

The Peculiarities of the Balkans from BCC Perspective

Angelos ZACHARIADIS, PhD

Honorary President of ENEPROT, Greece, angezachar@gmail.com

Abstract

The peculiarity of the wider Balkan region to be located at the crossroads of all points of the horizon, gives its peoples the opportunity to shape the models of human behaviour by standardizing its quality with the customs and traditions of their ethnicities. This peculiarity gave humanity important civilizations, as the unique Ancient-Greek-one which is a common heritage of the Balkan peoples. The Ancient Greek Civilization has the peculiarity that after its destruction in antiquity, it was reborn by the "Enlighteners" of the 17th century. That "Enlightenment", with central doctrine "liberty-equality-fraternity", reversed the course of history by its own interpretation to Ancient Greek Civilization, and created its own socio-economic system that it called "Democracy". They took this name from the socio-economic system of Athens, which they considered to be the source of Ancient Greek Civilization. Under the banner of this Democracy, the Enlightenment overthrew both the absolute monarchy and the immutable doctrines of the "Roman Catholic" Church. But the Enlightenment did not have the scientific knowledge that the socio-economic system of Athens arose from the evolution of traditional Ancient Greek models and, like any differentiation of tradition, it declined and it was destroyed. Scientific knowledge, however, shows that the unaltered preservation of traditional patterns allows socio-economic systems to survive in the depths of the centuries. As the case of the Spartan variant of it, which Lycurgus called "Great Rytra", "Great Tradition" in the Laconian dialect. The knowledge of Democracy can therefore be acquired if the Balkans study scientifically the Ancient Greek models, as they are hidden in their common traditions. If the Balkans record the, according to Aristotle, "Certain Knowledge" of "True History", the Balkans will donate Enlightenment to the peoples of the world, as the goal of BCC in this perspective is.

Keywords

tradition, true history, quality, culture, post-industrial age

1. Introduction to the Balkans' Peculiarities

There are a dozen states in the Balkans today, that emerged after the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman empires. This division of the Balkan peoples between the industrial West and the traditional East is perhaps what gave a first peculiarity to today's Balkans. That is, those Balkans who were citizens of a Western European country, found themselves today in the group of Industrial Countries without their societies being industrialized. The societies of the rest, who were citizens of an empire that was organized based on the tradition of religious separation of peoples and not on their national identity, kept under the cloak of religion their folk traditions that had been common since the depths of the centuries.

Since the Middle-Ages, the peoples of the Balkans allow foreign powers with different morals and customs to control their destiny, being fragmented into warring states. The American philosopher Noam Chomsky could well have been referring to the Balkan peculiarities when he wrote: 1) "There are no poor countries, only failed resource management systems", and 2) "If you want to control a people, create an imaginary enemy who seems more dangerous than you, and then present yourself as their savior" [1]. These two phrases succinctly describe why and how the peoples of the Balkans allow foreign powers to control their destiny.

The conflict between the Balkan peoples began in antiquity and continued until today, when industrialization has been completed in the West, and the Globalization throughout the world. In fact, the domination of the Balkan peoples began in antiquity with the Romans and continued with Byzantium and the Ottoman Empire, until then when industrialization has been completed. Since ancient times, each master left his own stamp on the Balkans, which together with the local characteristics created the Balkan physiognomy. However, peoples are made up of humans and human characters are influenced by the environment.

The common environment makes the peoples of the Balkans to have commonalities that unite them. If the commonalities are highlighted, the differences that fragment the Balkans, and allow foreign ideology of imperialism to lead them into rivalry, will be revealed. Today, therefore, when the end of the Industrial Age is evident, the Balkan peculiarities could lead humanity to a peaceful transition to the Post-Industrial Age, with a positive influence on the foreign powers. Because industrialization took humans away from nature. As N. Chomsky also said, "the West will regret its shallow ideas that alienate people from their true nature" [1].

Following Chomsky's reasoning, we see that the true nature of humans is identical to the nature of all other beings on Earth [2]. Not only does it differ from the "industrial nature" of the societies of the West, but it is completely opposite. While the true nature of humans is completely intertwined with the "Natural Environment", industrial nature is now intertwined with the "Technical Environment". Thus, the societies of the "Industrialized Countries" have developed an environment not only alien to nature, but absolutely hostile to it. This development of Chomsky's view makes the peculiarities of the Balkans decisive for the post-industrial future of the Planet [3].

