



Socialist Secularism

Religion, Modernity, and Muslim Women's Emancipation in Bulgaria and Yugoslavia, 1945–1991

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ABSTRACT

This article uses the examples of socialist Bulgaria and Yugoslavia to propose some new directions for rethinking scholarly understandings of “secularism” and the ways in which socialist secularizing projects were intricately intertwined with questions of gender equality. Current scholarly debates on the genealogy of secularism root its origins in the Catholic/Protestant West, and systematically ignore cases from the former communist world. This article takes two cases of Balkan states to explore the theoretical contours of what we call “socialist secularism.” Although Bulgaria and Yugoslavia’s experiences of socialist secularism differed in the degree of their coerciveness, this article examines the similarities in the conceptualization of the secularizing imperative and the rhetoric used to justify it, specifically the rhetoric of communist modernism and women’s liberation from religious backwardness.

KEYWORDS: Bulgaria, secularism, state socialism, women’s emancipation, Yugoslavia



In his influential work on secularism, Talal Asad contends, “An anthropology of secularism should thus start with a curiosity about the doctrine and practice of secularism regardless of where they have originated.”¹ Despite this, however, the growing body of critical work on secularism has devoted relatively little attention to secularism’s genealogies in the Second World of socialist states, in particular Southeastern Europe. Furthermore, scholars have considered the centrality of claims about female emancipation to secularist ideologies and projects in fairly limited and restricted ways. Contemporary European defenses of secularism that posit Islam as inherently premodern, nondemocratic, and oppressive to women and debates over veiling/headscarves in European Union states, for example, dominate the discussion of gender in relation to secularism. Less remarked upon are the deeper entanglements of Orientalism with secularism that have played an important role in European states with significant his-



torical Muslim minorities, as well as Muslim majorities (such as Turkey).² This article uses the examples of two European states with Muslim minorities—socialist Bulgaria and Yugoslavia—which represent two ideological poles on the spectrum of state socialism. The article draws on these two cases to propose new directions for rethinking scholarly understandings of secularism and the ways in which socialist secularizing projects became intricately intertwined with questions of gender equality. Through a specific focus on Muslim women in Bulgaria and Yugoslavia, it argues that socialist regimes deployed the secularist discourse in unique and fascinating ways that deserve inclusion in the larger scholarly debates.

In many cases, secularism becomes conflated with secularization, a waning in religiosity that is a result of modernization.³ Such secularisms then become viewed as derivative of a Western genealogy that locates secularism's origins in the Catholic/Protestant split (thereby neglecting Orthodox Christianity)⁴ and "closely connected with the rise of a system of capitalist nation-states"⁵ as well as modernity. This tendency in secularism studies explains, in part, the scholarly neglect of the particular histories and experience of secularism in socialist states, including those of Southeastern Europe. Just as Southeastern Europe or the Balkans occupy an ambiguous space in the discursive configuration that marks out the Orient from the Occident,⁶ so too do the histories of secularism in the region complicate scholarship that all too frequently rests on a dichotomized view of the world as divided between a "secular West" and a "religious rest."⁷ In this view, some non-Western societies import, emulate, or have imposed on them secularism. This approach characterizes even the excellent studies of secularist projects in Soviet Central Asia of scholars like Gregory Massell and Douglas Northrop, work that proves exceptional in its attention to the targeting of Muslim women by Bolshevik reformers.⁸ Following their lead, we also focus on Muslim women but we treat secularism in the Bulgarian and Yugoslav case as much more organic, drawing on each country's long history of religious pluralism.

The paucity of critical analyses of what we deem "socialist secularism" reflects problematic assumptions and blind spots that ignore the long history of pluralism. Furthermore, state socialism's promotion of industrialization along with secularism likely appeared as an all too obvious confirmation of the secularization thesis.⁹ Alternatively, perhaps more fundamental omissions in secularism/secularization scholarship meant that observers of state-religion relations in socialist regimes took not just atheism but also the nature of the state for granted.¹⁰ Whatever the reasons for the (relative) neglect of socialist experiences of secularism, the consequences have been serious not just for the scholarship on secularism but also for understanding of the nature of both socialism and postsocialist change.

The end of state socialism in Europe prompted many scholars to study the transformations in religious practice and expression in former socialist societies, but they often did so through an uncritical lens of "religious revival."¹¹ Scholars attempting to classify states and societies along a gradient of religiosity and secularism, for example, often mistook the rhetoric of Marxist atheism for the practice of state socialism. Barrett's worldwide studies of state-religion relationships in the 1970s and 1980s, for example, categorized all Eastern European states as "atheist" as the result of communism's "animus against organized religion."¹² Analysts of "religious revitalization" after socialism

who oversimplify the complexities of socialist secularism risk mischaracterizing the degree of change, particularly at the level of institutionalized religion.

More important for the purposes of this article, a study of socialist secularism highlights the ways in which women's emancipation was a core justification for the control and, in some instances, outright oppression of religious communities. Attending to the importance of women's issues in the socialist context offers a new lens through which to examine different permutations of secularism. In both Bulgaria and Yugoslavia, as well as in Central Asia, religious belief was blamed for the lack of social progress for women, particularly for Muslim women, although all religions were recognized as promoting "backward" gender relations. In both Bulgaria and Yugoslavia, Muslim women became the particular targets of the state's secularizing efforts but for different reasons. In Bulgaria, the history of Ottoman imperial domination rendered Islam a (perceived) threat to Bulgarian national identity whereas in Yugoslavia Bosnia's Muslims symbolized the Yugoslav promise of a pluralist socialist society.

Scholarly debates on Western secularisms assume a bifurcated public/private sphere, where religion is relegated to the latter in order to maintain pluralism and tolerance both within and between different religious communities. The socialist secularist case allows us to examine a state that controls religion in both the public and private spheres not only to ensure what John Locke called "toleration," but also to promote women's greater independence within the family for the greater good of society. This takes place even as the behavior of all citizens becomes highly regulated by and subordinated to what anthropologist Katherine Verdery has called the socialist "parent-state."¹³ Here we find a critical difference between secularism in Turkey or Western Europe and socialist examples. For instance, in France or in Turkey symbols of religious affiliation such as the headscarf are officially banned in public institutions but not in private settings. In socialist Bulgaria, Muslim women's attire was prohibited in all public and private spaces.

A comparison between Bulgaria and Yugoslavia proves productive, given that the two states lay on opposite ends of the socialist spectrum. After the Tito-Stalin split in 1948, Yugoslavia modeled itself as an exceptional case, offering a "third way" that combined limited market practices and relative freedoms (such as freedom to travel abroad) with "unique" socialist principles (such as workers' self-management). The Yugoslav federation became increasingly decentralized from the 1960s and 1970s on. In contrast, Bulgaria was the Eastern European communist country with the closest ties to the Soviet Union and had one of the most centralized, totalitarian regimes. Despite these differences, both states implemented very similar policies with regard to religious communities. The socialist state in both places tried to capture and control religious institutions rather than eradicate them. Furthermore, gender equality and the emancipation of women from cultural "backwardness" were key goals that motivated many state secularist policies, particularly with regard to Muslim minority populations. Of course, we recognize that an article of this length cannot provide comprehensive discussion of the many different examples of socialist secularism and how it operated in both countries. Rather, our goal here is merely to paint the contours of a broader conceptual framework that will provide the foundation for future research on this topic in the region.

