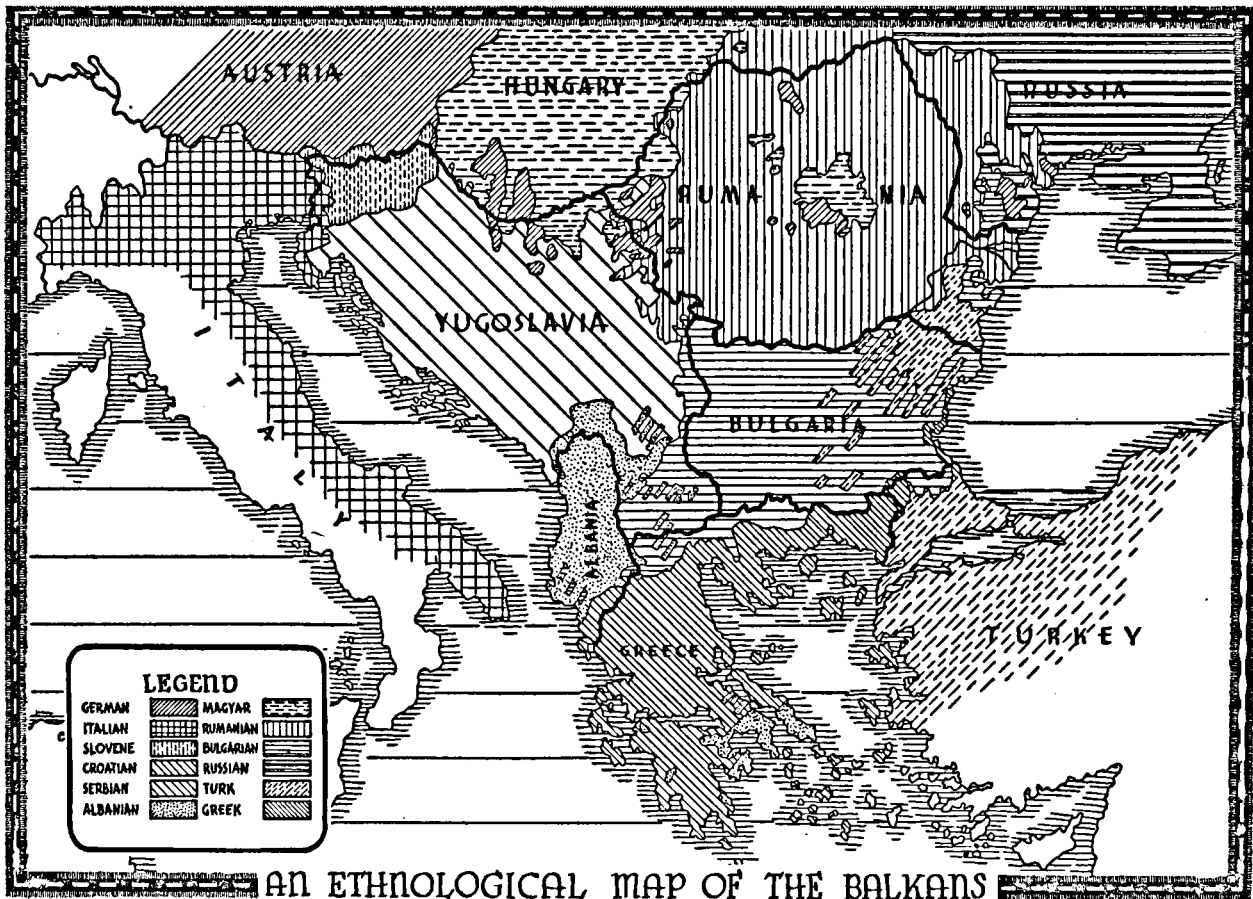
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# **Balkan Politics**



# Balkan Politics

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS IN  
NO MAN'S LAND

JOSEPH S. ROUCEK

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HEMPSTEAD, LONG ISLAND

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TO  
*DEAN WILLIAM HUNTER BECKWITH*  
WHO DID SO MUCH FOR HOFSTRA COLLEGE  
DURING ITS CRITICAL PERIOD



## PREFACE

**E**UROPE'S international problems in the half-century preceding World War I had been closely bound up with Balkan problems—the disruption of the Turkish Empire, the disputed border points among the Balkan states, and the ensuing arguments over the spheres of interests among the Great Powers. World War I broke out as a direct result of the assassination of the heir to the throne of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in a little-known Balkan town—Sarajevo. After the signing of the peace treaties, the Balkan problems soon initiated another cycle of problems with world-wide implications; in fact, at the end of the first decade of the postwar years the Nazi plan to conquer the world by way of subjugating the Balkans and the Near East had pretty well crystallized. During the second postwar decade the plan was put into effect, step by step, and eventually culminated in World War II.

