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ENTITLED American Protestant Influence in the Balkans, 1918-1939

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**American Protestant Influence in the Balkans, 1918-1939**

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## I. Purposes and Problems in Missionary Research

Hugh Seton-Watson, in his book Eastern Europe Between the Wars, 1918-1941, writes about Great Power influence in Eastern Europe. He mentions three means by which America impacted East European life: through philanthropic activities, schools established by Americans in Eastern Europe, and through citizens of these nations who visited or lived in the United States and then returned home and told of their experiences.<sup>1</sup> Who were the Americans involved? Many of them were Protestant missionaries who used all three of these methods in their attempt to bring Protestantism to Eastern Europe.

American missionaries became interested in Eastern Europe in the mid nineteenth century. This paper was written to examine the work of American Protestant missionaries in the interim between the two World Wars. Why the interwar period? One reason for giving the interwar period special treatment is a shift in the focus of the missionaries. As one author writing on this subject points out, "American foreign affairs and Protestant missions to the Near East began to turn a corner in the Woodrow Wilson era." At a time when the United States favored an isolationist stand, missionaries were concerned with the international picture. While priorly missions were oriented at theology, "individual salvation and church building," and characterized by a reluctance to get directly involved in political affairs, it is suggested that after 1914 there was a parting from this traditional course.<sup>2</sup> Another author describes the change as a departing from doctrine to an increased interest in social problems and ideals.<sup>3</sup> This shift was not enacted by all missionaries. There was, however, after World War I a large emphasis by missionaries on political and social ideologies.

In studying missionary activity, a broad question emerges. How much of an impact did missionaries make? In other words, how successful were they? This question is difficult, for it will be

seen that the missionaries surely made an impact, but measuring it and answering the question of how successful they were is not quite so simple. In considering plausible answers to this question, numerous problems arise. An understanding of these problems is necessary before any accurate conclusions can be drawn.

First, the territory to be included in the study must be defined. For purposes of this paper, the discussion will be limited to the Balkan countries of Albania, Bulgaria, Rumania, and Yugoslavia though Greece and Turkey could easily be included. Greece is not included because as Robert Wolff points out, conditions there were more cosmopolitan and western than in the other East European countries.<sup>4</sup> The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (American Board) had been largely active in both Greece and Turkey and after World War I, concentrated largely on these fields, separating them from their European missions in Albania and Bulgaria.

In researching the influence of American missionaries in the Balkans, there is a notable shortage of accessible material. Furthermore, although there is enough material on missionary activity on the peninsula from which to draw some conclusions and acquire a sense of what the work entailed, it is much harder to find than material discussing missionary work in India, Japan, or China, for example. Why did the work in Eastern Europe receive less attention? A probable reason is that Europe was already considered predominately Christian as the majority of the population belonged to the Orthodox Church. This point is supported also by the fact that Muslim Turkey also receives a great deal of mention in missionary writings.

Yet, the problem is not so much the *lack* of resources as the *content* of the resources. Much material was written by the missionaries from the fields. While it reflects first-hand experience, there are three basic criticisms that can be mentioned about the quality of the writings.

First of all, there are just basic errors. The missionaries should not be treated too harshly for this as it is likely that these errors were the results of misunderstanding or misreading the circumstances and events of the period. For example, American Board missionaries were rather delusioned about the state of affairs in Albania. They confused the desire of Albanians to be free from the Turk as a desire to be free from Islam. They report that Albanians "are ready to repudiate their Mohammedism completely and desire to become Protestants rather than members of the Greek or of the Catholic Church."<sup>5</sup> There might have been a small group of people in Albania who were turning to Protestantism, but there was no indication that the Albanian population, two thirds Muslim, had any intention of converting. In this sense, the statement is a complete falsehood. Even when one considers that Albania was antagonized by Greece, Yugoslavia, and Italy, there is no reason to think this would create a massive change in religious orientation. Barbara Jelavich, in speaking of the Greek occupation of Korce during World War I, the city where missionaries were active, maintains exactly the opposite viewpoint. "The Albanian peasant had indeed much to complain about... most of the peasants were devout Muslims, deeply attached to their faith and the religious leaders."<sup>6</sup>

A much greater problem is the lack of specificity, particularly when it comes to statistics. One writer said, "In just a few years after our work began, the number of Baptists was about three times the original number."<sup>7</sup> Ambiguous statements are not uncommon. Of course, this kind of writing suited the missionaries' purposes but it makes it difficult to get a solid grasp on the situation, especially in regard to statistics. Inconsistency in reporting statistics, which occurred because occasionally statistics were approximated, also complicates the process of drawing accurate conclusions.

Another example of a general lack of preciseness is in an appraisal of six Near East colleges. This appraisal, in talking about

the success of the institutions, includes a short discussion of each college and alludes to what the graduates are doing but mentions few names.<sup>8</sup> While a list of names might be tiresome to read through, it could offer valuable information. For example, it is reported that one graduate of Robert College went on to become the first prime minister of Bulgaria. This sounds like a significant fact. In this case, the missing information can be discovered without too much difficulty. Still, there are numerous other occasions where names may prove useful and yet are withheld.

A third criticism that can be mentioned is the authors' tendency to tell anecdotes as opposed to the hard facts. Again they ought not be criticized harshly. After all, anecdotes certainly make for more pleasurable reading. Moreover, such stories are often representative of the cultural settings in which the missionaries were at work. It was important to the missionaries, writing for American readers, to get across these cultural trends and ideas. Not only that, but these stories may offer clues on how well accepted the teachings of the missionaries were among the peoples of Eastern Europe. The obvious disadvantage is that they do not normally point to substantial information representing the progress or lack thereof made by the missionaries.

Interpreting statistics is the next major problem which arises in the research of missionary work. Certainly this is a problem in all fields of research, but in the study of missionary activity, the problem is increased by the spiritual aspect. After all, how does one judge whether a conversion is genuine? It cannot be done, so the best solution is to take the missionaries at their word, recognizing that a "convert" may have relinquished his new faith at any particular time or that many people may have accepted the missionaries' teachings without making a public confession or joining the ranks of church membership. An illustration of this principle comes from an account of Southern Baptist work in Yugoslavia. It is an example from 1941, but the point applies to all time periods. In Croatia, the Ustasha terrorists were forcing



those of the Orthodox faith to convert to Catholicism. In the town of Moshthenitsa, a Baptist pastor by the name of Jovo Jekich was to be shot along with one hundred fifty Serbians. It is reported that the gunmen found out that Jekich was not Orthodox and released him as well as another Baptist. The author writes that "revival swept the countryside. Hundreds were clamoring to be received into the church. Needless to say, the results were not lasting."<sup>9</sup>

Another problem in interpreting statistics is directly related to demographical and ethnical considerations. When comparing the influence of Protestantism in one country versus another, greater statistics do not always point to greater success. In Rumania, for instance, there were notably more Baptists than in any other Balkan country. However, the population was larger. Not only that but there was a diverse mixture of ethnic groups. Most of the Baptists were in Transylvania, territory gained from Hungary after World War I. It can not simply be concluded that Protestantism was more widely accepted in Rumania than in other countries on the basis of statistics. One must consider which segments of the population were Baptist and find out when they converted.

All of these problems considered, the greatest still remains, which is how the influence and effectiveness of missionaries is to be measured. The answer to this question is dependent on point of view. From their writings, it seems that the missionaries were optimistic and saw themselves as successful in carrying out a vital work. In retrospect, was the missionaries' analysis of themselves truly accurate?

There are three ways to approach the question of how much of an impact the missionaries made. First and most obvious is by looking at statistics. Some of the shortcomings of statistical analysis have already been discussed, but even assuming that a coherent set of accurate, non-contradictory statistics could be attained, there are still serious problems with this type of

evaluation. Looking just at statistics would fail to take into account considerations such as the obstacles that the missionaries had to face in their work. Not only that, but statistical analysis would also assume definite, measurable results. Though the missionary work may have ended in a particular year, the influence of missionaries may have endured for generations. In fact, there is no reason to believe that it has ever completely ceased. Focussing on statistics would tend to undermine this very important consideration. A striking example which illustrates this point is the December, 1989 revolution in Rumania. Because the evangelical church was repressed by Nicolae Ceausescu, it was "one of the few voices of dissent" in Rumania. Protestants in Rumania played a key role in bringing about the revolution.<sup>10</sup>

A second method of evaluation would be to judge success on the basis of how successful *missionaries* considered themselves to be during the time frame. This method would, however, assume that the missionaries were completely honest in their reports (in regard to their attitude, as opposed to facts). What about any biases or prejudices the missionaries may have held? Looking at the missionaries' judgment alone would also tend to ignore statistics and would focus on intention more so than on results. It is an inadequate measure in itself, but a vital aspect to consider.

Finally, influence may be looked at retrospectively in terms of the goals that were set as compared to goals attained. Such a method would include both statistical considerations and the missionaries' attitudes about their own work. If not carefully handled, this method might ignore outside circumstances which affected the missionaries' work. In addition, it may tend to imply that the goals set were both realistic and obtainable. In some cases, goals were not clear; in others, they were immense and dependent on too many external contributors.

This paper is written to examine the work of three American missionary organizations active in Southeastern Europe between

the World Wars. The aim is to evaluate the impact the groups had on life in the Balkans according to the three methods discussed. There are many common threads that unite the work of these organizations, yet many differences that point to different goals and different perspectives. It is Herculean to draw specific conclusions, but in the end, it will be seen that the American missionaries, while not wholly "successful" according to any of the discussed means of analysis, did have a definite influence in the Balkans which continued throughout the interwar period.

Keeping the aforementioned problems in mind, it is appropriate to move on from these introductory remarks to an actual discussion of the missionary organizations.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>H. Seton-Watson, East and West Between the Wars, 1918-1941 (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1946), pp. 420-421.

<sup>2</sup>J. L. Grabill, Protestant Diplomacy and the Near East (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1971), pp. 3 & 33.

<sup>3</sup>W. W. Hall, Jr. Puritans in the Balkans (Sofia, 1938) pp. 240-241.