In the Balkans, nature has not yet been affected by industrialization, but it is mortally threatened by it. Although globalization has generally prevailed fully, there are still places in the Balkans where the Natural Environment has not yet been affected by industrialization. In these parts of the Balkans, the Environment could evolve smoothly during the Post-Industrial Era. Thus, the paradox appears, the traditionally "Underdeveloped" Balkans being the only ones that could show the "Developed" states the way to the salvation of the world. This ability is given to the Balkans today by their peculiarity of having industrial experience, without having been fully industrialized.

There are still Balkan countries or parts of countries that are industrially underdeveloped. Thus, ideas, proposals, and planning for a "Post-Industrial Social System" can arise from the intra-Balkan exchange of knowledge. In other words, the Balkans are currently going through the Enlightenment phase, which the West went through before industrialization [4]. However, while the West is experiencing its decline after industrialization and is leading humanity to destruction, the Balkans can pass unscathed and directly into a Post-Industrial Age and become the model that will drag the rest of the world into it.

The peculiarity of the Enlightenment phase in the Balkans is that there is today an interconnection between scientists, similar to that of the Enlightenment of the West. Another peculiarity is that the Balkan Enlightenment is influenced and directed today by the West and there is a direct interconnection of the Balkan states with those Industrial states that dominate them, but there is no communication between them. However our electronic age allows the lightning-fast exchange of knowledge and experiences. Electronic media, thus, eliminate the disadvantage of the lack of direct interconnection of the Balkan states, which has been largely imposed on them.

There is also a basic peculiarity of the Balkans, which other countries, that have gone through industrialization, guided by the West [5], do not have. Specific, countries with a long tradition of harmonization with nature, such as Japan and China, were industrialized without a period of Enlightenment, abandoning their traditions and faithfully following Western models. Thus, they have today passed into the camp of the Developed States, having enormous technological development, but losing their human identity that would protect the nature of their land.

2. The Antiquity of Balkan peculiarities

Countries in the East and the West are currently jostling for primacy in industrial technology [5], rapidly destroying an environment of human survival, and creating an environment where cockroaches and microbes survive and grow. Most of the Balkans, though, are still on the verge of industrialization. This peculiarity will be productive, if Balkan scientists manage to collaborate with each other and with alternative scientists of the world, such as Chomsky, to shape the Balkan Enlightenment.

It is commonly accepted that the Natural Environment is decisive for the development of people and their cultures. That's why the Balkan Enlightenment could be the one that will lead the Balkans to their Post-Industrial Age and will make them a model for the rest of humanity. For this exemplary transition to the Post-Industrial Age, the Balkans have a unique peculiarity, as the unique ancient Greek civilization

was created here. The ancient Greek civilization, which was the model of the Western Enlighteners [4], is a common tradition of the Balkan peoples, because it was born in their Natural Environment.

In large parts of the Balkans, the natural environment has not changed substantially since antiquity. The ancient Pindos mountain-range in particular, is the same as the one where the Proto-Hellenes began to shape their socio-economic system that gave birth to their civilization. That socio-economic system had a peculiarity which no system from antiquity to the present has. In the small communities of the Proto-Hellenes, the power was held by their people [6] and not by their chieftains, in contrast to the socio-economic systems of the first civilizations of the East, where the rulers had absolute power.

Then the tribes of the Ancient Greeks descended from Pindus to coastal areas and became seafarers. After coming into contact with already civilized peoples of Asia Minor, Mesopotamia and Egypt, those seafaring Greeks preserved and developed the primitive system of their ancestors. Thus, that civilization which the Enlighteners revived, was developed, first in Crete and the Cyclades and then in Macedonia, Thessaly, Epirus, Central Greece, and the Peloponnese.

However, the Enlightenment was preceded by the Italian Renaissance of intellectuals from Italy and ideological refugees from Byzantium. All those pioneers of Western civilization were active in the liberal social environment of the feudal West. The feudal social systems of the West, under the coordination of the Pope of Rome, were successors of the Roman Republic, so they differed from the system of the Ancient Greek democracies.

The decisive difference between them, was that while in the small populated Ancient Greek communities the power was exercised directly by the people, in the populous Roman Republic it was exercised by the peoples' representatives [6]. Thus, the Enlighteners gave to their socio-economic system the Greek name "Democracy", having though consumed the Roman Republic [7]. In this way, to the begin of the Western Enlightenment, with that furious struggle against the absolutism of the "Roman Catholic" Church, the peculiarity was presented to have the Greek Democracy as a model, while at that time in Democracy's homeland prevailed the absolutist of the Orthodox Church.

