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Ideas of Federation and Personal Union with Regard to Bulgaria and Romania

(Abstract)

This article presents and explains the moments in the history of the relations between Bulgaria and Romania, in which different ideas of federation and personal union with regard to the two countries have been launched, but not accomplished. The emphasis is placed on the Bulgarian-Romanian cooperation against the Ottoman Empire in the 1860s-1870s, the opportunities for a personal union in connection with the restoration and the early history of the Bulgarian principality since 1878, and the issue of federation in Southeast and Central Europe in the period 1944–1948. The initiatives uniting Bulgaria and Romania came more from the Bulgarian side, due to the historical advantages of Romania as regards state consolidation and political potential. These political ideas were primarily subjected to other ultimate aims considered to be more important than bilateral rapprochement (national liberation, unification and independence, protection from the imperial policies of a great power, implementation of party and class interests, etc.). The great powers neighboring the region, especially Russia / Soviet Union opposed most to the implementation of these ideas, as the creation of large state formations in the region would hinder the application of the imperial principle of “divide and rule”. The ideas of federation have remained unrealized, but they continue to be a mobilizing resource which can be used in the present of Bulgaria and Romania.