<sup>4</sup>R. L. Wolff, The Balkans in Our Time rev. ed. (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1974), p. 8.

<sup>5</sup>J. L. Barton, "Free Albania," Envelope Series, 16 No. 3 (1913), pp. 13-21.

<sup>6</sup>B. Jelavich, History of the Balkans, 20th Century (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1983), p. 103.

<sup>7</sup>E. P. Maddy, Believers and Builders in Europe (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1939), p. 96.

<sup>8</sup>An Appraisal of America's Investment in Six Near East Colleges (New York: Near East College Association, 1936).

<sup>9</sup>Europe--Whither Bound? A Symposium (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1951), pp. 141-142.

<sup>10</sup>T. Keppeler, "The Persecuted Church: Heart of the Revolution," Christianity Today, 34, No. 2 (1990), pp. 43 & 47. According to this article, the revolution began when Laszlo Tokes, a pastor in Timisoara, was surrounded by a human blockade [his congregation] so as not to be arrested by the secret police.

## II. Active Missionary Organizations

There were three large missionary organizations active in the Balkans. The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, representing the Congregationalist Church, was the operation involving the first American effort. A second organization was the Methodist Episcopal Church. Methodists were active in Bulgaria and Yugoslavia (mainly in territories formerly belonging to Austria-Hungary). Work in Yugoslavia was started by German missionaries while the work in Bulgaria was an American effort. Lastly, the Southern Baptist Convention was a smaller project which did not commence in Eastern Europe until 1920, setting it apart from the other two organizations which both undertook their endeavors in the late 1850's.

It is also interesting to note that there were both offshoots of these organizations that formed, and a few smaller evangelical missions going on as well. Not much is known about these other projects, but their existence makes it difficult to know the extent of Protestantism in the Balkans. Also requiring mention, there were Protestants active in Southeastern Europe who were not American. This is an important distinction to make as without it one might easily assume that Protestantism in Eastern Europe was an American product, when it was not.

The Methodist Episcopal mission in Europe started in 1857 while the American Board mission followed a year later. It is likely that the start of this work was related to what is known as the Third Great Awakening, a revival which swept both the United States and Canada from 1857 into the Civil War years. In October, 1857, the New York stock market crashed and fears of financial chaos abounded. As if that were not enough, the United States was a nation on the brink of Civil War divided over the slavery question. These two factors provoked waves of prayer throughout the continent. All over the country, many people were making commitments to the Christian life and to Christian service.<sup>1</sup> This

suggestion can be backed up by Grabill, who in speaking of the origins of the American Board says that it "arose out of various forces in New England society. The Second Great Awakening [1795-1840] and its theology about practical Christianity... impelled not only foreign missions but antislavery, temperance, and peace movements."<sup>2</sup> As will be seen later, temperance and peace movements are included among the missionaries' goals for Southeastern Europe.

Stations of the American Board work in Eastern Europe were located in Bulgaria, Greece, Macedonia, and Albania, though the work in Albania did not start until 1907. Because the missionaries set up their stations in disputed territories, some of these stations were transferred from one country to another. Two examples of territorial disputes were the Macedonian cities of Monastir and Salonica. Both of these cities were in Bulgarian territory at the start of the mission, but after Bulgaria lost the Second Balkan War in 1913, Monastir went to Serbia and Salonica to Greece.

Originally, the American Board project was called the European Turkey Mission. Its intent was to reach the Muslims through the native people. As a result, the center of the mission was in Constantinople. One way that the mission intended to reach its goal was by maintaining the native churches but reviving and reforming the spirit.<sup>3</sup> Missionaries then proceeded to set up schools to train the natives to continue the work.<sup>4</sup> The most renowned of these institutions is Robert College in Constantinople. In this cosmopolitan setting, missionaries emphasized the multi-national aspect. It was a place where people of any nationality or religion could come and receive an education; because of this outlook, Robert College played a role in the history of each country under discussion. Within Bulgaria, the institutions of importance were the schools at Samokov, Bulgaria, set up in 1860 and 1863 for boys and girls respectively and which became the American College at Sofia in the 1920's.

While there were throughout the years, numerous other projects, these were the most important.

Methodist Episcopal work began in Bulgaria in 1857 by Wesley Prettyman and Albert L. Long. Work in Yugoslavia did not start until 1908, and this was a German effort. Similar to the goals of the Congregationalists, the Methodists wanted to inspire the already existing native churches, "stirring them to greater zeal and activity."<sup>5</sup> Like the American Board, the Methodists also established schools. At Lovech Bulgaria, an American School for Girls was opened by the Womens' Foreign Mission Society. At Novi Sad Yugoslavia, a training school was opened for girls in 1921. In December, 1921, twelve American Board stations were transferred to the Methodists for financial reasons. The transfer included a school for girls at Monastir, with sixty five students. Those missionaries who worked at this school stayed on as staff.

In 1920, Baptist denominations of Europe and America met in London to discuss missionary activity. At this conference, European missionary fields were divided up and assigned to the different Baptist conferences. Fields assigned to the Southern Baptist Convention included Rumania, South Russia, Hungary, Yugoslavia, Spain, and Italy.

Some very significant factors set the work of the Baptists apart from the other groups. First, the work was a continuation of a work already started. The Southern Baptist Convention was assigned to assist the Baptists already in these nations, therefore, few missionaries were sent to the field. Another distinction is that the Southern Baptists were concerned almost exclusively with evangelism. In other words, their main interest was in converting people. Also worthy of note is that from the start, natives had a large role in organization and evangelism. This was possible because there was already a viable number of native Baptists who were willing and ready to take on the work.

Before discussing in more detail the aims and practices of the missionaries, it is necessary to briefly present a historical survey

of each nation. Both the local and worldwide conditions during the interwar period affected the missionaries' goals and the natives' responses. Ultimately, due to these conditions, the missions were unable to continue following the course they had started.



## Notes

<sup>1</sup>Christian History, 8 No. 3. (1989), pp. 32-34.

<sup>2</sup>Grabill, p. 5.

<sup>3</sup>Hall, p. 3.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., pp. 30-31.

<sup>5</sup>J. H. Vincent, The European Mission of the Methodist Episcopal Church (New York: Open Door Emergency Commission. Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 1904?) p. 29.

### III. General History

Each of the four countries under discussion followed a unique course in internal politics despite the fact that they shared similar concerns. For all of the countries, the economic condition, internal instability, ethnic tensions and territorial disputes were prevalent concerns. Although each nation pursued its own program as much as possible in a system dependent on the Great Powers, the results were not unique. By 1938, the four states had become dictatorships and were quickly falling into Axis control.

#### Bulgaria

The course that Bulgaria took after World War I was different from that of her neighbors on several counts. Bulgaria was the only state discussed in this paper which had fought on the side of the Central Powers. Missionaries and historians alike tell us that this decision was not in agreement with popular sentiment but was the decision of King Ferdinand.

Losing in World War I was the second loss that Bulgaria had experienced in five years. Nationalist sentiment had been strong and remained strong after the war as the settlement was not found by the people to be satisfactory. Territories in Macedonia that Bulgaria had previously claimed were divided up among Yugoslavia and Greece while the Dobrudja was handed over to Rumania. Now Bulgaria did not have an outlet on the Aegean Sea which she desired. As a result of her losses, morale in Bulgaria was low. Missionaries report that the resultant trend was towards church attendance on the one hand and toward irreligion on the other.<sup>1</sup>

According to missionaries, the growth of Communist parties was the expression of this irreligion. There were other reasons why Communist parties grew during the interwar period. Bulgaria tended to have a pro-Russian outlook, even after the Bolshevik revolution of 1917.<sup>2</sup> Russia had long been Bulgaria's

hero, even having helped her achieve autonomy from the Turks in 1878 and finally, independence in 1908. Bulgaria continued to look to Russia for support. Yet, Bulgaria's attachment to Russia was based more on tradition than on politics. One way that this pro-Russian sentiment manifested itself was in the growth of Communism.<sup>3</sup> Additionally, Communism grew in reaction to the depression. The doctrine was not understood by most party members. Rather, Communism became synonymous with "opposition."<sup>4</sup>

A third thing that sets Bulgaria apart from her neighbors was the temporary success of Stambolisky's peasant party. Macartney and Palmer call his success, short-lived as it was, an "episode unique in modern history."<sup>5</sup> The program of this Agrarian Party was characterized by socialism, a pro-Russian outlook, and the desire to form a South Slav federation which was an aim of all Balkan peasant parties. To meet this latter goal, Stambolisky founded the Green International in an effort to unite peasant parties against Bolsheviks and "reactionaries."<sup>6</sup> It was this last aim also that inspired Stambolisky's attempt to make *rapprochement* with Yugoslavia, an effort that hastened his death. Besides aiming for a federation, there was an economic reason for pursuing better relations. Bulgaria and Yugoslavia both produced the same kinds of products for exports. Not only that, but Bulgaria was dependent on trade routes through Yugoslavia in order to export her goods to the West.<sup>7</sup> Missionaries worked mainly with the peasants. This fact may be one reason why some missionaries hoped that the Balkan countries could be consolidated into a federation.

At any rate, the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (IMRO) was not the least bit pleased with Stambolisky's pro-Yugoslavia program. This terrorist group had formed in 1893 and was working for one of two purposes. IMRO Federalists wanted Macedonian autonomy in a Balkan federation while the Centralists favored Bulgarian annexation.<sup>8</sup> The

organization was representative of the extreme nationalist sentiments so characteristic of the Eastern European states. Their program for an independent Macedonia kept them at odds with Yugoslavia and Greece, for they were unwilling to accept Bulgarian losses of this territory.

Opposition to Stambolisky was not limited to the IMRO. Several nationalist groups with more rightist programs joined together and overthrew Stambolisky in April, 1923. The IMRO captured Stambolisky and heinously disposed of him. Many peasants were killed along with Stambolisky, again provoking a growth of Communism. In fact, in September of the same year, due to pressure from the Comintern, the Communist party attempted a coup. When this attempt failed, the Communist party was strongly repressed by the new government.