The peculiarity of giving the term democracy to a republican system, also passed to those regimes of the West which were called Democracies, and from there to the regimes of the Balkan states. First a Balkan state was created by the Greeks, after a long and bloody struggle against the Ottoman Empire [8]. That unequal struggle of the Greeks would have died-out, if the like-minded countries of the West and East had not intervened. Thus, the first Balkan state was created with a Bavarian king, while the Enlighteners and the revolutionaries believed in Democracy.

This is the way by which arose the leadership of the Balkan peoples by foreign powers, which extended to all the Balkan states that emerged after the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman empires. Those Balkan states had in common the peculiarity of being essentially dependent on foreign powers, while they were divided more or less based on religions and not on racial origin. This division based on religion, and not based on nations like the Ancient Greeks, was a common peculiarity of the first civilizations of the East. There the absolute rulers were either deified, as in Egypt, or were representatives of the divinity of their nation [9].

3. Religions and nations in the Balkans

The people who believed in the divinity of Ashur, who was represented by their absolute rulers, were called by the Greeks "Assyrians". From that name came the name of the state of Syria, that emerged after the distribution that foreign powers made there from the ruins of the Ottoman Empire, regardless of the ethnicity of the residents [10, 11]. Since then, this predominantly Muslim state has maintained its cohesion based on religion. In such cases, the History of Civilizations teaches that religion as a synthetic element of peoples is either their primitive form, or where civilizations end up in their decline.

In the decline of the Macedonian Reigning Democracy and the Roman Republic, its leaders were deified, like the Pharaohs, and their civilization was relegated to the lowest level. However, in the History of Civilizations it is mentioned that in the Reigning Democracy of Sparta, its culture was preserved for centuries and did not decline [12]. Only from 945 to 988, the "Christian Civilization" was imposed on its people by military force by the monk Nikon "Metanoeite (Repent)". On the contrary, the regime which the Athenians called "Democracy" [7] functioned as such as long as the city-state had a small population, which Aristotle defined as enough for the voice of the town-crier to be heard [9].

The establishment of that Athenian Democracy began when the tyrant Draco recorded his "Laws" on marble slabs in 621 BC. Since then, it was an evolving system of power distribution for 170 years, but after its final formation by Solon and Cleisthenes, it was implemented for only 140 years, until 322 BC. From this History of the culture of Athens, it follows that the socio-economic system of Democracy requires small sizes, in contrast to Globalization [9]. On the other, from the History of Spartan civilization, which was based on the Great Tradition of Lycurgus, it emerges that traditions do not "evolve" but must remain eternally unbroken [12].

From the History of Spartan civilization emerges also for the Balkans, the even more important lesson of "coexistence". In medieval Byzantium the prevalence of Christianity had not reached the region of Lacedaemonia in the "Theme" of the Peloponnese. In fact, from 600, the emperor's deputies gradually abandoned the Peloponnese, the Episcopate was closed and the few churches were deserted due to the lack of believers. The lack of Christian subjects weakened the power of Byzantium, and the Spartans, who in order to preserve their traditions had taken refuge in Taygetos and Parnonas, were able to return.

In 700 Slavs and Jews began to peacefully descend on the Peloponnese, seeking a safe place to preserve their own traditions [13]. For many decades, the free Greeks and the other non-Christian communities coexisted harmoniously, without friction, and each observed its own rules. This irreligious situation continued even after 727, when by decree of Emperor Leo all of Greece was placed under the direct authority of the Patriarch. The wonderful coexistence of Greeks and Hellenized Slavs endured until the invasion of Nikon. That Asia Minor monk massacred the Jews and all those Peloponnesians who did not accept becoming Christians.

Many other uprisings and revolutions, though, against the discrimination based on the Abrahamic religion had occurred in Greece, after the complete dominance of Christianity in Byzantium in 380, mainly in the "Era of Iconoclasm". In 727, Greeks from Main-Greece and the islands, under the "Tourmarches of the Theme of Greece" general Agalianos marched against the iconoclastic emperor Leo III the Isaurian, of Armenian origin. The large Greek fleet, however, was destroyed in Constantinople by the "Liquid Fire." Successive desolations and resettlements of the Balkans followed.

The two-year period 746-747 began with a great plague that came from Calabria and Sicily, with which there were close relations. In 783, the Byzantine "Patrician" Stavrakios campaigned in the Peloponnese against non-Christians and forced the "Ezerite" and "Melingian" Slavs to take refuge in the mountainous regions of the Greeks [13]. This was followed from 790 to 800 by a failed attempt by Patriarch Tarasios to Christianize Greeks and Hellenized Slavs by force of arms. The result was that a Slavic revolt broke out in Achaia in 807, which, despite the help of the Saracens from the sea, was drowned in blood by the Byzantine general Leo Skleros [14].