Secularism and State Socialism

It is important to address the issue of secularism within state socialism within the framework of theoretical/philosophical statements about the role of religion in socialism—whether those ideas are grounded in Marxist-Leninism as in Bulgaria, or in Marxist-Leninism together with other ideologies such as Titoism or Yugoslavism in Yugoslavia—¹⁴versus the practice and lived experience of secularism. Such an analysis must be precise in its use of the term “secularism.” Given that there are many definitional debates over the terms “secularism” and “secularization,” a clear definition of the parameters of socialist secularism is required (1) as entailing the legal separation of church and state and (2) as the embrace of a “worldly” or non-religious ideology (in this case, that of Marxist materialism), and its relationship to the communist modernization paradigm and women’s emancipation.¹⁵ This article employs both definitions, examining how socialist secularism was a core ideological imperative of both the Bulgarian and Yugoslav communist regimes and their efforts to forge a new socialist man and woman.

Religion-state relationships varied considerably throughout the Eastern Bloc depending on the specific local histories, degree of religious difference, and specific configurations of gender relations. Different regimes treated different religions differently. Such treatment depended, for instance, on whether churches were “national” (as in the case of the Orthodox Churches of Serbia or Bulgaria) or “international” and thus potentially created foreign allegiances (as with Catholicism in Croatia or Poland). Other crucial factors included the size and influence of the religions and the behavior of the churches during World War II.¹⁶ Ramet notes that throughout the communist states Eastern Orthodox churches tended to enjoy general tolerance but they were also among the most co-opted of the churches, in part because of the relative scarcity of powerful patrons and supporters in the West.¹⁷ The Bulgarian Orthodox Church (BOC) offers a perfect example of a church that was largely controlled by the communists for their own goals. In the 1950s, the BOC newspapers ran articles that openly supported Stalin and the goals of socialism,¹⁸ and the communist government could appoint and dismiss patriarchs and archbishop at will.¹⁹ Ramet goes as far to argue that this represented an inversion of the tradition of Caesaro-papism, a partnership between church and state whose origins may be traced variously to the Ottoman millet system, to the Spiritual Reglement of 1721 in Tsarist Russia, or even back to the Great Schism of Eastern and Western Christianity of 1054.²⁰

By contrast, the Catholic Church in Eastern Europe inherited an oppositional stance toward the state that grew out of the Church’s championing of “suppressed nationalities” in the nineteenth century. In the years immediately following World War II and the establishment of socialism in Eastern Europe, a number of states urged (with little success) the Catholic Church to create “national” churches independent of the Vatican.²¹ In Yugoslavia (and particularly the Yugoslav Republic of Croatia), the Croatian Church bore the additional burden of its association with the brutal Ustaša regime of Ante Pavelić and the (not unfair) perception that the Vatican favored Italian claims in the Italo-Yugoslav dispute over Venezia Giulia (1945–1954). In Bulgaria, Muslims were likewise seen as belonging to an international religion that forged problematic

links between the local Muslim population and NATO-allied Turkey. Furthermore, because the Bulgarian communists feared Turkish irredentism in the Balkans, they were particularly keen to assimilate the Turks of Bulgaria as well as the Muslim Slavs and Roma into a secular, nationalist worldview.²²

In general, state-religion relationships relaxed considerably over time in all of the communist regimes. In the Soviet bloc, Stalin's death ushered in a new emphasis on co-optation rather than outright repression of religious groups. In many socialist states forms of religious instruction remained possible but were subject to strict state controls (or were prohibited from the state educational sector at various moments), more an assertive attempt by the state to control religion than to eliminate it altogether (or to eliminate it from the public realm). In Bulgaria, the state created a Directorate of Religious Denominations, which oversaw all religious affairs in the country. Similarly, in Yugoslavia, the regime sought to tightly circumscribe the space in which religion held sway. Commissions for Religious Affairs were established at both the federal and republican levels. Until Aleksandar Ranković's removal as minister of the interior in 1966, the Commissions were closely connected to the secret police. As post-Ranković liberalization coincided with increasing devolution to the republican level, the Federal Commission for Religious Affairs became more of a coordinating body than one involved in direct monitoring and repression of religious institutions and believers.²³

Observers critical of Yugoslav policies toward religion maintained that the "form [of religion] is protected," even as its essence and its institutional bases were depleted.²⁴ At the same time, as Michael Petrovich has observed, "religion [in Yugoslavia] was not so much a matter of private conscience as one's public identity."²⁵ We might consider this a "paradox" of Yugoslav socialist secularism, although it only appears paradoxical when viewed through normative understandings of secularism (in which religion belongs to a clearly delineated "private" sphere). Part of the problem stems from the conceptual confusions over how to define the "public" sphere and what Asad has identified as the Western assumption of a secular public sphere as a neutral arena.²⁶ Intermingled as it was with other aspects of identity in both Bulgaria and Yugoslavia, religion could not be disregarded or discarded by the socialist regime in either country. Rather it required harnessing or "taming," to use anthropologist Kim Shively's term for Islam in Kemalist Turkey.²⁷ In the Bulgarian case, there was a strong nationalist myth that the Orthodox Church had preserved Bulgarian language and culture during the 500 years of the Ottoman domination and many important national heroes were members of the clergy (i.e., Ivan Rilski, Vasil Levski, Patriarch Eftimii). Under the Ottoman millet system, the Bulgarians were largely defined by their Christianity and a kind of secular Eastern Orthodoxy remained a core facet of Bulgarian national identity in the communist period.

In the case of the Muslim identity in Bosnia and Yugoslavia, this identity became more public or visible over time as the result of the creation in 1971 of the census category "Muslim, in the sense of a nation" (i.e., Muslim as *narod*).²⁸ Here an ostensibly religious identity became more prominent even as it increasingly acquired cultural (or secular) connotations; devout Muslims often distinguished between communist (or secular) Muslims and believers, however, pointing to a tension in Bosnian Muslim identity that remained unresolved throughout the Yugoslav period.²⁹ In actively promoting

a distinct (secular) Bosnian Muslim identity, the Communist Party or LCY (League of Communists of Yugoslavia) and the state sought to balance competing religious identities and claims.³⁰ Religious leaders in Yugoslavia often perceived efforts by the regime to orchestrate “national symmetry” between various faiths in Yugoslavia as an attempt to divide and weaken religious communities, who saw themselves as competing with one another as well as with a secularist program.³¹ Religious leaders suspected that a supposed policy of national symmetry actually made for asymmetry in the treatment of specific religious communities.³² At the same time, taming religion and either neutralizing its political power or putting it in service to a socialist state became entangled with the project of liberating women from religion’s patriarchal structures. In reality, this project meant that the revolutionary and oppositional potential of women was also “tamed,” a critique made vocally by Yugoslav feminists in the 1970s and 1980s.

Taming Religion in Yugoslavia

From its very beginnings, the socialist regime in the Federal People’s Republic of Yugoslavia made quite explicit in both theory and practice its aim to contain religion’s sectarian tendencies, thereby taming it and containing its potential for political opposition. On the one hand, the Constitution laid out the principles of separation of church and state and religious freedom (Article 25).³³ On the other hand, the document warned, “The abuse of the Church and of religion for political purposes and the existence of political organization on a religious basis are forbidden.”³⁴ In an important qualification, however, the law stipulated, “scientific criticism of religion in general and criticism of improper actions of religious representatives ... cannot be regarded as incitement to religious hatred,”³⁵ thereby opening an authorized space for proponents of a particular form of secularism (Marxism/Titoism) to critique religion and its followers. The socialist authorities also provided themselves with the legal weapons for cracking down on religious officials deemed guilty of incitement (whether those charges were genuine or trumped up), declaring, “It shall be regarded as an aggravating circumstance of [*sic*] the offence of incitement to religious hatred is committed by ecclesiastical representatives.”³⁶

Proponents of socialism in Yugoslavia thus rejected religious sectarianism in favor of what they saw as their own version of religious pluralism. Pro-regime authors like Ivan Lazić stressed the ways in which all religions received equal protection within socialist Yugoslavia, in contrast to the prewar Yugoslav kingdom in which only those religions legally recognized in the state at the moment of its creation (in December 1918) were protected while other religions were persecuted.³⁷ Critics would instead rebut that under socialism *all* religions were discriminated against, though not in equal measure, just as individual believers enjoyed greater or less degrees of religious freedom depending on their positions in society.³⁸

Regime-sponsored authors like Rastko Vidić further contended that those churches that had previously suffered persecution (or, at the very least, did not enjoy a privileged position in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia) welcomed the institution of genuine freedom of religion under socialism. In contrast, some churches “could not easily ac-

quiesce in the loss of the privileged position which they had enjoyed up to that time."³⁹ These were the same churches that had, in Vidić's estimation, not only colluded with the royal regime but also the quisling states during World War II. As Vidić's comments suggest, from the point of view of the Yugoslav regime, the task of taming religion proved more urgent for some faiths than others.