Following the execution of Stambolisky, politics in Bulgaria were largely characterized by anarchy, fierce feuds between the right and left, illegalities, and great instabilities. Communism was strong and chaos reigned.

Finally, Bulgaria was unique in that she did not have an "internal national problem."<sup>9</sup> During the interwar period, only thirteen to seventeen percent of the population was made up of minorities.<sup>10</sup> Because of the rather small percentage, inter-racial tensions within the state were not an immense problem.

In 1935, King Boris took over the government. The dictatorship helped to reduce the chaotic conditions. Not only that, but it brought to Bulgaria a new orientation towards Germany, which Hitler would capitalize on.<sup>11</sup>

### Yugoslavia

As the only federation in Southeastern Europe, the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes officially came into being on December 1, 1918. It had been forced to form quickly to avoid antagonism from outside powers, mainly Italy, and as a result, was an unstable nation from the beginning. One main problem

characterized Yugoslavia during the interwar period, which was a struggle between the different nationalities of the kingdom, especially between the Serbians and the Croats. The main problem of the state was that no Yugoslav nationality arose.<sup>12</sup> Representatives of Serbia, Prince Alexander and Pashich wanted a centralized government which was to be an extension of Old Serbia. They felt entitled to this claim as they had suffered severe damage in World War I, including the loss of ten percent of the population.<sup>13</sup> Unfortunately, the other South Slav peoples had no desire to merely leave one form of "foreign" domination for another. They wanted and expected a loose federation with equality for each nationality.

Though the peoples of the kingdom were mainly Slavs, that was about all that they had in common. Each nationality had its own religion: Serbians were Orthodox, the Croats and Slovenes were Catholic, and there was also a significant Muslim population. Differences in national and religious orientation made foreign policy an issue as the Croats tended to be Austrophile while the Serbians traditionally looked more to Russia and during the interwar period, to France. This created an economic division as well, for transportation routes were rather poor and the traditional markets were disrupted by the formation of the federation.<sup>14</sup>

Missionaries hoped to alleviate tensions between opposing political parties and between different nationalities which were often realized in terrorist acts. In June, 1928, five members of the Croatian Peasant Party were gunned down at a meeting of the constituent assembly. This led Alexander, on January 1, 1929, to abolish the constitution and set himself up as dictator.

Two repercussions of political disunity were the terrorist Ustasha movement and the growth of a strong Communist party. The Croatian Ustasha was an extremist terrorist movement which sprung up as a reaction to Serbian domination. Ante Pavelich led the movement from Italy, and Mussolini subsidized it in an effort

to break up the Yugoslav state. Why was Mussolini interested in doing this? Because there were territorial disputes between Italy and Yugoslavia left over from Versailles.

As for Communism, the party had been immediately suppressed during the formation of the state, but gained impetus in 1931 when Alexander installed his own constitution.<sup>15</sup>

In 1934, Alexander was assassinated. Prince Paul took over the regime, and like Boris in Bulgaria, was oriented towards Germany.

### Albania

Albania achieved independence from the Turks only in 1912 as a result of the First Balkan War. It is a small, poor country and the most backward of the Balkan countries. Albania is unique in that it is the only country on the peninsula with a primarily Muslim population, seventy percent.<sup>16</sup>

It would have been impossible for Albania to exist independently at all without her independence guaranteed by the Great Powers. During the Balkan Wars, Italy, Yugoslavia, and Greece had planned on partitioning her to claim their national minorities within the Albanian borders. Great Power intervention prevented this occurrence and established Albania as an independent state. Albania did, however, accept a protectorate from Italy.

In the interwar period, the internal situation for Albania was chaotic. Between July and December 1921 there were five different governments. Political parties fought over the question of land reform. Albania's primary issue was that of her dependence on outside powers. After several years of havoc, Ahmed Bey Zogu gained power in 1924 with Yugoslavian support.

Zogu, once established, irked Yugoslavia by turning to Italy and signing a trade treaty with her, the Treaty of Tirana.<sup>17</sup> Later, in November, 1927, Albania and Italy signed a "defensive alliance." Zogu declared Albania a monarchy on September 1,

1928 and proclaimed himself King Zog I. At the same time, he let the Tirana Treaty slide, which annoyed Italy. After all, Albania was financially dependent on Italy and there was no way she could pay back the loans she had obtained. Mussolini tried to get complete control of Albania through a financial takeover, but King Zog resisted and signed trade agreements with Yugoslavia and Greece.<sup>18</sup>

Zog's main policy seems to have been one of gaining assistance from one nation, but when becoming too dependent on that nation, or being asked for too many concessions, to switch alliances. Another way by which he tried to check outside influence was by initiating a program of Albanian nationalization to unify the country. His nationalization efforts interfered with the missionaries' work.

By 1935, Zog could no longer resist pressure from Italy. Albania fell under Italian control, peaking on April 7, 1939, when Mussolini invaded.

### Rumania

Rumania gained a great deal of territory at Versailles. Transylvania was acquired from Hungary, the Dobrudja from Bulgaria, and Bessarabia from Russia. Seton-Watson attributes Rumania's gain to the Bolshevik scare.<sup>19</sup> Twenty eight percent of the population was made up of minorities, including Hungarians, Germans, and Russians, and this caused tension and division.<sup>20</sup> It also created language barriers with which the missionaries had to contend. Efforts to unify the country politically and religiously created difficulty for the Baptists.

Minority groups provided most of the leadership for the Communist party in Rumania.<sup>21</sup> Among Rumanians, Communism was unpopular, because of the rivalry with Russia over Bessarabia. Russia did not want to let go of this valuable territory, rich in oil.

The Communist scare also had an influence on domestic politics, for a program of land reform was instigated to prevent the spread of Communism. Unfortunately, land reform alone was not a solution to Rumania's economic problems. Small holdings were generally less productive, so the peasants remained poor and dissatisfied.

From 1918 until 1928, the Liberal Party under Bratianu was in power, with a few short interims. Their program included a policy of economic nationalism so they did not open the country up to foreign capital. The result was an economic crisis, especially for the peasants.

In 1928, Bratianu died and Julius Maniu of the National Peasant Party became premier. He opened the country up to foreign investment, but was hindered by the depression.

King Carol II decided to return to Rumania in 1930. Maniu objected to his illicit love affair with Madame Lupescu and threatened to resign if this affair continued. It did, and he did. This event provokes a commentary from Seton-Watson. He writes:

Bourgeois sexual morality is probably less esteemed in Roumania than anywhere else on the Continent. It was not the right issue on which to base the whole conflict between Democracy and Dictatorship. Moreover, the resignation of Maniu, far the strongest personality in his party, left the field clear for royal intrigue.<sup>22</sup>

Of great interest, *Annals of the Southern Baptist Convention* report a ceasing of persecutions from 1928 until 1930. After Maniu's short rule, Rumanian politics moved closer to dictatorship, though Carol did not officially become dictator until 1938. Carol, too, was oriented towards Germany.



Throughout the interwar period, the Rumanian government interfered with the Baptists. The constitution, guaranteeing religious liberty, was not carried out.

### The Balkan Economic Situation

The general economic situation of the Balkan states can be summed up in one word: poor. For one thing, by the end of World War I the Balkan countries had been fighting for six years. They suffered from immense destruction of men and resources. Not only that, but the Balkan economies were still predominately agricultural, with a great peasant majority: seventy-eight percent in Rumania, seventy-five percent in Yugoslavia, and eighty percent in Bulgaria. Throughout these countries, less than ten percent of the population was employed by industry.<sup>23</sup> What little industry there was created an additional burden for the peasants who ended up paying for it, especially in Yugoslavia and Rumania.<sup>24</sup>

Such poor economic conditions greatly impacted both domestic politics and foreign relations during this period. All countries except Albania enacted land reform measures to combat Communism. As for foreign relations, territorial disputes were often related to economics. Bessarabia is probably the best illustration. Rich in oil, this territory had been a source of great friction between Russia and Rumania and continued to be so during the interim between the wars.

In the 1920's, while economic conditions were persistently grim in Eastern Europe, there were some fluctuations. With the coming of the depression, however, there were even less sources of relief. During the depression, agricultural income declined by nearly fifty percent. Land reform had led to more small holdings which contributed to the general decline in production. Effects of the depression were dichotomous, including the growth of political reaction, Communism, and peasant apathy.

Another effect was the growth of economic nationalism.<sup>25</sup> Each state had to take whatever methods possible to protect its own economic interests. With a collapse in the markets, the states needed to find new ones and take measures to protect those markets. This was realized by implementing tariffs.

Most staggering, was the course pursued in foreign relations. As it was, agriculture in the Balkans was backwards, there were few products to export, and many debts to be paid. Therefore, the four nations were vulnerable to foreign control. Albania is a prime example. Because Southeastern European countries were unable to get assistance from the West, and what they did get was quite restrictive, Hitler asserted his influence and was able to get these countries to turn to him, with the exception of Albania, which he allowed Mussolini to control. Not only did they turn to him, but they ended up becoming financially dependent on Germany.<sup>26</sup> How did Hitler do this? Through the establishment of trade treaties with Bulgaria, Rumania, and Yugoslavia.

In summary, nationalism, Communism, anarchy, ethnic tensions, and the economic situation were factors characterizing the Balkan states. Missionaries had to confront each of these issues in their work. In light of this, it is time to see how the missionaries fit into the Southeastern European scheme.