In 849 general Theoktistos Briainios suppressed a rebellion in Laconia that had lasted more than ten years. After the Christianization campaigns of 880-900, the Greeks were confined to their inaccessible settlements on Taygetos, along with the Melingians, who had been fully Hellenized [13]. Nevertheless, in 940, a revolt of the non-Christian Balkans against Emperor Romanos had to be suppressed by the general Crinitos Arotras, and a period of anarchy followed in the entire region.

The locals, under various Byzantine "Protospatharioi", made successive stands against Romanos, until the Balkans were forcibly Christianized by Nikon [13, 15]. From this focal point, the Balkans began to create their own culture, from their common "Folk Tradition" [9]. In this Balkan Culture, the ancient Greek deities and demigods were transformed into Saints and Osius, and the "Ever-Virgin Mary" took the place of the "Virgin Athena". After the Ottoman conquest, Muslim elements were added to Balkan culture. Since the occupation of the Balkans by the Turks, the peoples were now divided into Christians and Muslims.

4. Islam and the Balkans

With the rise of the Ottomans in the Balkans, Turkish replaced Greek as the common language of the peoples, and Muslim citizens now constituted the "ruling class" throughout the empire [10]. In the new multinational regime of the Balkans, though, where Turkish and Arab elements and names were introduced into the Balkan Popular Tradition, religious divisions were now the cause of national and

social differences. This, decisive for the History of civilizations, differentiation of the national identity of peoples from their religious separation, has not been scientifically investigated to this day.

The phenomenon of confusion about the origin of a people had already appeared in the Balkans before Christ, with the increase in populations and the formation of multinational states after Alexander the Great and Rome. At that time, however, cultures remained national and in the culture of the strongest people participated also those members of other nations who identified with the socio-economic system of the strongest, ardently wishing to implement it. Thus, after Alexander, non-Greek peoples were Hellenized, adapting their folk traditions to Greek models [15].

The process of identifying peoples with the strongest continued more intensely when the Roman Republic was transformed into a multinational empire. For that empire, it was necessary to find that synthetic element of the state, which for the Greeks was their traditional models, which they knew from their myths and history. At the time of Christ, this required synthetic element for the multinational Roman state was the "Laws of the Empire". The members of the nations conquered by Rome were now obliged to apply the laws of the empire, in contrast to the voluntary participation of the peoples of the Hellenistic Era.

At that time, however, the national differences covered with religious cloak caused obsessions, fanaticism, and conflicts. The social differentiation brought popular revolutions of nations with a deeply rooted local socio-economic system, such as that of the Jews. The Abrahamic socio-economic system, which advocated that the Jews were "the privileged people of the Earth" was deeply rooted in the Jewish people since they were wandering shepherds as food gatherers. That Jewish system was strictly applied by the Jewish shepherds, as they considered it "god-given", until after the wandering they settled permanently in the Palestinian lands.

Then the Jews began to enrich their primitive socio-economic system with myths and traditions of the peoples they had contacts with during their wanderings, such as the Phoenicians. At the time of the coming of Christ, millennia had passed since the coming of Moses and the start of the Abrahamic socio-economic system application. The system founded by Moses was no longer strictly applied by the ruling class of the Priests and Pharisees, with the result that the people of Israel were excluded from its traditions. This made Jesus become from a Rabbi the revolutionary who overturned the course of History, destroyed an empire and conquered to the world as the "Messiah".

This global phenomenon appeared especially strong in the wider Balkan region after the coming of Christ, who founded the new Abrahamic socio-economic system of Christianity. The coming of Messiah also determined the future of the Balkans. The dominant language in the Balkans and Judea, which were both parts of the Alexandrian kingdoms, was still Greek. A large portion of the Jews, such as their king Herod and the "Septuagint" translators of the Hebrew Bible in the 3rd century BC, were "Hellenized". Thus, Christianity spread rapidly in the Greek-speaking part of the world, where three centuries later Byzantium was created, with the Balkans as its territory.

About another three centuries later, a "Great Migration of Peoples" took place from the west and east of Byzantium. During this period, Germanic, Slavic, and Mongol tribes were added to the Balkans, while at the same time the rigor of the Christian socio-economic system weakened. It was then that socio-economic injustices brought secessions of "Heretics" and revolutions to Asia Minor, the Middle East and Egypt, creating fertile ground for the advent of a new Abrahamic socio-economic system by Muhammad. That scion of a prominent Arab family, knew as a poor man the injustice and misery of the weak, and created his philosophy with the aim of protecting and restoring them.