At different moments in Yugoslav history, the task of taming religion also acquired greater urgency. Many observers have noted that more direct forms of repression and control later gave way to a greater emphasis on ideological pressure, both in the form of providing an alternative (Titoism and Yugoslavism as civil or secular religions) and in valorizing modernization and the abandonment of backwardness, particularly gender inequality. The early socialist state in Yugoslavia was modeled on Stalin's Soviet Union,⁴⁰ sharing with the USSR a ruthless attitude toward enemies, real and imagined. Religious functionaries figured prominently among such enemies. In June 1945, for instance, trials of Catholic, Orthodox, and Muslim clergy took place in military courts in Croatia.⁴¹

Religious institutions came under assault along with religious personnel, who became seen as sources of both potential political disorder and agents of traditional forms of class and gender oppression. In rural areas with low development of class consciousness, the regime could point to "oppressed" women and peasants—what Massell, writing about the Soviet context in Central Asia, deemed a "surrogate proletariat."⁴² In parts of Central Asia, notes Northrop, "women's emancipation ultimately came in many ways to exemplify the entire Bolshevik Revolution."⁴³ In Yugoslavia, too, the simultaneous harnessing of religion and liberation of women became a potent symbol of progress and modernity.

Providing its own forms of education through literacy classes and state schools, the regime closed down religious schools throughout the federation, as well as Muslim cultural associations and Islamic courts, and made schools available equally to men and women.⁴⁴ The 1946 land nationalization law hit religious institutions particularly hard, depriving them of key sources of autonomous income. In Sarajevo, for example, the properties of the Bašćaršija (the historic Ottoman urban center) controlled by the Muslim institution of the *vakuf* now came under state ownership.⁴⁵ The message sent by such expropriations, as well as by the trials of priests, was that no resistance to or even autonomy from the regime would be brooked, particularly opposition that sought to reinforce the link between religion and nationalism. In part, the communist authorities justified this repression in light of the controversial role played by the Catholic Church and clergy (as well as some Muslims) in the independent Ustaša state established under Ante Pavelić during World War II. Similarly, the support of royalist Orthodox Serbs for the Chetniks meant that Orthodoxy had to be disentangled from a specifically Serbian nationalist project.

Yugoslavia's break with the Soviet Union did not bring about an immediate relaxation of church-state relations. The regime continued to struggle to bring priests and imams under its direct supervision. Although the authorities enjoyed some success in Slovenia and Bosnia and Herzegovina in persuading priests to join government-controlled priests' associations (and imams and *hodzas* to participate in the state approved Islamic Association), many Catholic priests in Croatia refused to join.⁴⁶ Through such

associations, the Yugoslav socialist state hoped to contain religion by making religious leaders not only submit but actively collaborate in the work of the state, underscoring the need to consider socialist secularism in terms of what scholars like political scientist Ahmet Kuru deem an “assertive” or active secularism.⁴⁷ In the 1950s, for example, it was the *Islamska Zajednica* (Islamic Association) that banned dervish orders and oversaw their dismantling.⁴⁸ With regard to faiths like Islam and Catholicism, the state aimed to privilege believers’ loyalty to specifically Yugoslav religious institutions (government-controlled institutions) and traditions rather than permit the dual loyalty of nation and universal church.

Several significant moments of liberalization in church-state relations modified the early picture of repression and direct control of religious institutions by the state. The 1958 Program of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia, for example, reiterated a view of religion as antithetical to a Marxist worldview and a sign of lingering backwardness. Such backwardness, argued Minister of the Interior Ranković, was to be combated primarily through ideological work from this point on. Ranković’s subsequent fall from power in 1966 meant further relaxation of state monitoring over the Commissions for Religious Affairs and the activities of believers. As a result of these shifts, Yugoslavia has been perceived as relatively liberal in comparison to Bulgaria and other socialist states in its policies toward organized religion. This is particularly true when compared to Bulgaria, where religion became the primary vehicle for the promotion of a socialist national identity.⁴⁹

Taming Religion in Bulgaria

When Bulgaria achieved its independence from the Ottoman Empire, the Turnovo Constitution established Bulgarian Orthodoxy as the traditional religion of the new state in 1878.⁵⁰ This gave the Bulgarian Orthodox Church a privileged position in Bulgarian society, but this also meant that it was fused with the Bulgarian state during the years of Bulgaria’s alliance with Nazi Germany in World War II. The communists who would subsequently come to power inevitably held some of the BOC clergy accountable for their collaboration with the fascist regime. Immediately after the communist victory on 9 September 1944, state officials began the process of removing all religious education from public schools.⁵¹ The church strongly opposed the secularization of education, but the communist government, and the country’s first communist Premier, Georgi Dimitrov, closely followed Soviet antireligious policies and felt that religious education would undermine communist efforts to modernize Bulgarian society. In 1946, the government also instituted new laws that only recognized marriages performed by civil authorities and no longer recognized those performed by the church. Furthermore, the various charitable functions of the church were taken over by the state with the nationalization of many church properties. Direct repression of the Bulgarian Orthodox clergy began in 1944 and continued until the mid-1950s; many priests were targeted in a series of purges.⁵²

A serious blow to the Bulgarian Orthodox Church came with the passage of the 1947 Dimitrov constitution, which firmly established the separation of church and

state by removing the language that had once recognized Orthodoxy as the traditional religion of Bulgaria. Exarch Stefan (the spiritual leader of the BOC) opposed these changes, and was forced into retirement by the communist government in 1948. State officials replaced him with a church leader more favorably disposed to their agenda. At the end of that same year, the Fifth Congress of the Bulgarian Communist Party decided to take a firm stand against the lingering "bourgeois" and religious influences on society by nationalizing monasteries and seminaries. During this time, many priests who opposed the regime were also imprisoned or sent to work camps.⁵³

Despite these changes, it must be remembered that the Bulgarian government did not want to destroy the church, but rather to control it and use it as a tool of the state. The passage of the 1949 Denominations Act unequivocally placed the Bulgarian Orthodox Church under the authority of the communist government. Although Article 1 of the 1949 Denominations Act states that "[a]ll people in Bulgaria are given the opportunity of freedom of religion and conscience,"⁵⁴ the law heavily proscribed the activities of all religious groups in Bulgaria, including that of the BOC.

Article 12 of the Act allowed the state (through the Directorate of Religious Denominations) to dismiss any clergy member who was suspected of working against the "democratic order of the country" or of jeopardizing the public safety or good morals of the population. As in Yugoslavia, this in effect gave the Bulgarian state complete control over the religious establishment of all denominations. Article 18 stated that: "The mentioning of the Supreme Power and its organs by religious denominations during sermons, rituals and celebrations may be done only by expressions previously approved by the Directorate for Religious Affairs." This article allowed the government to directly interfere in the writing of church sermons and texts; phrases used to speak about God and his powers during religious ceremonies had to be vetted by communist officials beforehand or priests risked arrest and imprisonment. Article 20 banned religious education in schools and Article 22 banned contacts with religious communities in other countries without the express written consent of the Directorate of Religious Denominations, effectively isolating Bulgaria's religious communities from sister spiritual communities abroad. This was particularly detrimental to Bulgaria's Catholic and Muslim populations.⁵⁵

During the 1940s, antireligious propaganda was ubiquitous and the communist newspapers often included reports of drunk or immoral priests. Church newspapers also became an outlet for communist propaganda, publishing articles such as "Socialism: The Eternal Ideal of Humanity,"⁵⁶ "The Communalism of Religion and Socialism,"⁵⁷ and "Long Live the Task of Great Stalin."⁵⁸ Thus, rather than the separation of the church and state called for in the Dimitrov constitution, the Bulgarians placed religious institutions firmly in control of the state as it pursued its scientific socialist goals.