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Annual Report of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Methodist Episcopal Church 102 (1920), pp. 523-527.
- <sup>2</sup> Seton-Watson, p. 256.
- <sup>3</sup> Wolff, pp. 105-106.
- <sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 108 & 133.
- <sup>5</sup> C. A. Macartney & A. W. Palmer, Independent Eastern Europe (London: Macmillan & Co., 1962), p. 230.
- <sup>6</sup> Jelavich, p. 169.
- <sup>7</sup> Macartney, p. 230.
- <sup>8</sup> Jelavich, p. 171.
- <sup>9</sup> Macartney, p. 174.
- <sup>10</sup> J. Rothschild, East Central Europe Between the Two World Wars (Seattle: Univ. of Washington Press, 1988), p. 328.
- <sup>11</sup> Wolff, p. 135.
- <sup>12</sup> Jelavich, p. 151.
- <sup>13</sup> F. B. Tipton and R. Aldrich, An Economic and Social History of Europe, 1890-1939 (Baltimore: John Hopkins Univ. Press, 1987), p. 189.
- <sup>14</sup> Macartney, p. 173.
- <sup>15</sup> Wolff, p. 123.
- <sup>16</sup> Rothschild, p. 357.
- <sup>17</sup> Wolff, p. 140.
- <sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 141.
- <sup>19</sup> Seton-Watson, p. 198.
- <sup>20</sup> Jelavich, p. 159.
- <sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 161.
- <sup>22</sup> Seton-Watson, p. 204.
- <sup>23</sup> Tipton, p. 251.
- <sup>24</sup> Wolff, pp. 105-106.
- <sup>25</sup> Macartney, p. 285.
- <sup>26</sup> Tipton, pp. 188-190.

#### IV. Missionary Goals

Before any conclusions can be drawn about the missionaries, their goals must be outlined. There were several different aims towards which the the missionary organizations were working. Foremost was the most obvious goal, that of evangelism, which was the goal of all the missionaries.

On the other hand, it has been mentioned that the Methodists and the American Board desired to preserve the existing institutions but to restore life to them. At the same time, they were clearly establishing their denominational churches. Which goal took precedence? It seems that if the American Board and the Methodists were content to work merely with the native churches, they would not have set up their own churches with denominational membership. The Methodists certainly aimed to establish their church as can be seen from a statement of their goals. "We wish it were possible to have in the capitol [sic] of this big kingdom [Yugoslavia] a lasting, solid work, adequately representing Methodism."<sup>1</sup>

One possible explanation for this apparent contradiction would be that conversion was the desired end but the knowledge that they could be influencing people whether or not that influence showed up in church membership was ultimately more valuable to them. A second explanation is offered by William Hall in his book on the American Board's work in Bulgaria. "The missionaries did not regard church membership as the measure of their success." To paraphrase, he suggests that they established their own institutions as a base for carrying out their work. In addition, if converts were persecuted, they would have a "refuge." Furthermore, the setting up of Protestant institutions may have given native churches reason to change.<sup>2</sup>

Here is where a distinction can be made between the Baptists and the others. For the Baptists, conversion was the primary goal. Likewise, they did seem to stress full-fledged conversion more

than the other two organizations. It was said that the Baptist's goal for the Rumanians was to see them "turn away from the priesthood, the icons, the superstitions of the State Church, and come into the true knowledge of salvation and Christian living as they are preached and taught by Baptists."<sup>3</sup> There is no reason why this goal would apply exclusively to the Rumanians; the same could be said of the mission in Yugoslavia. Even so, next to conversion, their obligation was to assist the existing Baptist church and provide leadership and training for the continuation of the work.

Second to conversion, education was a key goal. Missionaries had two basic reasons for providing an education. First, they felt that religious and moral education should be included with a general education. This was something that the state schools did not provide. A second purpose was to expand the mission through schools, mostly by training young people with the hope that they would take over the mission work.

Again there is a distinction between the aims of the Baptists and those of the Methodists and American Board. Baptist schools were there to train people in evangelism and for leadership positions. The Methodist and American Board schools in Bulgaria earned the recognition of the Bulgarian government, and were more comparable to the state schools. Students were instructed in a variety of subjects including language, music, history, mathematics, and grammar. In 1919 an American Board missionary wrote that the Bulgars were committing "hideous cruelties and vilest abominations." His proposed solution was for the board to send more missionaries and build more schools.<sup>4</sup>

Related to educational goals was the effort to provide literature not only for students of the schools, but for communities. Each of the organizations had one or more periodicals. In Bulgaria, the American Board's key periodical was entitled *Zornitsa* and had 5000 subscribers in 1925.<sup>5</sup> Likewise

the Methodists had periodicals. In Rumania, Southern Baptists put out "The Leader" and in Yugoslavia, "Voice of the Gospel."

Besides serial publications, missionaries also put out tracts addressing social and religious issues, and worked to get fine literature translated into the native languages.

In addition to being evangelists and educators, missionaries, were representatives of American values. In this sense, the missionaries were propagators not only of the Faith, but also of American ideals. Three such ideals were self-determination, democracy, and temperance.

Missionaries earnestly supported the concept of self-determination. Wilson's ideas, to the extent that they were understood, were very popular among some in these small states that had been under foreign rule for so long. These states had a chance at self-determination in the interwar period according to the Paris Peace, but it was short-lived; as it turned out, they were too dependent on the surrounding powers to actually determine their own fate. There is a peculiarity about the missionaries attitude for self-determination which is linked to another of the missionaries' concerns.

Divisiveness was a problem and hindrance to the missionaries, and one which all organizations strived to alleviate. Missionaries attempted to exterminate it by establishing multi-national institutions. Reports of the harmony between the peoples attending such institutions are a dominant theme in missionary writing. Divisiveness was caused by tensions between racial groups and by language barriers. Everett Gill, European Representative of the Southern Baptist Convention labels it "supernationalism."<sup>6</sup> One writer expressed his missions' goal of overcoming such divisiveness. "The desire of our mission [American Board] is not to reflect too much the separatist nations of the Balkan States, but to be the symbol of the Balkan Federation which is to be, and for which all the missionaries are spiritually working."<sup>7</sup> Self-determination, on the other hand, is

by nature divisive and promotes nationalism which was already present in abundance. This paradox suggests a lack of understanding by the missionaries.

Democracy was the political system the missionaries saw as essential. They considered it partially their duty to help establish democratic governments in Eastern Europe through education. Though they meant well, they did not seem to understand that it was not to be a reality in the Balkans. Along with the missionaries' zeal for democracy went an attitude against Communism and the atheism associated with it.

Another factor is that among some of the missionaries there was the idea that there would be a Balkan federation in the future. There was some advocacy for such a program as with democracy. In reality, the circumstances did not support the notions. While people of different races and religions may have coexisted at the missionary institutions, the large scale political circumstances did not allow for a federation to develop. Yugoslavia, for instance, was struggling to organize and find a satisfactory form of government. Furthermore, Bulgaria, having been a loser both in the Balkan War of 1913 and in World War I was a revisionist state, and no genuine rapprochement was enacted between her and the other Balkan states. In fact, the Little Entente, between Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, and Rumania was a defensive alliance against Bulgaria. The missionaries seem to have disregarded the implications of international relations in the interwar period.

Interestingly enough, the American Board had a specific policy of political neutrality.<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, they were greatly concerned with political issues and on occasion crossed the boundary from political neutrality to interference. The Methodists favored similar political ideals as well, while the Baptists interest in political issues seems to have been limited to circumstances that directly affected their work. As a rule, missionaries of the Methodist and Congregational churches were

concerned to different degrees with ideology, while the Baptists were not.

Another concern found among all the missionaries was the matter of world peace. The Methodists explained their goal this way. "In the center of a situation like this [Bulgaria: place where many wars originated] stands a group of evangelicals trying to do one thing. They are possessed with the idea that the building up of the Kingdom of God in this territory would be a strong factor in preserving the peace of the world."<sup>9</sup> War represented all that the missionaries were working against: nationalism at its extreme, provoking divisiveness, hatred and detriment instead of Christian unity and love.

An additional value the missionaries wanted to implement into Balkan life was temperance. Missionary periodicals from the time period report on the state of temperance work. Public meetings were one way that missionaries worked towards temperance. Other ways were through publishing tracts and forming temperance committees. Congregationalists and Methodists worked towards this goal; little about temperance is mentioned by the Baptists, but one can be sure they favored sobriety.

So far the goals of conversion, education, spreading political values, and temperance have been mentioned. These goals are mentioned first because they accentuate a significant point in the missionaries' work, which is the emphasis on youth. Young people were seen as the hope for the future if they could be brought up with new values and religious fervor. This would happen as they became leaders and implemented the values that they had been taught. Again, the American Board focussed on the role these leaders would play both in promoting American political and social values in their nations, and providing evangelical and church leadership. Likewise, the Methodists were concerned with both the spiritual and political issues. Providing a trained



leadership for the Church was the prominent goal of the Baptists. All three boards stressed the importance of young people.

Epitomizing the emphasis placed on youth were the young peoples' organizations active in the Balkans, mainly the Y.M.C.A. and Y.W.C.A. Missionaries were directly interested in the work of these organizations, and in some cases, worked with them. The goals of the Y.M.C.A. and Y.W.C.A. were to establish a "new social order" and to eliminate "injustices." They stressed the need for world-wide cooperation, which could be attained through the youth.<sup>10</sup> One article explains the Y.M.C.A.'s goals for Orthodox countries. Their program aimed to work with the Orthodox Church, stressing personal Christian experience and building character. The youth were to learn how to serve society and apply justice and love in confronting social problems and issues. Education through the Y.M.C.A.'s was to be both religious and supplemental. Youth were to gain an understanding of current issues, participate in the arts, and learn about basic health and fitness. It was supposed that if these ideas were implemented in all countries, world peace and cooperation would result.<sup>11</sup>

All three missionary organizations encouraged the policy of self-support. Any institutions established by the boards were to be supported by the people who were members or who attended. The change from reliance on the board for funding to self-support would occur gradually. Ideally, self-support applied not only to finances, but included providing native leadership to replace foreign workers.

