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BILGIN ÇELİK, *DAĞILAN YUGOSLAVYA SONRASI KOSOVA VE MAKEDONYA TÜRKLERİ* [KOSOVO AND MACEDONIAN TURKS AFTER THE DISINTEGRATION OF YUGOSLAVIA]. ANTALYA: YENİDEN ANADOLU VE RUMELİ MÜDAFAA-I HUKUK YAYINLARI, 2008, 180 p.

*Reviewed by* Ognjen Krešić\*

The book *Dağılan Yugoslavya sonrası Kosova ve Makedonya Türkleri* was written by Dr. Bilgin Çelik of the Dokuz Eylül University in İzmir. He is Chair of Modern History at the Faculty of Literature and head of the Balkan Region Research Centre. His main area of interest is Ottoman politics during the last decades of the Empire, and especially the Albanian component in the complexity of Ottoman politics and society. His interest in the Turkish population of Yugoslavia, as he himself noted, also stems from personal reasons because he is descended from a family that emigrated from Kosovo after the First World War.

Believing that the political situation in the Balkans is frequently of global importance, the author takes upon himself to present one of its aspects – the issue of the Turks living in the territory of the former Yugoslavia. Çelik analyses the problem from a historical perspective, organising the account in the chronological order. The book consists of an introduction (pp. 11–18), three chapters covering the period from the creation of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes in 1918 to the first decade of the twenty-first century, a conclusion (pp. 167–171) and bibliography (pp. 173–180). Apart from the available literature, the author makes ample use of newspaper articles and documents issued by political parties and relevant institutions.

The introduction gives an account of the modern history of the Balkan Peninsula with special reference to the importance of interventions and influences of foreign powers. The author sees the period following the end of the Second World War as one marked by political

stability but also as one that, in his opinion, ended in a crisis caused mainly by the rise of nationalism. He chooses to devote the first chapter, “The Course of the Disintegration of Yugoslavia” (*Yugoslavya’nın Dağılma Süreci*) (pp. 19–58), to the history of the Yugoslav state. His detailed account, which includes different views on political complexities, may be interesting to the Turkish public but the readership in Serbia would be quite familiar with its contents.

The second chapter, “The Kosovo and Macedonian Turks in the Yugoslav Period” (*Yugoslavya Döneminde Kosova ve Makedonya Türkleri*) (pp. 59–102), focuses on the Turkish population of Yugoslavia from its creation in 1918 until its disintegration in the 1990s. One of the period’s most striking trends was Turkish emigration, mostly organised, from Yugoslavia. Another factor that contributed to their decreasing number was national assimilation, mostly in the form of albanisation. One of the most important moments for the Turkish community of Kosovo and Metohija was their recognition as an ethnic minority in 1951. The Yugoslav government was encouraged to take that step by the improvement of the country’s relations with the Turkish Republic which, being a NATO member, had hitherto been looked at with distrust. Interestingly, relations between the two countries reflected directly upon the number of persons declaring themselves as Turks in the censuses. In 1948, 1,300 inhabitants of Kosovo declared themselves as Turks. Only five years later, in 1953, the census showed the figure of

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35,000. In the former census Turks chose to declare themselves as Albanians in order to dodge the repercussions of being associated with a hostile country. The new minority rights enabled the Turkish community to establish several cultural societies and to have their children educated in their mother tongue. Nevertheless, they were exposed to pressures from the Albanian majority, especially after the enactment of the 1974 Yugoslav Constitution, and the number of schools providing instruction in Turkish varied. At the end of the 1980s the Turks found themselves amidst the Serbian-Albanian conflict, but they predominantly took a neutral stand.

The Turks in Macedonia mostly shared the experience of their co-ethnics in Kosovo. Still, there were differences that deserve to be separately examined and analysed. The number of Turks in Macedonia followed the same trends as that in Kosovo. In 1953 they accounted for 15.6% of the population (the second largest group after the Macedonians), but by 1991 the figure dropped to 3.9%. Macedonian Turks were also subjected to assimilation by Albanians when their number began to dwindle. In the People's (later Socialist) Republic of Macedonia the Turks were recognised as an ethnic minority from the beginning, and thus they developed diverse educational and cultural activities. The most important newspaper of the Turkish community was the "Unity" (*Birlik*), the first Turkish newspaper printed in Latin alphabet by The Progress Organisation.<sup>1</sup> After the war it was under the control of the Communist Party. Beside newspapers, the Turks pub-

lished several magazines, the most influential of which was the "Voices" (*Sesler*).