Muhammad also knew Christianity from the Byzantines and in his worldview, he refers to the future messianic action of Jesus. However, by improving the practical application of Christianity, he created for the Arabs a model that was easily applied in practice, without relying on miracles. "Islam" thus spread rapidly in Arabia, and soon after in Asia Minor, the Middle East and Egypt. It created there the "Muslim Civilization", which soon expanded to North Africa and Europe. However, because neither Christ nor Muhammad wrote down their teachings, the initial oral transmission brought different interpretations during its dissemination.

The different interpretations remained even after the writing of "Koran". Thus, the Muslim and Christian territories were fragmented into kingdoms that fought each other in a world divided into

Christians and Muslims, with the Balkans at the centre of the cyclone. The Great Migration of Peoples brought Germanic tribes to Western Europe also, who were mixed with the locals, and the Greek and Phoenician colonists. Unlike the Balkans, the Great Migration brought about a complete upheaval in the West through national enrichment of the already multinational Romans.

5. The Balkans until the Industrial Era

During the Great Migration, in the formally subordinate Western part of Byzantium, the “Frankish” kingdoms began to take shape according to the “Feudal System”. Thus, the West-of-Balkans Europe became a territory of networked states, like the Ancient Greek city-states. However, unlike the Greeks, the Franks were coordinated by the Pope, who, after Gregory II, who was the first to become independent, began to have German names. Following this development the Christians ended up in 1054 in the “Schism”, and their separation into “Catholics” in the West and “Orthodox” in the East.

In Byzantium of the Orthodox East, the Laws of the Empire and the absolutist Roman system, headed by the emperors and the patriarchs, continued to dominate as a synthetic element. The Slavic, Germanic, and Mongolic Tribes that were Christianized followed the system of “Orthis Doxas”, and adapted their folk traditions to Byzantine models, with their Kings, Tsars, and Sultans initially subordinate to the Emperor and the Patriarch. Gradually, however, the kingdoms of East and West became independent. Under the guise of the Catholic Religion, and with the “Carolingian Renaissance” the Westerners founded their “European Civilization”.

With the liberal Feudal System, the European Civilization had a “comparative advantage” against the monolithic Byzantium, and with the wealth they produced they financed the so called “Renaissance of Ancient Civilization”. These were the reasons why Byzantium declined rapidly after Emperor Basil II, with the mutual disintegration of the Orthodox peoples and the gradual dominance of the Turkish Muslim tribes [10]. During the Carolingian Renaissance, an attempt had been made in Byzantium by the “Iconolatres” to restore the Ancient Greek models, but they failed miserably in socio-economic terms and collapsed.

The collapse of the Iconolatres lead the Empire to fundamentalism. The “Isaurian Emperors” and their successors did not perceive the comparative advantages of the Muslim religion, and by only restoring rigor to the Christian socio-economic system, they increased social injustice. That social injustice led the Asia Minor farmers to voluntary Islamization, and thus the Turkish Sultanates were created. With the dominance of the Ottomans the Turks from vassals became sovereigns. To confront the Ottomans, the Byzantine Emperors did not address their Orthodox neighbours, because they considered them rivals.

The desperate Byzantium addressed the Catholic Hegemons of the West and provoked the Crusades. The collapsing empire thus added new rivals and opponents, and caused the bilateral shrinkage of its territory. On the one hand the “Crusader West” gradually occupied the Balkans, occupied in 1204 Constantinople, and dissolved the Byzantine Empire. At the same time, Ottoman rule extended to Thrace, at the invitation of Emperor John VI Kantakouzenos, and in 1453 it captured Constantinople and brought about the end of Byzantium.

It was then that the servitude of the Balkans to the Ottomans and the Crusader West was completed, until the time when the West changed its orientation with the Enlightenment. The centuries of servitude had different developments for each Balkan people. Of the Byzantines of Asia, the “Romans” became “Romii” which became the new name of the Greeks of Asia Minor. The Cappadocians became either “Karamanlids” or “Pontii”, while the Armenians kept their name and the Jews remained a dispersed religious community, as in Byzantium.

The Albanians, more than any other people, showed the Balkan peculiarity of being divided into Muslims and Orthodox or Catholic Christians, each ruled by the Sultan, the Patriarch or the Pope. The Orthodox Slavs, on the other hand, obeyed the Sultan and the Patriarch, but secretly looked to the Tsar. A peculiar balance of power was thus formed in the Balkans, where the Muslims were under the Ottoman Sultan and the Orthodox under the Greek Patriarch. So, the Greeks who ruled the Orthodox of the Empire essentially co-ruled with the Turks, while the Crusader West attempted to regain power through the Pope.