How was this policy put into practice? Schools could be self-supporting by having their own industries, for instance, printing presses, which employed student workers. The Southern Baptist schools, oriented mainly at religious training, had a slightly different approach. Some of the students needed a general education to supplement their religious training. More educated students could earn their way through the seminary by teaching.<sup>12</sup>

Churches were often built with little or no help from the missionary boards. Missionary journals frequently reported any gains that had been made towards self-support. For example, in the 1933 Baptist annual, it was reported that the Baptists in Yugoslavia did not wait for the Americans to do everything for them, either in regard to work or money.<sup>13</sup>

Missionaries were also involved with various philanthropic enterprises. All the boards engaged in relief work, and this was an important activity after World War I. Since the Balkan countries had been at war since 1912, the need for relief was great. The Y.M.C.A. would send students out to collect goods for the poor. Each of the missionary organizations also allotted a certain amount of funding for relief work in the form of food, clothing, and medical care.

Another aspect of missionary work was the focus on social issues and problems. A Community House built by the American Board at Sofia included a health center, a youth hostel, and a place for entertainment and group gatherings.<sup>14</sup> Tuberculosis was a large problem which missionaries wanted to battle through teaching health and hygiene.<sup>15</sup>

Types of social work that the Methodists saw as important included orphanages, a youth hostel for girls attending the university in Sofia, and a home for the elderly. Many reports were written on the need for such projects, but little on which projects were actually implemented.

Missionary schools, girls' schools in particular, taught courses in "home-training" or home economics. One goal of James Memorial Training School was to create better wives and mothers, as well as refined community and church members.<sup>16</sup>

An American Board missionary, Edward Haskell, proposed a "Folk High School" for Bulgaria. This was to be an institution modeled after those in Denmark to provide training in agricultural villages between the months of November and March. Housekeeping, updated agricultural methods, and childrearing

were some of the skills that were taught. Haskell made his proposal in 1928 and reports that within six months, already seventeen villages had offered land on which to place such a school. His proposal received general approval from the Bulgarian people, and the Ministry of Agriculture promised "all assistance in its power."<sup>17</sup>

Finally, to close this discussion of goals, it should be pointed out that the Methodists had a special goal for their work in Bulgaria in the period between the wars. Their program was to unite with the Congregationalists, for the simple reason that they felt a united mission would be a stronger, more effective mission.

A booklet written in 1904 on the Methodist Episcopal mission in Europe mentioned the desirability of retaining different denominations. "The denominational form, with love at the core, is the best form of the Christian Church."<sup>18</sup> By the 1930's the Methodists were looking for unity. This point may be representative of a general change in attitude, or there could have been some diversion on this issue of unity. At any rate, Methodists were avidly working with the American Board to create this union. It was complicated by the fact that when the Congregationalists left the European field in the mid 1930's, they turned the properties over to the natives. Bulgarian evangelicals were not in agreement on the issue.

It can be seen that each missionary board had a different approach to their work. At the same time, there was only a small number of goals that they were working towards. With these goals in mind, attention should be given to the missionaries' accomplishments.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>Annual Report of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 106 (1924), pp. 240-241.

<sup>2</sup>Hall, p. 270.

<sup>3</sup>E. H. Trutza, Modern Macedonia (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1940), p. 29.

<sup>4</sup>Missionary Herald, 115 (1919), p. 426.

<sup>5</sup>E. B. Haskell, "Putting Bulgaria on the Map," Missionary Herald, 121 (1925), p. 273-274.

<sup>6</sup>Annual of the Southern Baptist Convention, (1931), p. 269.

<sup>7</sup>Missionary Herald, 117 (1921), p. 197.

<sup>8</sup>Hall, p. 44. Hall cites comments from Missionary Herald, 73 pp. 36-38.

<sup>9</sup>Annual Report of the board of Foreign Missions of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 109 (1927), pp. 299-301.

<sup>10</sup>F. H. House, "Christian Youth in the Balkans," Student World 32 No. 3 (1939), pp. 222-227.

<sup>11</sup>Objectives, Principles, and Programme of Y.M.C.A's in Orthodox Countries (Geneva: World's Committee of Y.M.C.A's, 1933), pp. 6-10.

<sup>12</sup>Missionary Herald, 124 (1928) p. 476. 125 (1929), pp. 20-25 & 159.

<sup>13</sup>Annual of the Southern Baptist Convention, (1933), pp. 220-221.

<sup>14</sup>Missionary Herald, 121 (1925), pp. 8-9.

<sup>15</sup>Missionary Herald, 124 (1928), pp. 434-435.

<sup>16</sup>Annual of the Southern Baptist Convention, (1938), pp. 242-244.

<sup>17</sup>Missionary Herald, 124 (1928), p. 476. 125 (1929), pp. 20-25 & 159.

<sup>18</sup>Vincent, p. 31.

## V. Obstacles

A dominant theme in missionary writing is mention of the many difficulties and problems which were hindering their work. These obstacles are important considerations in how the missionaries judged their own work. Furthermore, as was mentioned, the missionaries did have an impact on life in the Balkans. Still, it was not the impact that they hoped they would have. Often times, the problems they encountered in their work prevented them from having a greater impact. In light of this, it is necessary to consider the difficulties the missionaries faced.

It is not surprising that the missionaries encountered many problems, as they were foreigners in lands troubled by internal instability, extreme nationalism, and economic problems. In order to achieve their goals in the Balkans, the missionaries would have had to get around these barriers. In some cases they were able to do so, while in others, the obstacles were just too great and complex.

One category of problems contains those pertaining to nationalism. First of all, there was the problem of racial divisiveness. In Rumania and Yugoslavia this was a large internal problem. Bulgaria, as previously mentioned, did not have an internal national problem. In Albania there was some ethnic conflict but the missionaries do not mention it as a problem. Racial tensions were something that the missionaries hoped to alleviate through the propagation of the Gospel, through education, and through youth work. Reports and letters written by the missionaries emphasize their multi-national focus.

The problem of racial divisiveness is best illustrated by Yugoslavia and Rumania, where it particularly affected the Baptist's work. Both of these countries had a population consisting of multiple ethnic groups. Among the different factions, there was often deeply rooted resentment. Missionaries would have had to persuade people to give up such ideas, not an easy task.

Nationality problems created political instability which had repercussions for the missionaries. Furthermore, they set up language barriers which were not easy to overcome. In writing of this barrier it was stated, "no one can understand the heaviness of the curse which God put upon the proud and ambitious builders of the Tower of Babel like those who live in the Balkans."<sup>1</sup> Southern Baptists report that their statistics were only approximate because of the language problems.

An additional effect of racial tensions was persecution. With the extreme nationalism characteristic of the Balkan States, to be Protestant was to forsake your nationality. In Rumania, though there were several different ethnic divisions as well as religious, Baptists and Jews seemed to be persecuted more than the others. The persecutions of Baptists in Rumania was an important issue in the interwar period. Baptists had religious freedom according to the Rumanian constitution but not in practice. This supposed right was infringed upon, and the blame for these persecutions is generally placed on the Orthodox clergy and the government. Churches were closed down by the Ministry of Cults, people arrested and books were burned. Certain standards had to be adhered to in order for the laws of religious freedom to apply.<sup>2</sup>

Persecutions in Yugoslavia often came from Catholics. Annuals of the Southern Baptist Convention report that Catholics accused the Baptists of Bolshevism and disloyalty (1935 p. 218-219). On at least one occasion, Vacek was arrested and fined for baptizing a convert. Catholics also prevented Baptist burials in "community cemeteries."<sup>3</sup>

Albania was another country where there was opposition. Again, according to law there was to be religious freedom. Yet, the 1939 Missionary Review reported that four converts to Christianity were arrested. The Albanian state responded that it was not a matter of personal conviction but that their change in religion was "detrimental to the interests of the state."<sup>4</sup> Later the

same year it was reported that fascist Italians were censoring missionary publications.

In Bulgaria, there had been some opposition both to the American Board and to the Methodists, but by the interwar period, the government was generally cooperative.

Divisiveness, language barriers, and persecutions are the problems that were related to nationalism. Another large category of problems that the missionaries were constantly contending with pertained to finances. Each missionary board had a different policy for handling finances. All of the mission boards stressed a policy of self-support. This attitude meant a limiting of board funds for the missions. There were numerous problems because of a shortage of funds.

One example is that when the American board decided to move the Samokov schools to Sofia, the move took several years because of a shortage of funds. Another financial problem was encountered by the Methodists when in 1923, the funding the missionary fields received from the board was cut in half. This led to reports of dilapidated and unfinished church buildings, shortages of books and materials, a shortage of workers, and needless to say, very small stipends. Every project that was proposed was dependent on funds. Southern Baptists, who had from the start of their mission in Yugoslavia planned on building a seminary in Belgrade, were unable to do so until 1938. The American Board's mission to Albania was dropped for lack of money. There is an abundance of examples that could be mentioned in regard to this problem.

Another problem faced by the missionaries was that of government regulation and intervention in all countries. In Bulgaria, there had been sporadic periods of persecution over the years, but over time, the government began to cooperate with the missionaries. For one thing, they recognized the value of the education and relief work that the missionaries were providing. Still, there had been some difficulty in getting government

recognition for the American schools. On the one hand the government appreciated and recognized the value of the schools. Nevertheless, the government adhered to a national program and was not willing to give the missionaries a free hand. Some stipulations were imposed on what was taught. Government attempts to unify their states led to the closing of private schools in Albania and Yugoslavia. In Rumania, because of a conflict between the Southern Baptist Board and the Rumanian Baptist, the government intervened, closing the seminary and James Memorial Training School.<sup>5</sup> Many other attempts were made by the Rumanian government to stop the Baptists.

As was discussed, the missionaries were concerned with developing a trained native leadership to take over the work. This was one of the missionaries' goals for a few reasons. First, it was assumed that natives would be more effective in reaching other natives with the Gospel. A second reason was the simple fact that it was only financially feasible for a few missionaries to be at work in the fields. This handful of workers could by no means minister to the entire population on their own. They clearly needed more workers, and due to finances and the aforementioned reasons, it was appropriate that these workers be natives. But numbers alone were not sufficient. Also necessary would be training, both in a knowledge of the Bible and in how to evangelize. There was some opportunity to provide this training at the schools, but most of the students were Orthodox and few actually converted (at least officially) to Protestantism. Therefore there were few trained natives who were committed to carrying out the work that the missionaries had begun.