After Stalin's death, there was a relaxation of religious persecution in Bulgaria and many of the priests who had been sent to labor camps were granted amnesty. Still, religion was frowned upon in public life and social mobility was tied to atheism. All life cycle rituals previously performed by the church (baptisms, marriages, funerals) were replaced by socialist rituals created by the state, which were devoid of spiritual meaning.⁵⁹ In Muslim communities, certain rituals and ceremonies were officially banned

and few young people had access to religious education. As a result, one scholar claims that by 1962 the Bulgarian “government was able to boast that the dramatic decline of religious belief in the country was unmatched in the Soviet Bloc,” with two million Bulgarians claiming to be atheists and less than one-third of the population claiming to be religious.⁶⁰ Thus, socialist secularism in the Bulgarian context was more about the church supporting the state’s goals, than a true secular separation of these institutions. The aim was to limit the influence of the “backwardness” of religious mysticism and faith in favor of science and rationality in order to achieve a more modern society, as well as the emancipation of Bulgarian women.

Socialist Secularism: Women and Religious “Backwardness” in Yugoslavia

In 1947, a regime-sponsored publication, *Women of Yugoslavia*, proudly announced, “One of the greatest achievements won by the peoples of Yugoslavia in their fight for liberation was undoubtedly the emancipation of women from age-long injustice and oppression.”⁶¹ Published in Serbo-Croatian, English, Italian, and French, this booklet posited socialist Yugoslavia’s many achievements in women’s equality, ranging from the significant role played by women in the partisan struggle, to the establishment of suffrage and constitutionally guaranteed equality in socialist Yugoslavia’s first constitution, to policies to protect mothers and children, to literacy campaigns targeting women. As this pamphlet illustrates, female emancipation served as a key symbol of socialist modernization. In Yugoslavia, as in many other socialist (and capitalist) societies, women’s status—concretized in the visual marker of women’s dress—thus became metonym of both tradition/backwardness and modernity/progressivism. Within this discursive configuration, women’s backwardness figured as a result of traditional structures such as the patriarchal family and religion, thereby legitimating various projects aimed at reform.

In *Women in Yugoslavia*, Olga Kovačić depicted Yugoslav women as both agents and subjects of their and their country’s emancipation. On the one hand, the text detailed “what new Yugoslavia has given to women,” implicitly portraying the regime as a “parent-state” doling out benefits and rights to its grateful children.⁶² Literacy courses, for example, were said to free women “from the chains and prejudices which had fettered them till now.” The most abject of these women, in the socialist imaginary, were rural women who had “lived in ignorance, enslaved, just like the sheep which they tended.”⁶³ On the other hand, Kovačić stressed women’s agency in winning their rights, beginning with the heroism of women during the partisan war. This was seen to mark a new consciousness for women. “Millions of new citizens, socially aware, have arisen from mediaeval darkness, proud of the confidence shown them and full of the desire to justify that confidence.”⁶⁴ A later generation of feminist critics in Yugoslavia, however, would argue that women’s emancipation was a top-down process that sought to tame women’s energies and channel them into sanctioned political activities.⁶⁵

Interestingly, for much of her text, Kovačić does not emphasize the link between religion and women’s oppression, in contrast to some of the writings of well-known female Party activists like Vida Tomšič.⁶⁶ Nonetheless, regions of the country described

as steeped in backwardness were those associated with Islam and Ottoman rule. In singling out areas where the large majority of women did not know how to read before the socialist revolution, for example, Kovačić highlights Bosnia (with 85 percent of women illiterate), Macedonia (88 percent female illiteracy), and Kosovo and Metohija (90 percent female illiteracy). In such descriptions, Kovačić draws an implicit connection among backwardness, religion (especially, but not only, Islam), and female oppression. Only in the final pages of the book does Kovačić make this explicit, discussing the practice of women casting off the veil.

Published three years before wearing of the veil became illegal in Yugoslavia, Kovačić stresses the abandonment of the veil as a voluntary act, one consonant with Yugoslav women's newfound empowerment and sense of agency as (putatively) socialist subjects. She describes "women of the national minorities" (i.e., Muslims) as casting off the symbols of "the wretched past."

The movement for the removal of the veil has widely affected the Moslem women in the republic of Bosnia, the republic of Macedonia, and the region of Kosovo and Metohija. Villages and towns compete among themselves to "remove darkness from their eyes forever" as one of thirty Bosnian women who went to work on the building of the railway, expressed it.⁶⁷

Photos accompanying the text depicted "Moslem women who removed their veils at a course for the illiterate" and "Moslem girls from the People's Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina working on the Brcko-Banovici Youth railway." Though unveiled, the women in the latter image wear headscarves and long dresses, suggesting one of the limits to the regime's "emancipation" campaign as a result of its efforts to contain but not completely eradicate religion.

In her account of youth and adulthood in Tito's Yugoslavia, Munevera Hadžišehović describes the same events as Kovačić but from the perspective of a woman raised as a practicing Muslim in the Sandžak who later became a member of the Party. She notes the divisions created within Muslim communities by the regime's secularist programs, as some Muslims themselves became advocates of abandoning the veil and other symbols of the "backward" past. Even before the passing of the 1950 law forbidding the veil, a number of Muslim women—particularly wives of officials and members of partisan families—began to go uncovered. As Hadžišehović puts it, "Muslim communities, at the least the first ones and those who joined right after the war, 'liberated' themselves from religion as they worked their way through the communist literature ... They justified their changed outlook on the grounds that they were tired of the backwardness of our people, which they attributed to the long Turkish rule and to Islam."⁶⁸ She adds, "Their longing for Muslim equality with the other nationalities in Yugoslavia, as well as for a better life, led them to identify with communist ideas about society."

In order to set an example for other Muslims, prior to the 1950 de-veiling law women from respected families who had not "liberated" themselves from Islam were strongly encouraged to abandon the veil voluntarily. With this in mind, the authorities approached Hadžišehović's mother or Nanna. When she refused to de-veil, she was called before the local secret police, but nonetheless remained adamant. Only with the

passing of the law did Nanna finally remove her veil. This particular example reveals the uneasy balance between coercion and consent in Yugoslav efforts to contain religion in the name of female emancipation.⁶⁹

Over time, explicit attention to the so-called woman question faded in socialist Yugoslavia, eventually sparking the rise of feminist groups in the 1970s who critiqued the Party's unwillingness to render the educational system an effective tool for transforming gender relations. This new generation of feminists increasingly went outside the structures sanctioned by the state and the Party (the structures within which female activists like Kovačić and Tomšič worked), instead adopting tactics of self-help and public protest. They also recuperated older traditions of feminism from presocialist Yugoslavia, genealogies that the socialist regime had sought to efface or delegitimize.⁷⁰ The second and third wave feminists loudly protested what they saw as the failures of the socialist project with regard to gender relations. From a somewhat different angle than that of Yugoslav feminists, ethnographic work revealed how structural transformations in Yugoslav society such as industrialization and migration to urban areas did much to modify family structures, even as women remained saddled with "traditional" burdens together with new demands.⁷¹

As Yugoslav society modernized, women's dress remained a key marker of progress. In contrast to Bulgaria, however, the regime trod much more carefully in singling out Muslims as emblems of backwardness, given the need to balance competing ethno-religious claims and the increasing importance accorded to Bosnian Muslims as a constituent people. At the level of everyday life, non-Muslims pointed to gendered and religious dress as evidence of backwardness. In her study of a mixed Catholic and Muslim village in late socialist Bosnia, anthropologist Tone Bringa reported the reactions of local Catholic women who took the traditional dress of Muslim women in the village as a sign of otherness and a rejection of modernity. Yet many older Catholic women in the village dressed in a style almost indistinguishable from that of their Muslim neighbors (with long skirts and headscarves). In the minds of many Yugoslav citizens, then, tradition, women, and religion remained linked until the last days of socialist Yugoslavia's existence.