The debate in the war councils of the Allies over the question whether the European fortress under the Nazis should be attacked by way of the Balkans or through Normandy was of supreme importance, and the decision not to use the Balkans proved to be of tremendous significance to the course of world events. The Churchill plan for a Balkan invasion might have prolonged the war by a few months, but more likely it would have made unnecessary the present tragicomic spectacle of our anxiety to help Greece and Turkey as the last outposts of opposition against the growing expansionist policy of Soviet Russia in the Balkans and the Near East.

The Anglo-Saxon world knew at the end of World

War II just as little (or just as much) about the Balkan problems as those agitating Africa or the Near East. But the sudden awakening to the supreme importance of the Balkans was brought about in 1947 with the insistence of the United States government that this country must support the anti-Soviet regimes in Greece and Turkey, although during the war years we had already suspected that the feud between Yugoslavia's Tito and Mikhailovitch had something to do with the welfare of America.

The suspicions of the United States and of the rest of the non-Communist world received further impetus when, on October 5, 1947, the formation of a Communist "Information Bureau" in Belgrade was announced. This, in effect, amounted to the re-establishment of the Communist International (Comintern). Leaders of world Communism announced the creation of the new "Bureau" to combat what they termed American "dollar imperialism."

The secret meeting in Poland which saw the birth of the new Comintern called on Europe to align itself with the "Soviet Union and other democratic countries," against "the camp of imperialism and anti-democratic forces whose chief aim is the establishment of a worldwide American imperialist hegemony."

Thus the Comintern has again come out into the open, more militant and more powerfully backed than before. The countries in this new organization include France and Italy, where the Communist Party was numerically stronger in 1947 than anywhere outside the Soviet Union, as well as the lands in the Russian orbit (next to the U.S.S.R., Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Rumania, Hungary, Poland, and Czechoslovakia). The moving spirit is Andrei Zhdanov, the member of the Moscow

Politburo who, in prewar days, before Molotov became so influential, was most frequently mentioned as Stalin's successor. Zhdanov reported on the international situation, and his report formed the basis of the warlike declaration issued by the conference. The meeting was a reunion of the Party organizers who had long worked together in Moscow. But in 1947 they were no longer conspirators plotting subversive movements by remote control; now they had either governments or well-organized mass movements behind them. The old Comintern represented sixty nations from all parts of the world, as against the eight European signatories of the new manifesto. But the smaller organization was far more important as far as Europe was concerned; for the Communists in these Balkan and Central-Eastern European countries were mobilizing for all-out political war—under the direction and with the full support of the Soviet Union, and with the avowed, the almost single, purpose of fighting the United States, which they accused of being the aggressor, saying it was bent on “enslaving Europe by means of the Marshall plan.”

In short, the manifesto meant that the Communists of Europe were being dragooned into a united front to undermine the influence of the United States; that the last illusions, nourished on the hope that out of the blood and sacrifices of World War II there might arise a new world order, based on the common interests of all nations, and able to banish forever the specter of new strife, were dealt a mortal blow; that all the wartime agreements from the Atlantic Charter to Potsdam were torn to shreds; and that all the Communist parties, not only in Europe but the world over, were stamped as the tools of U.S.S.R. imperialism.

A general opinion applying definitely to the Balkans

is that the value of any cause is relative to its cost, which may vary in accord with the speed of realizing it, and that the inevitability of any future is relative to the potentialities which are overlooked or excluded, especially when the future in question is a somewhat distant one. Furthermore, as long as we run our democracy on the assumption that the major decisions are made by a majority of the citizens we must be carefully and dispassionately informed about the facts involved in the governmental decisions pertaining to the Balkans. From such a point of view, this volume aims to provide the basic background for an understanding of the Balkan problems today, on the internal as well as the international scale. Surely, there will be readers who will disagree with the author's conclusions or evaluations, but every effort has been made to present the facts fairly and interestingly and to place in true perspective the international struggle in the Balkans.

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HEMPSTEAD, LONG ISLAND  
October 1947

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