A lack of response from the people the missionaries were trying to reach was also a problem. There are a few reasons for this. Rothschild discusses peasant apathy as characteristic of the interwar period.<sup>6</sup> Peasant apathy was the result of discouragement with political matters and poverty, especially the



depression. If the peasants were apathetic to politics, they may very well have been apathetic to religious issues.

There are other reasons why the missionaries were not overwhelmed with responsiveness. One is simply that the orientation of the missionaries was so different from what the people were familiar with. People were certainly willing to accept the education, and even to attend Protestant services, but few "converted." Statistically speaking, the people were not particularly receptive to the missionary teachings, yet missionary activities continued, often without any significant opposition. This suggests a religious reason for the lack of response; the Orthodox people had a liturgical orientation which focused on icons and sacraments, while the missionaries had a doctrinal orientation.<sup>7</sup> Perhaps the theological approach of the missionaries was not understood by the natives.

Not only that, but the natives' institutions were a vital part of their life. As Jelavich puts it, each individual's identity was found in the family and the community, with the church at the heart. "Whether they were Orthodox, Catholic, or Muslim, it is difficult to overestimate the part that religious institutions and clergy played in these rural societies."<sup>8</sup> Hall, writing about Bulgaria, points out that the least success was in numbers and attributes it to the political struggles of the peoples and their devotion to the national church. He suggests that a general lack of sympathy by the missionaries towards Orthodoxy may have offended the people; that the missionaries' failure to recognize how important Orthodoxy was to the people proved to be a stumbling block.<sup>9</sup>

Native religions, Orthodox, Muslim, and Catholic were important because they were directly tied in with ethnicity and national feeling. Hall saw this as the dominant reason for the lack of response pointing out that the church was the "guardian and the embodiment of the national culture."<sup>10</sup> Anyone in an Orthodox country that was not Orthodox was an outcast politically. It was the same thing in Catholic Croatia. Converts to

Protestantism were seen as unpatriotic or even betrayers. Because of such strong nationalist sentiments, converts risked facing persecution.

A final problem that the missionaries faced was one that they could not really do anything about. This problem was the course that world events took, and while some of the missionaries' goals were to influence the course of events, they were to have little success here. A handful of missionaries could not cure all the ills of hatred, a thirst for power, and poverty. They certainly could not contain Hitler, Mussolini, or the Balkan authoritarian rulers. Even if their values could have been instilled into the youth, any lasting results would only be the product of time. Between the World Wars, there was no time.

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup>Annual of the Southern Baptist Convention, (1925), p. 274.
- <sup>2</sup>For reports of persecutions and church closings in Rumania, see Missionary Review of the World, 45 (1922), pp. 758-759, 48 (1925), p. 62. 61 (1938), pp. 55, 253, 438, 592. 62 (1939) pp. 108, 150, 476-477. See also the Annals of the Southern Baptist Convention.
- <sup>3</sup>Annual of the Southern Baptist Convention, (1931), pp. 221-222.
- <sup>4</sup>Missionary Review of the World, 62 (1939), p. 150.
- <sup>5</sup>Annual of the Southern Baptist Convention, (1931), p. 269.
- <sup>6</sup>Rothschild, p. 16.
- <sup>7</sup>Aling, Charles, Professor of History, Northwestern College, St. Paul, Minnesota. Personal Interview.
- <sup>8</sup>Jelavich, p. 6.
- <sup>9</sup>Hall, pp. 269-270.
- <sup>10</sup>ibid., p. 269.

## VI. Missionary Self-image

Two attitudes were held by the missionaries about their work. One was a feeling of general optimism and the other was a sense that not only was their work worthwhile, but it was crucial. It is significant to note that the missionaries saw themselves in this light, for if they had not, they may well have dropped their missions. They clearly felt that they were accomplishing necessary work for the peoples of the Balkans as the following examples will demonstrate. It will also be seen that the missionaries were biased in their attitude about themselves, but who can blame them? Their prejudice sometimes reflects a lack of understanding or even disillusionment, but without this attitude, how would they justify continuing to sacrifice money and human labor for the people of Southeastern Europe?

Missionaries of the American Board felt that America had a wonderful opportunity to work in Bulgaria. How did the missionaries feel about the Bulgarian people? One missionary wrote that the Bulgarians were "splendid raw material" In other words, the Bulgarian people would be influenced by whoever came along first, but they preferred the Americans.<sup>1</sup> It is a bit peculiar to find such a sentiment expressed by a missionary of the same board that so often emphasized how the valiant Bulgarians had victoriously endured five hundred years of oppressive Turkish rule.

The American Board missionaries credited themselves with many worthwhile achievements. Some of the key achievements they claimed in Bulgaria were: speeding the process of Bulgarian independence from the Turks, especially through the Zornitsa; spreading an attitude of religious tolerance; making progress towards temperance; increasing the interest in human welfare; preventing the United States from breaking relations with Bulgaria and Turkey in World War I.<sup>2</sup> There is a connection between these accomplishments and the missionaries' attitudes.

First, this latter achievement is rather noteworthy. It shows something of the missionaries' attitude towards political situations and reveals that their policy of political neutrality did not always apply. On war relations of World War I, the missionaries wrote that popular opinion in Bulgaria and Turkey was pro-American and anti-German. They wanted to keep the schools open, especially in Constantinople, as they were doing relief work at the American College there, and they did not want the Germans to take over their stations.<sup>3</sup> For this reason, two missionaries left Bulgaria and confronted the United States Congress. The United States did not declare war on Bulgaria.

American Board missionaries also emphasized the fact that their services were attended by many who were not members. In 1933, the year the Board left Bulgaria, attendance was reportedly 200 percent of the membership.<sup>4</sup>

Most of the achievements that the American Board missionaries claimed relate to education. Their schools were credited with playing a vital role in educating the Bulgarian people, particularly by teaching them to read. At the draft for World War I, illiteracy in Bulgaria (among the men) was reportedly only five percent. One wonders at this impressive statistic, which is backed up by the Methodists as well.<sup>5</sup> It may be entirely accurate, although illiteracy statistics for Bulgaria in 1934, for people ten years old and over was around 31.4 percent with a substantially higher rate for women (43.3 percent) than for men (19.5 percent).<sup>6</sup> It is unclear if illiteracy rates increased between 1918 and 1934 or if the missionaries either exaggerated or dealt with an older segment of the population.

Another example of the missionaries' attitude towards education is seen in the following statement. "I know of no instance in history where the life of a nation has been so profoundly influenced by an educational institution as the life of Bulgaria has been influenced by Robert College. He said this

because two graduates of Robert College became prime ministers of Bulgaria and nine graduates became cabinet ministers.<sup>7</sup>

Missionaries also reported that the government of Yugoslavia was seeking more aid and education from the missionaries. James L. Barton of the American Board attributes the fact that the government was looking to American missionaries for help to the fact that "Old Serbia, unchanged," could not maintain a place "in a twentieth century league of nations [sic]."<sup>8</sup>

Although the missionaries reported that the education of the state schools was of good quality, they credited their schools with providing essential religious and moral training which the state schools lacked.<sup>9</sup> These accomplishments are reiterated in an article that tells of how the missionaries were responsible for getting the Bible translated, holding religious services in the vernacular, and with keeping the Orthodox Church from interfering with their work.<sup>10</sup>

On the subject of temperance, missionary Agnes Baird, one of the most vocal in the temperance movement spoke of success. She said, "Temperance literature is in great demand" and reported that ninety Bulgarian villages went "saloonless."<sup>11</sup>

An American Board missionary, Elias Riggs, translated the Bible into Bulgarian in the nineteenth century. Though there was opposition to the missionaries at first, undoubtedly from the Orthodox church, it did subside with time. As far as keeping the United States out of war with Bulgaria and Turkey, the missionaries did intervene with government officials in this case. Schools occasionally received commendation from the Bulgarian government. The fact that the Yugoslavian and Albanian governments also tried to work out an arrangement to get the missionaries to set up similar schools in their countries shows that these institutions were appreciated, not for their religious teachings, but for the modern education that they provided.

William Hall comments on the missionaries accomplishments. They were earnest and this earnestness showed because the

missionaries worked with all nationalities and were not political figures. Also, they helped wartime relations by educating the west about the Bulgarian peoples and situations.<sup>12</sup>

At this point, little has been said about Albania. The American Board had taken on this field but withdrew during World War I. Phineas Kennedy and his wife, formerly missionaries with the American Board, returned to Kortcha as independent missionaries in 1923. In Kortcha, the Kennedy's had a coed school.

Articles written by the Kennedy's reflected their dismay that no missionary board was working in Albania, the "neglected" field. They clearly had a burden for this country, though they encountered opposition and persecution. In 1933, when Zog nationalized Albania, their school at Kortcha was closed. The Kennedy's had a small following but their reports lack the idealism and optimism so characteristic of the American Board.<sup>13</sup>

In summary, the American Board's history of successes gave the missionaries impetus to keep the work alive, at least until it was no longer financially feasible, which became the case in 1933. In this year the Board decided to drop its mission in Bulgaria. Over the next few years they cut back financial aid and by 1936 the last missionary was withdrawn. Churches and schools were turned over to the Bulgarians.

It is appropriate to turn from the American Board to the Methodist Episcopal mission. They report "in most communities where an evangelical church exists, its members are active and leading in all the moral interests of that town or village."<sup>14</sup> By this statement, it is implied that church members were more active in political and social issues.

Methodism was also seen as a necessary force in bringing the gospel to Eastern Europe. Not only that, but it was thought that preaching the gospel in Bulgaria was very vitally related to the peace of the world.<sup>15</sup> Why? Because they felt that so many conflicts had originated within Bulgaria.

It is often mentioned that Methodist services were well attended. Many of the people who attended Methodist services were people of the Orthodox faith. This was true of the school at Lovech as well. Here is that very important distinction to make that while the people were Orthodox, they nevertheless attended the missionary services and could very well have been affected by them. Perhaps incredibly, three of the students attending the Lovech school in 1927 were daughters of Orthodox priests. The missionaries tell us that this is because the students at the school were "so carefully guarded from the evil influences that sometimes surround the youth of the country."<sup>16</sup> In light of the fact that opposition to the missionaries' work was blamed largely on the Orthodox Church, such an occurrence is meaningful.