Socialist Secularism: Women and Religious "Backwardness" in Bulgaria

As in Yugoslavia, it was the Muslim women who were the most associated with religious "backwardness," and from the earliest years of communist rule Muslim communities were subject to persecution.⁷² Bulgaria's Muslim community was quite heterogeneous, made up of ethnic Turkish, Slavic Muslim (Pomak), and Romani communities. Although 95 percent of the Muslims in Bulgaria were technically Hanafi Sunni, there was a very wide spectrum of beliefs represented during the communist era. There was a small heterodox Shi'a population, called the Alevis, and a wide variety of Sufi brotherhoods such as the Betkashis, which had a long history in the country. Most important to the Bulgarian communists, however, was that the Muslims in Bulgaria were remnants of the Ottoman Empire, the vast majority of them ethnic Turks who spoke Turkish as their mother tongue.

Efforts to secularize Bulgaria's Muslims populations and to emancipate Muslim women were inevitably bound up with the communist desire to distance itself from what it considered a feudal Ottoman past and to protect itself from perceived Turkish irredentism, in particular after Turkey invaded Cyprus in 1974.⁷³ In addition to infiltrating the official religious hierarchy of the Muslim community, the communists also invested heavily in education programs. Communist Party officials targeted individual Muslim men and women to create a cadre of loyal Party members who would spread the communist message among their faith mates. In a retrospective look at the communists' educational policies toward the Muslims, the Bulgarian historian Vera Mutafchieva writes:

Directed by the Turkish department of the BCP's [Bulgarian Communist Party] Central Committee, a Turkish *nomenklatura* came into existence, enjoying the status and privileges due it. It was isolated from the mass of the Turkish minority who remained untempted by either free laic education or the perspective for its young people to run against their parents and tradition ... [This] education influenced the traditional mentality—secular thinking undermined the religious outlook.⁷⁴

These educational campaigns were even more intensely targeted at the Pomaks, who spoke Bulgarian as their mother tongue and were believed to be the descendants of Bulgarians who had been forcibly converted to Islam during the Ottoman era. One specific example of an education campaign directed at Pomak women is a lesson plan from 1961.⁷⁵ The outline for "forty-five day courses for Bulgarian Muslim women activists of the Fatherland Front"⁷⁶ includes a variety of lectures, including four hours on Bulgarian and world geography and four hours dedicated to personal hygiene for women and how proper socialist women should dress (without headscarves, of course). There were also two hours each to be dedicated to the "unscientific and reactionary essence of religion," "religion and the woman," "the harm of observing religious holidays and traditions," and "religion and nationality." These lectures were followed by eight hours of lectures on the "morals of the socialist family," the work of the Fatherland Front among women, and the responsibilities of women activists within the Front as well as the role of women in building socialism more generally.⁷⁷ In addition to making them more educated and productive workers, these courses were aimed at convincing Muslim women to renounce their allegiance to Islam to embrace scientific socialism in their private as well as public lives.

As in neighboring Yugoslavia, efforts to combat Islam were also intertwined with modernization projects to improve the material conditions of Muslim lives in hopes that economic prosperity would weaken their spiritual commitments.⁷⁸ The Bulgarian government published a variety of propaganda materials focusing on the demonstrably rising living standards of the Bulgarian Muslims. One such book published by the Bulgarian Communist Party Press in 1960 targeted the Pomaks and was filled with propaganda lectures describing the ever-improving material conditions of life in the Rhodope Mountains, complete with before and after pictures of Muslim villages and photos of Muslim women smiling for the camera in modern Bulgarian clothing.⁷⁹

The book also included a series of before and after cartoons that visually depicted socialism's superiority over Islam. One such cartoon showed a man smoking a cigarette and riding a donkey while his wife, a barefoot figure wrapped up like a mummy and carrying several large parcels, a baby and two hoes, walks behind him. The bottom panel shows a modern woman holding the hand of a young boy with a helium balloon. She is followed by her husband who is carrying a large household appliance out of a department store,⁸⁰ emphasizing not only the material progress made by socialism but the improvement in women's position in society. Another cartoon shows an angry looking man in a turban holding an open book and prayer beads standing in the balcony of a minaret. The caption reads: "Builder of Paradise in the Sky." The bottom panel shows people working together to build a modern socialist city in the mountains and the caption reads, "Builders of Paradise on Earth."⁸¹

Although the communist propaganda was somewhat successful in winning Pomak converts to scientific socialism, Islam proved to be more tenacious than anticipated. A 1971 book, *Novite gradove v N. R. Bulgaria* (New cities in the People's Republic of Bulgaria), proclaimed that economic development had been so successful in Madan that the Pomaks had voluntarily changed their names back to Bulgarian ones, that the men no longer wore fezzes and that the women had cast off their headscarves.⁸² But the situation was not as positive as the communists portrayed it. The early attempts at educating Pomaks to help sway their neighbors to the benefits of modernization were not enough to eradicate persistent local Muslim traditions. The intransigence of these local forms of Islam caused the government to intensify its assimilation campaign, and as the 1970s wore on, they began to ban certain Muslim rituals and the question of Muslim names became paramount.

In comparison to Yugoslavia, the Bulgarians took a much more heavy-handed approach to secularizing Muslim communities, although the justifications for doing so proved remarkably similar. Rather than starting with a complete ban, however, the Bulgarian state first put forward their version of rational arguments against Islamic practices.⁸³ For instance, fasting during the month of Ramadan was said to inhibit the immune system's ability to fight off disease, making Muslims more susceptible to sickness. This self-inflicted predisposition to illness and the general weakness that accompanied fasting was also said to make workers less productive on the job. The ritual sacrifice of lambs during the *Kurban Bairyam* (Feast of the Sacrifice) was said to be unhealthy for Muslims who could suffer from severe stomach upsets from eating too much fatty meat at one time; it was also economically wasteful because the lambs could be sold for hard currency abroad. Circumcision was considered a barbaric process only practiced by the most backward of peoples, and the communists argued that it was unhealthy and dangerous for boys. Most significant for our article, headscarves and *shalvari* (Turkish trousers) for women were considered signs of their subservience to men, and therefore had to be removed.⁸⁴ The communist's goal of equality between men and women justified the ultimate ban on all Islamic dress.

The Bulgarian government would eventually institute prohibitions on the celebration of the two big Muslim holidays *Kurban Bairyam* and *Ramazan Bairyam*.⁸⁵ Women were forcibly de-veiled. The minarets on mosques around the region were torn down and destroyed; the mosque buildings were either closed or converted into cultural

houses or museums. Islamic burial practices were made illegal, and in 1978 the government created and disseminated new guidelines for “socialist rituals” to be performed at funerals and other important life events.⁸⁶ Local imams and *hodzhas* who defied these new rules could be arrested and imprisoned.

Unlike in Yugoslavia where oppression of religious groups and of the Muslim community in particular gradually lessened through the 1970s and 1980s, the Bulgarian government took an increasingly firm stand against its Muslim minorities. Forcible name changing campaigns against the Pomaks and the Turks as well as the so-called Great Excursion (i.e., expulsion) of Turks in May of 1989 are only a few examples of the Zhivkov regime’s growing intolerance toward Bulgaria’s Muslim minorities. Although nationalism and fear of Turkish irredentism informed these policies, they were also driven by communist attempts to modernize what it considered “backward” religious communities for their own good, particularly for the good of Muslim women.