A special case was the Romans of Constantinople, who enjoyed special privileges thanks to the early capitulation of the Patriarchs, who "preferred a Turkish sari to the papal tiara". Thus, a Greek elite was created in "Istanbul" (an alteration in Turkish of the Byzantine "is tin Poli"). From those "Constantinopolitans" came high-ranking Ottoman dignitaries, who in the Industrial Age came to govern Balkan countries. The Constantinopolitans also had the opportunity, as educated people, to communicate with the West and to staff the "Greek Scientific Order". The Greeks of Russia occupied a similar position next to the Tsar.

In other words, in the wider Balkans, Byzantine rule continued in a peculiar way. These peculiarities had a serious impact on Balkan culture, which superficially flourished under the Ottomans, but was constantly moving away from the Ancient Greek models. In the West of the Balkans, however, the Renaissance continued thanks to liberal systems, which, after the arts and philosophy, also developed technology.

During the centuries of Balkan subjugation, the Feudal West had gone from the Crusades to the "Commercial" and "Scientific Revolution", with the Renaissance and democratization. The Commercial Revolution was caused by the loss of the trade routes of Asia, with the fall of Constantinople and the discovery of minerals in the mountains of Central Europe. The great navigable rivers of Europe contributed to the Commercial Revolution. They shortened transportation and largely replaced sea routes.

New commercial centres were created in European ports where sciences were developed, alongside the feudal courts and monasteries. Thus, the states that emerged from feudalism in the West reached the "Industrial Revolution" and entered the "Industrial Age". This now industrialized West became the model for the Balkans. The Industrial Europe included Russia after Tsar Peter I, and with the rapid industrialization, Western Europeans and Russians gained a crushing advantage over the declining Ottoman Empire.

6. Balkans and the Industrial Era

The Ottomans were engaged in wars during the Industrial Age and despised trade, which was taken-over by the Greek sailors, who became merchants. They were now freed from the Venetians and Genoese, who had its exclusivity in the last days of Byzantium. Thus, in the Balkans, a belatedly Commercial Revolution took place, that financed the Balkan Enlightenment and the revolutions that followed. So, the paradox arose that the Balkans became the advanced part of the Ottoman Empire, which was gradually becoming Europeanized [10, 11].

As the oppression of citizens became greater in the declining totalitarian regimes, the oppressed Balkans now placed their hopes for liberation in Industrial Europe, which they made their model. In fact, where the "European models" had a direct impact was the Balkan bourgeoisie, whose overwhelming majority were Greeks, based in their neighbourhood of Fanari. For this reason, popular tradition called them "Phanariotes". Meanwhile, the balance changed in the Orthodox Balkans, where liberation from the Ottomans was expected mainly from the rising power of Russia. It was then that the Balkan peoples' revolutions, provoked by the Tsars and the Enlightenment, began.

First, the Orthodox Greeks, Vlachs, and Arvanites rebelled in Greece and fought against the Muslim Turks and Arvanites. Greece was finally liberated, thanks to the military ability of its "Arms' Chiefs", the political assistance of the Phanariotes, and the support of Russians and Enlighteners. However, the unequal struggle, which from being popular and social ended up being religious, was limited by the Muslim Forces in the Peloponnese. Ultimately, the Greek revolution was saved with the help of Industrial Europe, which at that time consisted of absolute monarchies.

So, Greece, as the first liberated Balkan state became a Kingdom with a Bavarian ruler, and not a "Hellenic Democracy" as was the goal of the revolutionaries. The revolutions of the Bulgarians, Serbs, Montenegrins and Romanians followed, assisted by Russia [16]. However, Russia's involvement in the Balkans, and the prospect of its exit to the Mediterranean provoked the reaction of the West, which became Crusader again and has been intervening here ever since, in various ways. At that time, the foreign powers alternately fought and allied with each other and with the Ottomans, on the terms of "Industrial Standards".

Since then, the peculiarity has appeared that the liberated Balkan states are oriented towards the Industrial West and North, and their peoples are forced to replace their common traditional prototypes with Industrial Standards. Thus, the Balkans reached the "Balkan Wars" and the simultaneous "Declaration of Independence" of the Albanians, who with the "Turkish Republic" of 1923 essentially shaped the present-day Balkans. Today, therefore, the Balkans, having moved away from Russia, are attached to the Industrial West and are in the process of replacing their traditional prototypes with Industrial Standards [9, 17].