Missionaries felt that more people would join their churches if membership did not threaten to be so costly. Yet, so long as their services were widely attended, the small numbers did not discourage the missionaries. It was the missionaries' feelings that the church was not in itself a means of salvation, and they figured they were provoking an interest in the gospel regardless.

In 1923 the Methodist Episcopal Board cut financial support of their missions in half. Missionary reports for the following years spoke of the "depressing" situation. Projects were left unfinished and one of the periodicals could no longer be published. It is not surprising that those directly involved with the Methodist mission found this situation to be most undesirable and a blow to their work.

By 1929, when Yugoslavia became a dictatorship under Alexander, the setting was poor for church work. In the 1930-1931 Annual, the situation is defined as one of "distress." No longer were church schools allowed by the government, although the Methodists were still able to baptize, marry, keep statistics, and train young men. Social work could continue, as the Novi Sad school was transferred into a home for public school students.<sup>17</sup>



Despite the reports of setbacks in the Methodists' work, optimism for the future is always a theme. They were convinced that their work was necessary, and that positive results would come to pass.

A few distinctions between the Southern Baptists and the other two mission boards have already been pointed out. While differences in purpose and problems separate the Baptists from the others, their attitude to themselves was quite similar.

Missionaries of the Southern Baptist Convention had a problematic mission field, but one which yielded results. Despite the problems the missionaries faced, they were excited about their mission and the results it was producing. Their optimism is expressed in the following quote from the 1923 Annual. "The day of the gospel in the Balkan Peninsula has been long delayed, but we are confident that it has risen like a sun that is destined never to set."<sup>18</sup>

Work of the Southern Baptist Convention in Yugoslavia and Rumania began in 1921 although relief work had started shortly after World War I. It is interesting and important to note that the majority of Baptists in both Yugoslavia and Rumania were in the parts that had formerly been under Habsburg rule. This means that most Baptists in these territories were acquired by the states, and had actually become Baptists under earlier and different influences. The Southern Baptist Convention was commissioned to organize and continue a work that had its origins elsewhere. During the interwar period, the Baptist church continued to grow and expand, moreso in some areas, Croatian Yugoslavia and Bessarabia, for example, than in others.

Because of the fact that the Convention was assisting an existing church, organizing the work was essential. When Vincent Vacek, a Slav who had become a Baptist in the United States, went back to his home in Yugoslavia as a missionary, he organized by establishing a Baptist Union. Vacek saw the Yugoslavs as poor,

hardworking, honest, and oppressed.<sup>19</sup> Yugoslavia was seen as a field yielding the "finest possibilities in Europe."<sup>20</sup>

About the Rumanians it was said that "Rumanians are proud of being descended from the old Roman people, and of their Romance language. We recall that the Roman Empire under Trajan once embraced this territory."<sup>21</sup> They were considered a people who had "always been taught that their church is the only true one and that the priests must be obeyed."<sup>22</sup> Baptists in Rumania were organized into the Rumanian Baptist Union in 1920. Associations of 1000-3000 were formed, each having different "commissions." Examples of the types of commissions assigned included: administrative, to defend religious freedom and maintain relations with Baptists elsewhere; educational, which worked with the seminary and James Memorial Training School and with the Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention; women worked on lessons, books, and social work such as managing orphanages; a publicity department had a self-supporting paper called the "Calauza" (Leader) and a bookstore; missionary commissions had a field in the Balkans with one missionary in Yugoslavia and one in Moldova. Also they worked with lepers and gypsies; still other commissions were aimed at youth work, Sunday school, evangelism, and finances.<sup>23</sup>

Since few missionaries were assigned to the field, training new workers was considered imperative. To do this, the missionaries wanted to have two theological schools, one in Belgrade and the other in Bucharest. In 1923, missionaries Mr. and Mrs. Dan Hurley started, along with Everett Gill, a seminary in Bucharest. Another missionary, Earl Hester Trutza, established James Memorial Training School for girls, a two year school for missionary training built on the seminary lot. It was to open in 1930 but was delayed by the Rumanian government. During World War II, the mission was forced to withdraw personnel and assistance was diminished, but they did plan on resuming.<sup>24</sup>

John Moore went to Yugoslavia in 1938 to open missionary headquarters, a chapel, and a seminary in Belgrade. The Belgrade Bible school opened in 1939 though the formal opening was not until September 29, 1940. This was a seminary and worker's training school. Unfortunately, the Germans took over in 1941 and the last classes were April 5 of that year. The Baptist Union was also destroyed during world War II though there was a continuation of Baptist activity after the war.

One word that can not be excluded in a discussion of Baptists, especially in Rumania, is persecution. There were always churches being closed down by the state. Other repressive measures restricted pastors to preaching only in the towns where they lived, churches could not own property and were only allowed to worship in their own buildings.<sup>25</sup> Despite opposition, Baptist missionaries continued until their work was interrupted by war. Evangelism did not halt and the churches continued to grow.

The Baptists, too, on account of the continued growth even in the midst of opposition saw their work as vital and influential. An anecdote about James Memorial Training School confirms this attitude.

One of our very finest young women, when out in the field of missionary work, pointed to a cow and remarked, 'I was like that when I came to the training school.' The spiritual and psychological changes that occur in a two-years' course are but little less than miraculous.<sup>26</sup>

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>P. Rowland, "Bulgaria and America," Missionary Herald, 120 (1924), p. 151.

<sup>2</sup>E. B. Haskell, "American Influence in Bulgaria," Missionary Review of the World, 42 (1919), pp. 25-32.

<sup>3</sup>Missionary Review of the World, 41 (1918), pp. 474-475.

<sup>4</sup>W. C. Cooper, "Our Bulgarian Churches Have Been Graduated," Missionary Herald, 129 (1933), pp. 243-245.

<sup>5</sup>Missionary Review of the World, 45 (1922), pp. 151.

<sup>6</sup>M. C. Kaser and E. A. Radice, The Economic History of Eastern Europe 1919-1975, vol. 1 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985) p. 93.

<sup>7</sup>E. Pear, Missionary Herald, 121 (1925), pp. 515-516.

<sup>8</sup>J. L. Barton, "Greece and Serbia Approach," Missionary Herald, 42 (1919), p. 399-400.

<sup>9</sup>Missionary Review of the World, 45 (1922), p. 151.

<sup>10</sup>R. H. Markham, "The Religious Situation in Bulgaria," Missionary Review of the World, 47 (1924), pp. 607-609.

<sup>11</sup>A. Baird, "Bulgaria Going Dry," Missionary Herald, 124 (1928), p. 201.

<sup>12</sup>Hall, pp. 269-270.

<sup>13</sup>Information of the Kennedy's work in Albania is drawn from: P. B. Kennedy, "Albania-- A Neglected Field," Missionary Review of the World, 47 (1924), pp. 610-612. P. B. Kennedy, "Difficult Times in Albania," Missionary Review of the World, 52 (1929), pp. 600-612. Mr. and Mrs. Kennedy, "Politics and Religion in Albania," Missionary Review of the World, 62 (1939), pp. 359-360.

<sup>14</sup>Annual Report of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 106 (1924), pp. 235-237.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid.

<sup>16</sup>Annual Report of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 109 (1927), pp. 299-300.

<sup>17</sup>Annual Report of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 112 (1930-1931), pp. 165-173.

<sup>18</sup>Annual of the Southern Baptist Convention, (1923), p. 117.

<sup>19</sup>E. Maddy, p. 91.

<sup>20</sup>C. Maddy, "Mightily Grew the Word of God in Europe and Palestine," Pamphlet (Richmond: Southern Baptist Convention, 1935), p. 12.

<sup>21</sup>E. Maddy, p. 125.

<sup>22</sup>ibid., p. 127.

<sup>23</sup>Trutza, pp. 37-40.

<sup>24</sup>Europe--Whither Bound?, p. 35.

<sup>25</sup>H. C. Vedder, A short History of Baptist Missions (Philadelphia: the Judson Press, 1927), pp. 427-428.

<sup>26</sup>Witnessing at Home and Around the World: A Study of Southern Baptist Missions for 1937 (Nashville: Southern Baptist Convention, 1937), p. 113.

## VII. Missionary Accomplishments Compared to Missionary Goals

So far, missionary goals have been discussed, as have been missionary attitudes. It is time now to take a retrospective view and evaluate their work on the basis of to what extent their goals were met during the interwar period.

Conversion was the first of the missionaries' goals that was mentioned. Here is where a look at statistics is most beneficial. A few observations can be made from the statistical tables on the following page. Statistics for both the American Board and Methodist Episcopal church are unstable. Second, the numbers are small. As earlier mentioned, to the missionaries, each conversion was a success and not the most important factor. Nonetheless, since conversion was one of their goals, it is seen that they were not very successful. Only the statistics of the Baptists show a steady increase. However, if the statistics are compared with the total populations, it is clear that the number of Protestants was insignificant.

For example, Rothschild says the number of Protestants in Bulgaria as of 1934 was 8,371. This number reflects 0.1 percent of the population. In Yugoslavia, the percentage was slightly higher, around .18 percent. Even in Rumania, where the number of Baptists was certainly much higher than the number of Protestants in other countries, and is in fact larger than any of the Southern Baptist's other foreign missions, the number is still a minute percentage of the total population. Again, Rothschild lists the number of Baptists for 1930 at 60, 562, a higher number than the Baptist annuals report. Still, that number represents only 0.4 percent of the population.<sup>1</sup>

As for restoring life to the state churches, many members of the state churches attended Protestant services. It is quite possible that in some areas the state churches did experience renewal. Unfortunately, there is no evidence to suggest that any

## American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions

Annual Year	Communicants	Constituency
1918-1921	1457	4340
1922	1196	3386
1923	1115	3065
1924-1925	1125	3226
1926	1255	3148
1927	1273	3219
1928	1284	3616
1929-1930	1443	4117
1931	1184	3259
1932-1933	1104	3095

Statistics from the Annual Report of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions for corresponding years. Statistics apply to previous year.