The third part of the book is titled "The Kosovo and Macedonian Turks after Yugoslavia" (*Yugoslavya Sonrası Kosova ve Makedonya Türkler*) (pp. 103–166). The author stresses that the Yugoslav Turks also experienced anxieties and pressures from various sides in the period between 1989 and 1999. The Turks, common religious ties notwithstanding, could not decidedly choose one side in the Serbian-Albanian conflict and generally tried to remain neutral. Nevertheless, the historical ties and common religion contributed to a closer connection with the Albanians. The period after the 1999 NATO bombing and the establishment of UN administration in Kosovo was marked by the pressures put upon the Turkish community from extreme Albanian nationalists, some of whom demanded a ban on the use of the Turkish language. The situation was improved after the Turkish Republic intensified its diplomatic activity and Turkish soldiers became part of the KFOR troops.

Çelik devotes his greatest attention to an overview of Turkish political parties and civil society organisations in Kosovo. The first political party of Kosovo Turks was founded in 1990, the Turkish Democratic Union (*Türk Demokratik Birliği/TDB*). Afterwards, several other political organisations have sought to act as representatives of Turkish interests. In the first post-1999 parliamentary elections, the two biggest Turkish parties TDB and THP (Turkish People's Party, *Türk Halk Partisi*) formed a coalition, the Kosovo Democratic Turkish Party (*Kosova Demokratisi Türk Partisi*), which won three seats, using the position to promote the interests of the Turkish minority. During the drafting of the new Kosovo constitution, the Turkish delegates focused on the question of the formal status of Turkish, with a view to achieving the official lan-

<sup>1</sup> *Yücel Teşkilatı* (The Progress Organisation) was the most prominent Turkish organisation founded before 1950, and it was tied to the Turkish Consulate in Skopje and the Embassy in Belgrade. It was founded by intellectuals and conservatives, and had an anticommunist agenda, which is why it was banned in 1947.

guage status. The basis for their claim was found in the laws and constitutions from the Yugoslav period, all of which (from 1969 until the disintegration of Yugoslavia) provided for the status of Turkish as an official language along with Serbo-Croatian and Albanian. The author is of the view that the constitutional framework established by UNMIK violated the rights guaranteed by the 1974 Yugoslav Constitution given that the 2001 document stated that the formal and equal versions of the highest law were in Albanian, Serbian and English. The only provision taking Turkish into account was that the laws and the said constitutional framework be published in Turkish as well. According to Çelik, the stance of the UN Special Representative Bernard Kouchner was generally believed to be the reason for that situation. According to Mr Kouchner's spokesperson, they considered that, previous constitutional stipulations notwithstanding, the Turkish language had never been an official language in Kosovo in practice. The presented evidence to the contrary was not accepted. According to the Law on the Use of Languages adopted in 2006, apart from Albanian and Serbian, a language can be accepted as official and equal if its speakers account for no less than 5% of the total population of a municipality, with one exception: in Prizren Turkish is an official language irrespective of the actual number of its speakers. The Turkish politicians in Kosovo were and still are dissatisfied with the solution to the language issue because the use of Turkish for official purposes is hindered outside Prizren. They view as double standards the fact that Serbian is accepted as an official language in the whole territory of Kosovo regardless of the number of Serbs. Nevertheless, after Prizren, Turkish became an official language in Gnjilane, Kosovska Mitrovica and Priština. The 2008 Constitution drew ambiguous

reactions from Turkish politicians, some acknowledging that the constitutional provisions protect the right of the Turks to use their own language in local institutions and the Assembly, and the others remaining dissatisfied with the achieved level of minority rights.