This process has different paths in each Balkan state, depending on its History. One is the group of former "People's Republics" that have decades of experience in "Industrial Standardization" from Soviet standards. Turkey also has experience in standardization, which from Ottoman standardization gradually passed, as a Republic, to the "Industrial Countries". Greece, being under the control of the West since its liberation, follows Western standards, but largely copying them. In other words, the only Balkan country that has not been completely taken over by the spirit of Industrial Standards is Greece.

In all Balkan states, however, the majority of citizens have maintained their traditional mentality, and there are still generations here who find it difficult to live in the Industrial Age. However, the ignorance of Industrial Standardization, combined with the desire to acquire characteristic industrial products, such as cars, causes the Balkans to have intense admiration and desire to follow Industrial Standards. So we have reached the point today where the people of the Industrial Countries have realized the disastrous results of Industrial Standardization, while the Balkans follow them, abandoning their traditional standards [9, 17].

7. The Peculiarities of the Post-Industrial Balkans from the Perspective of BCC

The above-mentioned were a historical record in the spirit that characterized the establishment of the "Balkan Coordinating Committee-BCC". With this perspective of BCC, we will report the conclusions on the perspective of the Balkans in the Post-Industrial Era. The perspective of "Industrial History" is therefore that the Industrial Standards were a product of the evolution of the standards of the Industrial Countries, therefore they are today their own tradition for the "Developed Countries". In other words, the Industrial Standards have passed as prototypes in the habits and customs of their peoples.

These Industrial Standards evolved during the Industrial Age, as the traditional prototypes of the Athenian Republic evolved after the Laws of Draco. Like the Athenian ones, though, the Industrial Standards evolved contrary to the intended goals and brought confusion, misinterpretations, and anarchy to the citizens [17]. The result of these dysfunctions is that today the citizens of the Industrial Countries are looking for other standards to enter the Post-Industrial Age. The establishment of "Post-Industrial Prototypes" is very difficult for the Industrial Countries, where Industrial Standardization has become part of the habits of the citizens, and the technical environment dominates the natural one.

The opposite happens in the Balkan Countries, though, where the majority of the citizens still have the "pre-industrial mentality", and large parts of the natural environment are still untouched. This peculiarity gives the peoples of the Balkans the opportunity to shape the prototypes that will lead humanity into the Post-Industrial Age. In this endeavour, international experience from the History of the Enlightenment and the scientific analysis of the course of standards, from their "genesis" to their standardization, can help. The study of the entire course of Industrial Standardization will have an equally important contribution.

With this perspective, the BCC's activity began after the "First Balkan Meeting of Scientists and Experts on Standardization and Prototyping" that took place on June 8, 2001, in Thessaloniki. The Meeting was preceded by the "1st Balkan Conference Standardization and Related Activities: A Means of Balkan Countries' Collaboration" in May 1997, co-organized by Professors B. Sandanski and Ang. Zachariadis. Prof. B. Sandanski of the Technical University of Sofia had directed the socialist standardization body and organized the "Bulgarian Union of Standardizers-BUS" after the change of regime, for the study of Western Industrial Standardization.

After the 1st Balkan Conference, the "Union of Hellenes Scientists for Prototyping and Standardization-ENEPROT" was founded, as an attempt to create a body for the study and dissemination of standardization, unknown in Greece. ENEPROT was the one that had organized the Meeting, which

also included Albanian delegates selected by the director of the state "Albanian General Directorate of Standardization-DPS" A. Nati. The participants from the 3 Balkan countries signed the founding Protocol of the BCC, which provided for the organizational chart coordinated by a "Central Secretariat".

With the goals and perspective of that Protocol and with the coordination of its Central Secretariat, BCC organized on 14/10/2001 the "2nd Balkan Conference Standardization-European Integration-Consumers", in Sofia. Subsequently, on 2-3/05/2004, the 3rd Balkan Conference was organized under the title "Standardization and Related Activities a Means of Balkan Countries' Collaboration" in Tirana. Then, the Conferences became International under the title "Standardization, Prototypes and Quality, a Means of Balkan Countries Collaboration" from the fourth one, organized in Thessaloniki on 18-19/05/2007.

With the Protocol that had been signed in Edirne in 2003, Turkey already participated, at the initiative of Prof. Er. Akata, Dean of the university there, and Romania and Serbia followed. All these Balkan countries have organized a total of 16 International Conferences, and the 17th one is being organized in Brasov, in an effort to shape prototypes with the BCC perspective. When this ambitious effort succeeds, the peculiar Balkans with the "pre-industrial mentality", will lead humanity to create an environmentally friendly world in the Post-Industrial Era, respecting their traditions and heritage.