### Methodist Episcopal Church

Annual Year	Christian Community	
	Bulgaria	Yugoslavia
1919	709	
1920	691	601
1921	1171	1048
1922	1061	1048
1923	1047	1799
1924	1047	1799
1925	1049	1631
1926	1049	2035
1927	927	2107
1928	927	2187
1929	927	2286
1930-1931	1286	4486
1932	886	1565
1933-1934	928	2219

Statistics from the Annual Report of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Methodist Episcopal Church for corresponding years.

Statistics for the Southern Baptist Convention

Year	Yugoslavia	Rumania	Bucharest Seminary	J.M.T.S.
1923	709	20,959	—	—
1924	810	24,463	—	—
1925	815	26,314	25	—
1926	906	29,405	—	—
1927	996	32,938	42	—
1928	1643	36,928	50	—
1929	1077	39,222	50	—
1930	1148	44,304	50	—
1931	1310	47,205	40	38
1932	1389	47,205	40	38
1933	1596	52,477	40	8
1934	1729	52,477	40	8
1935	1877	58,277	44	9
1936	2079	62,203	45	10
1937	2281	62,203	45	10
1938	2299	62,203	45	10
1939	2299	62,203	45	10
1940	2316	62203	45	10

Statistics from the Annuals of the Southern Baptist Convention for the corresponding years. Statistics apply to previous year.

J.M.T.S. stands for James Memorial Training School.



large-scale renewal took place. One can only speculate about what impact the missionaries had on the state churches.

Second, educational goals of the missionaries were stressed. Significant gains were made in this area. In regard to the Congregationalists and Methodists, their schools in Bulgaria (at Samokov/Sofia and Lovech respectively) received government recognition. Without government recognition graduates of the schools were not qualified for entrance into the universities or for certain jobs. Government recognition came for the Samokov schools in 1914-1915, just prior to Bulgaria's entrance into World War I, symbolizing a cooperation that would continue throughout the interwar period. The Lovech school was recognized in 1927.<sup>3</sup>

In the 1920 Annual, the Methodists reported that the governments of Albania and Yugoslavia were looking to the missionaries for schools and help in reconstruction. Additionally, the Bulgarian government was cooperating with both the Methodists and the American Board.<sup>2</sup> This fact, together with government recognition of the schools, suggests a striking achievement of the missionaries.

Three nationalist Balkan governments were interested in cooperating with the missionaries. They were not interested in Protestantism; they were probably not interested in moral issues. But an American education for the youth of their countries was something that could prove beneficial to them. Not only that, but the governments could establish certain requirements and maintain control of what was taught. Government recognition was beneficial both for the government and for the missionaries. Recognition enabled the missionaries to be more selective in choosing students.<sup>4</sup> It also allowed more youth to receive a modern education, which could help the country.

Winning government cooperation in Bulgaria was no small accomplishment. It took years to establish rapport. Albania or Yugoslavia never were able to set up an educational program with the missionaries. Ultimately, national sentiment meant the closing

of private schools, such as the one at Novi Sad in 1929 and that at Kortcha in 1933.

Missionaries' ultimate aims for education were two-fold, general and religious. The American Board hoped that through education, youth could learn to govern their countries with new values. Through education, new democratic governments could be established, there would be less anarchy, and states would cooperate with each other. Missionaries did not realize that the problems plaguing Eastern Europe were far deeper than just a lack of education.

Missionaries did help to lower the illiteracy rates and to bring some western ideas to the Balkans. They did not create a following large enough or strong enough to implement American ideals. Education was valuable. It did not, however, change the nations' internal or external position. For instance, the ideal of democracy had no place in the Balkans between the wars. Where chaos, poverty, and anarchy existed in a primarily agricultural economy, authoritarian rule seemed to be the only way for a government to retain power.

The second purpose of education was to train natives to take over the work. Missionaries did have some success though the need for more trained native leadership was always expressed. It can be gathered from missionaries' writings that they did not find as many converts ready to commit to the work as they would have liked. Yet, each one was considered a valuable addition to the work force. During the interwar period, few Americans were even involved on the field. Often natives were teaching at the schools or pastoring rural congregations. If they had not been doing so, no one would have been.

At times the problem was not a lack of natives willing to do the work, rather, it was that natives did not have access to the necessary training. For example, Southern Baptist Annuals from the interwar period indicate that in Yugoslavia, natives were

willing and ready to work, but were hindered by the absence of a theological school at which they could receive training.

Moving on from the status of education, a few words must be said on the ideological orientation of the missionaries. While they promoted democracy, this was not a goal that was reasonable. It was legitimate for the missionaries to teach western ideas, and they might have influenced a large number of people. However, ideologies are no substitute for rational and attainable goals. If the aim of the missionaries was to educate a small number of people about Wilson's Fourteen Points or western style democracy, they succeeded. If the missionaries actually expected to see democracy and self-determination come to pass, they were errant in their beliefs.

It is problematic for small, poor, disunified countries that have been dominated by foreign powers for centuries to modernize their governmental and economic systems. First of all, even if they are allowed to be independent, they will only be free to the extent that they are guaranteed by surrounding, greater powers. Second, the fact that they are poor is likely either to create political reaction and anarchy, or push them to economic dependence on other powers, or both. Moreover, those few who have wealth will desire to hold onto it, not have it distributed to the peasants. Third, since a government is unlikely to survive by relying on popular opinion in a nation like this, about the only form of rule that can maintain order is dictatorial rule. Finally, nation-states, established on the basis of ethnicity have a difficult time working together with other nation-states. Minority tensions arise, as do territorial disputes. These questions are not easily solved, as shown by the interwar period, when the ethnicity based boundaries continued to be a source of tension in the international relations of the Balkan states. All of these factors characterized Southeastern Europe between the World Wars, and could not be overcome by a handful of missionaries.

As for world peace, it is the same kind of issue. One can understand why the missionaries thought of peace as desirable. However, in a world where so many countries' interests come into conflict, and where a man, through oratory skills and charisma can rise up to become a powerful despot, world peace is not something that can come to pass in one or two small, backward countries alone. Missionaries knew it was not up to them to prevent world conflict, yet, in a way, they hoped to do it.

On a smaller level, the missionaries did desire to break through the divisions of race and language. At their international institutions they promoted this attitude. Undoubtedly, there was some success. Overall, the divisions were old and the hatred was intense. Any success of the missionaries would be limited.

Since the Baptists stressed the divisiveness more than the other two boards, probably because they were active in the most divided countries, here are two examples to illustrate the extent of their "success." The following was a comment of a Yugoslav lawyer:

I know and see that the goal of your work is generous and good.... For what benefit is it to a man to have all the wisdom we possess... which can help man in this life, while we are a bad people and worse than animals to one another. Our intelligence recognizes that the Roman Catholic Church is only a comedy.... Because of this the Roman faith has for us no efficacy; hence we are now so beastly."<sup>5</sup>

It would be interesting to know the ethnic origin of the speaker. If he was a Serb, one could clearly see that the divisions remained, and this statement would constitute a political statement. If he were a Croat, the implications might not be as clear.

To give one more example, the 1939 Annual reports a break in the Yugoslav Baptist Union between the Serbians and Germans versus the Croats. To the Convention, this was a crisis which defeated a large purpose of their work.<sup>6</sup>

In temperance work, there are no definite reports of just how successful it was. Instead, missionaries only wrote that progress was being made. The author of this paper supposes that temperance was probably about as effective in Eastern Europe as in any western country.

Perhaps the most clear cut successes of the missionaries lie in their philanthropic activities. While the number of people who received food, clothing, or medical care is not known, it can be maintained that any work done in this area was a success. Any help in relief or reconstruction was beneficial to the recipient.

As for social work, the American Board's Folk School and Community House offered education and services that were practical, like health education and agricultural skills. When the Novi Sad school of the Methodists could no longer teach, it became a boarding home. Missionaries tried to establish services that were useful. If the door was shut in one area, they would try something new.

In conclusion, it is seen that very few *definite* accomplishments of the missionaries in the interwar period can be noted. Nonetheless, they certainly were using every opportunity to serve and assist the Balkan peoples. Their ideological goals have been refuted as impractical and unobtainable during the lapse between the World Wars. As Grabill says:

The story of Protestant diplomacy and the Near East... is a case study of a powerful lobby which wanted the United States government to organize part of the Old World. Failing to achieve this aim, the religionists nevertheless had a continuing effect in diplomacy as well as missions, education, and philanthropy.<sup>7</sup>

On the other hand, it is imperative to realize that while the missionaries' achievements were not exact, it is not because they accomplished nothing. The extent of their influence cannot be measured. Furthermore, if they did not accomplish all of their goals in the interwar period, some of those goals may still be attained in the future. It can be speculated that at a later time, more results of the missionaries' efforts will be known. As change continues to occur in Eastern Europe, it may be discovered that remnants of the missionaries teaching: educational, spiritual, political, and social, remain.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>Rothschild, pp. 203, 284, & 327.

<sup>2</sup>Annual of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 102 (1920), pp. 16-17 & 523-527.

<sup>3</sup>Hall, p. 217. and Annual of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 109 (1927), pp. 299-301.

<sup>4</sup>Hall, p. 219.

<sup>5</sup>Annual of the Southern Baptist Convention, (1928), p. 224.

<sup>6</sup>Annual of the Southern Baptist Convention, (1939), p. 256-257.

<sup>7</sup>Grabill, p. 286.

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World's Committee of Y.M.C.A's. Objectives, Principle, and Programme of Y.M.C.A's in Orthodox Countries. Geneva: World's Committee of Y.M.C.A's, 1933. This account of the Y.M.C.A's is a valuable work in studying Protestantism in Eastern Europe. True to its name it tells of the goals and orientation of the Y.M.C.A's as they apply to the Balkans.