Conclusion

Given the renewed scholarly interest in the history of secularism and its various impacts on both the Western and non-Western world, it is striking how little has been written about the experience of secularization during the state socialist era in Eastern Europe. Likewise, even careful analyses of the role of religion in post-socialist Eastern Europe often rely on cartoonish or dismissive accounts of religious repression and Marxist promotion of atheism during the socialist period. Just as scholars have debunked the assumption that communism placed a lid on ethnonational divisions by showing the ways in which various socialist regimes actually institutionalized ethno-national identities, so too must researchers take socialist secularism seriously and consider the ways in which it reaffirmed (even as it sought to contain) religious practices and institutions. Doing so enriches our understandings of how socialist regimes approached both gender and religion in ways that illuminate the persistence and transformation (rather than “revival”) of supposedly traditional practices after socialism’s end.

In writing this article, we were led by several key questions. What does it do to our understandings and genealogies of secularism if we consider socialist experiences? What happens to our understandings of socialism, in turn, if we consider its histories through the lens of secularism? Does this shift the ways in which we think about religion and gender in Southeastern Europe and, if so, how? Although it is clear that Bulgaria and Yugoslavia’s experiences of socialist secularism differ in the degree of its coerciveness, it is instructive to examine the similarities in the conceptualization of the secularizing imperative and the rhetorics used to justify it.

The centrality of the figure of Muslim women in socialist Bulgaria and Yugoslavia and the particular attention paid to gendered religious dress (veils, headscarves, baggy pants) highlight parallels with current debates over Western European secularisms (France, Germany, and beyond), as well as Kemalist versions of secularism in Turkey. In *The Politics of the Veil*, historian Joan Scott argues that the ban of the Islamic headscarf for French Muslims attending public schools took shape in a climate of growing French angst about the loss of cultural autonomy in the face of growing European su-

pranationalism.⁸⁷ The French—compelled to redefine their national identity within the confines of a newly enlarged “Europe”—mobilized discourses on race, gender, and sexuality in relation to a visible, internal “Other” (i.e., North African Muslim women) as a way to redefine the bounds of appropriate “Frenchness.” As Scott reminds us, it is no coincidence that the status and position of women in a society is often seen as a measure of that society’s modernity. The examples of Bulgaria and Yugoslavia show that this was also true during the communist era, where a feminized and backward East as represented by Islam was in need of a masculine, modern West as embodied in the discourses of socialist secularism.

Although there are certainly important similarities to the French and Turkish cases, we argue that a study of secularism in the Balkans can provide a new lens through which to view these debates. The socialist example suggests that scholarly genealogies of secularism, grounded in the Catholic/Protestant split, need to engage more directly with the literature on Orientalism. This seems particularly urgent given the centrality of the “oppressed” Eastern female to both classic Orientalist thought as described by Edward Said and Western secularism, which often rests on a view of tolerance that celebrates the protection of such Eastern women *from* religion as well as *to* religion. At the same time, scholars of secularism would do well to take account of what Maria Todorova calls “Balkanism,” seen not as mere variant on Orientalism but its own discursive configuration founded on a sense of the region as a space of transition between Europe and the Orient. Scholars can begin to do this by including the history of state-church relations in nations with Eastern Orthodox Christian traditions, nations that are systematically excluded from the existing genealogies of secularism in Europe.

Indeed, the Balkans in general are a place with a centuries old tradition of religious pluralism, under the Byzantine and subsequent Ottoman and Habsburg empire. Socialist reformers in both Bulgaria and Yugoslavia justified their often heavy-handed approach in the belief that their version of secularism further decreased rather than increased sectarian divisions in society. Furthermore, unlike in France or Turkey, where state efforts to impose secularism were focused exclusively on the public sphere, the Bulgarian and Yugoslav cases suggest that the socialist secular model was far more comprehensive in trying to radically reshape the material conditions of everyday life. This difference reflects, in part, the nature, role, and perception of the so-called private and public spheres under state socialism.⁸⁸ The cases of Bulgarian and Yugoslav secularist socialism stand diametrically opposed to models of secularism associated with the United States, in which separation of church and state is premised on the need to protect religion from the incursions of the state.

These findings point to the critical purchase that the concept of “socialist secularism” has even between as diametrically opposed cases as Bulgaria and Yugoslavia. By considering these two cases together, we question the frequent exclusion of Yugoslavia from broader discussions of Eastern European socialism and post-socialism. Furthermore, identifying commonalities for Bulgaria and Yugoslavia in both the content and practice of socialist secularism—in spite of the Yugoslav “difference”—highlights the productiveness of the concept of “socialist secularism” for scholars of gender, religion, and beyond.

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◆ Notes

1. Talal Asad, *Formations of the Secular* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), 17.
2. *Ibid.*, 10, 168–170, 199. That said, important studies on Turkey and Egypt that deal with secularism and gender have appeared in recent years. For example, see Saba Mahmood, *The Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005); Nilüfer Göle, *The Forbidden Modern: Civilization and Veiling* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997); Joan Wallach Scott, *The Politics of the Veil* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007).
3. Many scholars trace the origins of this secularization thesis to Enlightenment belief in the progressive triumph of reason and Weber's seminal work *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. See Janet R. Jakobsen and Ann Pellegrini, "Introduction: Times like These," in *Secularisms*, ed. Janet Jakobsen and Ann Pellegrini (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008), 2–3; John T.S. Madeley, "America's Secular State and the Unsecular State of Europe," in *Religion, State, and Society: Jefferson's Wall of Separation in Comparative Perspective*, ed. Robert Fatton and R.K. Ramazani (New York: Palgrave, 2009), 109–111. Neo-Weberian sociologists like Peter Berger championed the secularization thesis into the 1970s. Peter Berger, Grace Davie, and Effie Fokas, *Religious America, Secular Europe? A Theme and Variations* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2008), 10. For a spirited and thoughtful defense of the secularization framework, consult Jose Casanova, "Secularization Revisited: A Reply to Talal Asad," in *Powers of the Secular Modern. Talal Asad and his Interlocutors*, ed. David Scott and Charles Hirschkind (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), 12–30.
4. Kristen Ghodsee, "Symphonic Secularism: Eastern Orthodoxy, Ethnic Identity and Religious Freedoms in Contemporary Bulgaria," *Anthropology of East Europe Review* 27, no. 2 (2009): 227–252.
5. Asad, *Formations of the Secular*, 7.
6. Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, 2nd ed. (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2009); Pamela Ballinger, "Definitional Dilemmas: Southeastern Europe as 'Culture Area'?" *Balkanologie* 3, no. 2 (1999): 73–91.
7. One notable exception is Jeff Haynes, "Religion, Secularisation and Politics: A Postmodern Conspectus," *Third World Quarterly* 18, no. 4 (1997): 726.
8. Gregory Massell, *The Surrogate Proletariat: Moslem Women and Revolutionary Strategies in Soviet Central Asia, 1919–1929* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974); Douglas Northrop, *Veiled Empire: Gender and Power in Stalinist Central Asia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004).
9. Scholars of Yugoslavia noted declining religiosity, a phenomenon that was sometimes related to variables such as urbanization and politicization. Dean E. Frease, "A Politicization Paradigm: The Case of Yugoslavia," *Sociological Quarterly* 16, no. 1 (1975): 33–47.
10. Madeley, "America's Secular State," 110.
11. For one exception see, Lavinia Stan, "Church-State Relations and Secularism in Eastern Europe," in *Quo Vadis Eastern Europe? Religion, State and Society after Communism*, ed. Ines Angeli Murzaku (Ravenna: Longo Editore, 2009), 89–106.
12. Madeley, "America's Secular State," 125.
13. Katherine Verdery, *What Was Socialism and What Comes Next?* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 64.
14. Ramet discusses key differences in Marx's writings on religion and Marxist-Leninist interpretations of Marx. Pedro Ramet, "Conclusion," in *Religion and Nationalism in Soviet and East European Politics* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1989), 424. The distinct brand of Yugoslav socialism developed after Yugoslavia's split with the Soviet Union and centered on principles such as self-management and non-alignment is often deemed Titoism. This differs from Yu-

goslavism, an ideology of South Slav unity, which has enjoyed various articulations since the nineteenth century and which shifted considerably in form, content, and prominence during the lifespan of socialist Yugoslavia. For a detailed discussion of Yugoslavism in the socialist context, see Andrew Wachtel, *Making a Nation, Breaking a Nation: Literature and Cultural Politics in Yugoslavia* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998).