After a short review of the Turkish cultural organisations and press in Kosovo, Çelik proceeds to discuss the position of the Turkish minority in Macedonia after its secession from Yugoslavia. The new Macedonian constitution of 1991 stipulated that the national minorities, Turks included, were to have the same rights as the Macedonian majority. The continuous decrease in their numbers (mainly due to emigration) and territorial dispersion creates problems as regards the electoral process and the exercise of the right to education in their mother tongue. Moreover, the attempts at the albanisation of the Turks only intensified after the Ohrid Agreement signed between the Macedonian government and the Albanian representatives in 2001. On the other hand, according to the constitutional provisions adopted after the Macedonian-Albanian negotiations, in every municipality where a minority accounts for at least 20% of the total population their language becomes a second official language. The Macedonian Turks acquired this right in four municipalities: Centar Župa, Vraneštica, Mavrovi Avnovi and Plasnica. The constitution also guarantees the right to elementary and secondary education in mother tongue to members of every minority. The author draws attention to the fact that the decreasing trend in the number of schools with Turkish classes has already started in the Yugoslav period and merely continued after independence. Hence only half of some 10,000 Turkish pupils are receiving education in their mother tongue, and the percentage of those having secondary education in Turkish is below one per cent.

Like in the subchapters on Kosovo, the author outlines the political activity of the Turkish parties in Macedonia, as well as the Turkish community's activities through numerous cultural and civic organisations. As already mentioned, the dispersion of the Turkish population is a limiting factor as regards their representation in the parliament and local councils, and impedes more ambitious political engagement. Moreover, as is often the case, political, ideological and personal divisions within the Turkish political class further complicate political life. The main division is into adherents of a moderate liberal political stand and nationalists who accept the Turkish-Islamic synthesis.

The political situation in the self-proclaimed Republic of Kosovo and in Macedonia remains problematic and volatile. Albanian-Serbian and Albanian-Macedonian relations are always first to come to mind when trying to explain the complexities of the region's recent history, and they certainly are key to understanding its past and future. But Çelik offers the readers of his book a new perspective, that of the region's Turkish minority. Although the numerical strength and political and cultural influence of the Turkish population is relatively weak, they form an integral part of these societies and are active participants in political events and developments in the central Balkans, especially given the support they enjoy from the Republic of Turkey.

KOSTA NIKOLIĆ, *MIT O PARTIZANSKOM JUGOSLOVENSTVU* [THE MYTH OF PARTISAN YUGOSLAVISM]. BELGRADE: ZAVOD ZA UDŽBENIKE, 2015, xvii+502 p.

*Reviewed by* Dragan Bakić\*

Many generations of Yugoslavs born after 1945 thought that their socialist homeland had been forged in the Second World War in the heroic armed struggle fought by Tito's communist partisans against the occupiers and their collaborators (*narodnooslobodilačka borba*). It was then, as the communist origin myth expounded, that the nations and national minorities of Yugoslavia forged their brotherhood and unity (*bratstvo i jedinstvo*) which laid ground for the post-war socialist federation. That new country replaced the "rotten monarchist dictatorship" that was the Kingdom of Yugoslavia destroyed in the Axis invasion of 1941 and put an end to national discrimination of non-Serb peoples that was synonymous with the rule of a "Greater-Serbian hegemonic clique". The legacy of communist Yugoslavism, however, seems to have survived the break-up of the country nearly twenty-five years ago. In

Serbia, in particular, a section of population, not limited to youth-nostalgic older generation, still maintains a strange affection for dead and buried Yugoslavia. All this makes the necessity of scholarly examination of the phenomenon more pronounced. That is exactly what Kosta Nikolić, one of the most gifted Serbian historians, embarks on in his most recent monograph. His analysis is a continuation of what he had already discussed in his excellent *Srbija u Titovoj Jugoslaviji (1941–1980)* [Serbia in Tito's Yugoslavia] (Belgrade: Zavod za udžbenike, 2011). Nikolić has presented a thorough deconstruction of what he terms "the myth of partisan Yugoslavism". It should be noted that his study is not that of the history of the Yugoslav idea or the Yugoslav state from

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