References

1. Chomsky N. (1992): *Deterring Democracy*. Hill and Wang, ISBN 978-0374523497
2. Leakey R.E. (1982): *The Making of Mankind*. Sphere, ISBN 978-0349121697
3. Zachariadis Ang., Damaskos Chr., Zagas Th. (2010): *Για Ένα Μεταβιομηχανικό Πρότυπο της Βιομηχανοποίησης (Towards a Post-industrial Model of Industrialization)*. Proceedings, 4th Panhellenic Congress Standardization, Prototypes and Quality, ISBN 978-960-9555-00-5, pp. 138-146, ENEPROT, Thessaloniki, Greece (in Greek)
4. Williams D. (2012): *Voltaire: Political Writings*. Cambridge University Press, eISBN 978-1139170451
5. Zachariadis Ang., Latinopoulou M., Stergiadis L. (2009): *Who brought about the Crisis*. Proceedings, 6th International Conference Standardization, Prototypes and Quality: A means of Balkan Countries Collaboration, ISBN 978-960-87983-9-0, pp. 3-9, ENEPROT, Thessaloniki, Greece
6. Kastoriadis C. (1987): *Η Αρχαία Ελληνική Δημοκρατία και η Σημασία της για μας Σήμερα (The Ancient Greek Democracy and Its Significance for Us Today)* Ypsilon, ISBN 978-9607949202, Athens, Greece, (in Greek)
7. Babiniotis G. (2011): *Ετυμολογικό Λεξικό της Νέας Ελληνικής Γλώσσας (Etymological Dictionary of Modern Greek Language)*. Lexicology Centre, ISBN 978-9609582001, Athens, Greece (in Greek)
8. Vakalopoulos Ap. (2007): *Ιστορία του Νέου Ελληνισμού*, έβδομος τόμος: *Η μεγάλη ελληνική επανάσταση (1821-1829 (History of Modern Hellenism. Vol. 7: The Great Greek Revolution 1821-1829)*. Herodotos, ISBN 978-9608256835, Athens, Greece (in Greek)
9. Zachariadis Ang. (to be published in 2026): *The Two-Way Relationship of Tradition and Quality*. Technical Annals Athens
10. İnalçık H. (2011): *From Empire to Republic: Essays on Ottoman and Turkish Social History*. Gorgias Press, ISBN 978-1-61143-137-7
11. Danforth N. (2014): *Multi-Purpose Empire: Ottoman History in Republican Turkey*. Middle Eastern Studies, ISSN 0026-3206, Vol. 50, is. 4, pp. 655-678, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00263206.2014.892481>
12. Rassias Vl.G. (2003): *Μια Σύντομη Ιστορία των Σπαρτιατών (A Brief History of the Spartans)*. Anoichti Poli, ISBN 978-9607748294, (in Greek)
13. Zerlentos P. (1922): *Μίλιτες και Εζερίτες Σλάβοι στην Πελοπόννησο (Milites and Ezerites Slavs in the Peloponnese)*. Karavias, Athens, Greece (in Greek)
14. Jireček C. (1911): *Geschichte der Serben (The History of Serbs)*. Gotha: F.A. Perthes, <https://archive.org/details/geschichtederser00jire/page/n19/mode/2up> (in German)
15. Vakalopoulos Ap. (1989): *Πηγές της Ιστορίας της Μακεδονίας 1354-1833 (Sources of the History of Macedonia 1354-1833)*. Society for Macedonian Studies, ISBN 978-9607265029, Thessaloniki, Greece (in Greek)
16. Todorov N. (1982): *Η Βαλκανική Διάσταση της Επανάστασης του 1821 (The Balkan Dimension of the Revolution of 1821)*. Translation from German. Gutemberg, ISBN 85676, Athens (in Greek)
17. Zachariadis Ang. (2004): *Σχετικά με την Ποιότητα: Βιομηχανικά Πρότυπα ή Ελληνικά Πρότυπα (About Quality: Industrial Standards or Hellenic Prototypes)*. Proceedings, 1st Panhellenic Congress for Standardization, Prototypes and Quality, ENEPROT, ISBN 960-87973-2-2, pp. 96-107, Thessaloniki, Greece (in Greek)

Paper presented at The 17th International Conference
"STANDARDIZATION, PROTOTYPES and QUALITY: A means of Balkan Countries' collaboration"