15. For just a small sampling of efforts to define secularism and the secular, see Graeme Smith, *A Short History of Secularism* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2008), 2–8; C. John Sommerville, *Religion in the National Agenda: What We Mean by Religious, Spiritual, Secular* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2009), 195–204. In Bulgarian, see Dimitur Kirov's *Bogoslovie na obshtestvenia zhivot* (Theology of the social life) (Sofia: St. Kliment and Ohridski University Press, 2002).

16. Pedro Ramet, *Cross and Commissar: The Politics of Religion in Eastern Europe and the USSR* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 16; Stan, "Church-State Relations and Secularism in Eastern Europe," 192.

17. Ramet, "Conclusion," 414–415.

18. Evgenija Garbolevsky, *A Church Ossified? Repression and Resurgence of Bulgarian Orthodoxy 1944–1956* (Sofia: Aconi-Izdat, 2005), 16–18.

19. James Lindsay Hopkins, *The Bulgarian Orthodox Church: A Socio-Historical Analysis of the Evolving Relationship between Church, Nation, and State in Bulgaria* (Boulder, CO: East European Monographs, 2009), 202–205.

20. Ramet, "Conclusion," 415. Ghodsee, "Symphonic Secularism," 227–252.

21. Ramet, *Cross and Commissar*, 29.

22. Mary Neuburger, *The Orient Within: Muslim Minorities and the Negotiation of Nationhood in Modern Bulgaria* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004).

23. Klaus Buchenau, "What Went Wrong? Church-State Relations in Socialist Yugoslavia," *Nationalities Papers* 33, no. 4 (2005): 548.

24. See the letter from the Italian Legation in Belgrade to the Minister of Foreign Affairs in Rome; Ministry of Foreign Affairs Archive, Rome, Italy; Serie Affari Politici 1946–1950 Jugoslavia, b. 71, Telespresso "La Lotta Contro la Chiesa Cattolica in Jugoslavia" (26 April 1950). For a similar judgment, refer also to the Telespresso of 23 October 1948 from the Italian Legation in Belgrade to the Ministry of the Foreign Affairs in Rome; Ministry of Foreign Affairs Archive, Rome, Italy; Serie Affari Politici 1946–1950 Jugoslavia, b. 42.

25. Cited in Vjekoslav Perica, *Balkan Idols: Religion and Nationalism in Yugoslav States* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 5.

26. See Kim Shively, "Taming Islam: Studying Religion in Secular Turkey," *Anthropological Quarterly* 81, no. 3 (2008): 687.

27. Shively, "Taming Islam: Studying Religion in Secular Turkey."

28. Noel Malcolm, *Bosnia: A Short History* (New York: New York University Press, 1996), 199.

29. Tone Brंगा, *Being Muslim the Bosnian Way* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 8–11; Munevera Hadžišehović, *A Muslim Woman in Tito's Yugoslavia*, trans. Thomas J. Butler and Saba Risaluddin (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2003), 111, 123.

30. The regime also responded to Bosnian Muslims' insistence on their distinctiveness. As Dijana Alić and Maryam Gushesh put it, "the construction of Bosnia's national identity was informed by a dialogue between competing narratives: the more dominant Yugoslav notion of Bosnia as symbol of a united Yugoslavia, and the persistent claim of a unique cultural heritage distinct from the neighboring states of Serbia and Croatia." Dijana Alić and Maryem Gusheh, "Reconciling National Narratives in Socialist Bosnia and Herzegovina: The Bašćaršija Project, 1948–1953," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 58, no. 1 (1999): 12.

31. Buchenau, "What Went Wrong?," 553–554. The regime's support in 1959 for a Macedonian Orthodox Church autonomous from the Serbian Orthodox Church, for instance, rankled

many within the Serbian church hierarchy. Pedro Ramet, "The Interplay of Religious Policy and Nationalities Policy in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe," in *Religion and Nationalism*, 313.

32. Buchenau, "What Went Wrong?," 555.

33. Jugoslovenska Knjiga, *Freedom of Religion in the Federative People's Republic of Yugoslavia. Documents* (Belgrade: Stampa Jugoslovensko stamparsko preduzece, 1947), 5–6.

34. *Ibid.*, 6.

35. *Ibid.*, 8.

36. *Ibid.* For a brief prehistory of these constitutional clauses providing for freedom of conscience and separation of church and state in socialist Yugoslavia, see the pro-regime account in Ivan Lazić, "The Legal and Actual Status of Religious Communities in Yugoslavia," in *Religions in Yugoslavia*, ed. Zlatko Frid (Zagreb: Binoza, 1971), 50–57. Lazić locates the origin of these policies in the "Foca Documents" promulgated by the Supreme Staff of the People's Liberation Army in December 1942.

37. Lazić, "The Legal and Actual Status," 45.

38. Individuals holding certain occupations, such as teachers or soldiers, often could not publically practice religion, though this varied greatly depending on where one lived in Yugoslavia and became more relaxed by the mid-1960s. Stella Alexander, *Church and State in Yugoslavia since 1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 225.

39. Rastko Vidić, *The Position of the Church in Yugoslavia* (Belgrade: "Jugoslavija," 1962), 10.

40. Ivo Banac, *With Stalin against Tito: Cominformist Splits in Yugoslav Communism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989), 17.

41. Alexander, *Church and State in Yugoslavia since 1945*, 62.

42. Massell, *The Surrogate Proletariat*.

43. Northrop, *Veiled Empire*, 9.

44. Alić and Gusheh, "Reconciling National Narratives," 12.

45. *Ibid.*, 17.

46. The regime used both carrots and sticks to compel priests to join these groups, which provided the clergy with benefits such as pensions and social security. Miroslav Akmadza, "The Position of the Catholic Church in Croatia, 1945–1970," *Review of Croatian History* 1 (2006): 104. On recently available archival documentation of the frequent fear or opportunism that produced greater participation among Orthodox priests, see Buchenau, "What Went Wrong?," 556.

47. Ahmet Kuru, *Secularism and State Policies toward Religion: The United States, France, and Turkey* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 11.

48. Bringa, *Being Muslim*, 221.

49. Even as direct intervention and control gave way to subtler forms of ideological pressure, religious faithful often found it difficult to reconcile the supposedly "private" world of religion with participation in socialist secularism. Various scholars have identified as central to Yugoslav secularism a civil religion centered on Tito. This civil religion had its own calendar (New Year, May Day, Tito's birthday, Day of the Republic); rituals (most famously, the annual countrywide relay race to celebrate Tito's birthday); ideology (brotherhood and unity, self management); and sacred history (the partisan struggle, Yugoslavia's "daring" break from the Soviet Union, nonalignment). This civil religion did not supplant traditional religion but competed as an alternative. See Sergej Flere, "The Broken Covenant of Tito's People: The Problem of Civil Religion in Communist Yugoslavia," *East European Politics and Societies* 21 (2007): 681–703; Perica, *Balkan Idols*, 223–226.

50. Ghodsee, "Symphonic Secularism," 227–252; Daniela Kalkandjieva, *Bulgarskata pravoslavna tsurkva i durzhavata, 1944–1953* (The Bulgarian Orthodox church and the state, 1944–1953) (Sofia: Albatros, 1997); Stefan Chureshki, *Pravoslaviето i komunistite v Bulgaria (1944–1960)* (Or-

thodoxy and communists in Bulgaria [1944–1960]) (Sofia: Prosveta, 2004); Momchil Methodiev, *Mezhdú viarata i kompromisa. Bulgarskata pravoslavna tsurkva I komunisticheskata durzhava (1944–1989)* (Between faith and compromise. The Bulgarian Orthodox Church and the communist state [1944–1989]) (Sofia: Institut za blizkoto minalo i izdatelstvo “Siela,” 2010).

51. Central State Archive, Sofia, Bulgaria, f. 28, op. 1, a. e. 27 (Memorandum no. 36, 6 October 1944).

52. Hopkins, *The Bulgarian Orthodox Church*, 196–197.

53. Tzvetan Todorov, *Voices from the Gulag: Life and Death in Communist Bulgaria* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999).

54. People’s Republic of Bulgaria, *State Gazette* no. 48, 1 March 1949. http://www.minelres.lv/NationalLegislation/Bulgaria/Bulgaria_Denominat_Bulgarian.htm (accessed 21 January 2010).

55. For the specific effects of the policy on the Muslim population see Kristen Ghodsee, *Muslim Lives in Eastern Europe: Gender, Ethnicity and the Transformation of Islam in Postsocialist Bulgaria* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 109–115.

56. *Pravoslaven pastir* (Orthodox shepherd), no. 6 (June 1949): 224, cited in Garbolevsky, *A Church Ossified*, 28.

57. *Tsurkován vestnik*, 12 May 1947, no. 20–21, 91, cited in Garbolevsky, *A Church Ossified*, 28.

58. *Tsurkován vestnik*, 16 March 1954, no. 11, 2, cited in Garbolevsky, *A Church Ossified*, 28.

59. Klaus Roth, “Socialist Life-Style Rituals in Bulgaria,” *Anthropology Today* 6, no. 5 (1990): 8–10.

60. Janice Broun and Grazyna Sikorska, *Conscience and Captivity: Religion in Eastern Europe* (Washington, DC: Ethics and Public Policy Center, 1988), 45–66. Of course, what they said to communist officials and what they believed are two different things. Despite this, post-1989 surveys confirm high levels of atheism/agnosticism as well as low church attendance well after the communist rule was over. See Petar Kanev, “Religion in Bulgaria after 1989: Historical and Socio-Cultural Effects,” *South-East Europe Review* 1 (2002): 75–96; and Phil Zuckerman, *The Cambridge Companion to Atheism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

61. Olga Kovačić, *Women of Yugoslavia* (Belgrade: Jugoslovenska Knjiga, 1947), 5.

62. Verdery, *What Was Socialism*, 61–82.

63. Kovačić, *Women of Yugoslavia*, 49.

64. *Ibid.*, 6.

65. Jill Benderly, “Feminist Movements in Yugoslavia, 1978–1992,” in *State-Society Relations in Yugoslavia, 1945–1992*, ed. Melissa K. Bokovoy, Jill A. Irvine, and Carol S. Lilly (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1997), 184–185.

66. See, for example, the 1980 UN-sponsored report in which Tomšič blames the failure to achieve women’s equality in Yugoslavia on “economic underdevelopment, primitivism, religious beliefs and other conservative prejudices, and private-ownership relations which still affect life and family.” Vida Tomšič, *Woman in the Development of Socialist Self-Managing Yugoslavia* (Belgrade: Jugoslovenski stvarnost, 1980), 67, 17. Lawyer, writer, politician, partisan, and Yugoslav Party activist, Tomšič championed women’s equality, in particular reproductive freedom and the right to abortion, even as she remained within the framework of a Yugoslav socialist project that sought to dictate the ways in which women’s emancipation would take place. For a useful discussion of the tensions in Tomšič’s thought and politics, see Mateja Jeraj, “Vida Tomšič,” in *A Biographical Dictionary of Women’s Movements and Feminisms: Central, Eastern, and South Eastern Europe, 19th and 20th Centuries*, ed. Francisca de Haan, Krassimira Daskalova, and Anna Loutfi (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2006), 575–579.

67. Kovačić, *Women of Yugoslavia*, 70.

68. Hadžišehović, *A Muslim Woman in Tito’s Yugoslavia*, 110–111.

69. On the regime's efforts to "bribe" women to abandon the veil by offering low cost textiles and tailor services, see Alexander Dragnich, *Tito's Promised Land, Yugoslavia* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1954), 154.
70. Benderly, "Feminist Movements in Yugoslavia, 1978–1992," 184–186. Benderly details the various waves of feminist thought and activity in Yugoslavia.
71. William G. Lockwood, "Converts and Consanguinity: The Social Organization of Moslem Slavs in Western Bosnia," *Ethnology* 11, no.1 (1972): 55–79; Rose M. Somerville, "The Family in Yugoslavia," *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 27, no. 3 (August 1965): 350–363.
72. Ali Eminov, *Turks and Other Muslim Minorities in Bulgaria* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 26.
73. Neuburger, *The Orient Within*, 192.
74. Vera Mutafchieva, "The Turk, the Jew and the Gypsy," in *Relations of Compatibility and Incompatibility between Christians and Muslims in Bulgaria*, ed. Antonina Zhelyaskova (Sofia: International Centre for Minority Studies and Intercultural Relations, 1994), 31.
75. "Uchebna programa na 45-dnevite kursove za bulgarki mohamedanki aktivistki na Otechestveniya Front" (Educational program of the forty-five day courses for Bulgarian Muslim women activists of the Fatherland's Front). State Archive, Blagoevgrad, f. 628, o. 3, a.e. 81, l. 44–47.
76. Originally a coalition of various parties and organization opposed to the Germans in Bulgaria during World War II, the Fatherland Front eventually became a communist mass organization. See John D. Bell, *The Bulgarian Communist Party from Blagoev to Zhivkov* (Washington, DC: Hoover Institution Press, 1985), 70.
77. "Informatsiya za rabota na shkolata za Bŭlgarki Mohamedanki v Gotse Delchev za vremeto ot 16 Noemvri do 29 Dekemvri 1961 godina" (Information about the course for Bulgarian Muslim women in Gotse Delchev for the period from 16 November to 29 December 1961). State Archive Blagoevgrad, f. 628, O. 3, a.e. 81, l. 6, 7.
78. Lenka Nahodilova, "Communist Modernisation and Gender: The Experience of Bulgarian Muslims, 1970–1990," *Contemporary European History* 19, no. 1 (2010): 37–53.
79. Petar Petrov, Asen Spasov, and Donio Donev, eds., *Rodopa: Bulgarski tvardina (Sbornik besedi) Uchebno pomagalo* (Rodopa: Bulgarian fortress [Collection of talks]. Teaching materials) (Sofia: BKP Izdatelstvo, 1960).
80. *Ibid.*, 227.
81. *Ibid.*, 237.
82. Ignat Penkov, *Novite Gradove v N.R. Bulgaria* (New Towns in the People's Republic of Bulgaria) (Sofia: Izdatelstvo Narodna Prosveta, 1971), 124.
83. Eminov, *Turkish and Other Muslim Minorities*, 58.
84. *Ibid.*, 59.
85. Neuburger, *The Orient Within*, 142.
86. Roth, "Socialist Life-Style Rituals," 8–10.
87. Scott, *Politics of the Veil*, 18.
88. Susan Gal and Gail Kligman, *The Politics of Gender after Socialism: A Comparative-Historical Essay* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).