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Although the Albanian national movement in Yugoslavia is one of the book's focuses, the author provides little information about its structure, modes of operation and protagonists, occasionally misleading readers into believing that the latter were people who spent decades in prison for their beliefs, such as Adem Demaçi. In that way, readers are left unaware of the fact that the leaders of the Albanian national programme in Kosovo and Metohija in the 1960s and 1970s were not "persecuted members of an underground resistance" but in fact the most influential party functionaries and intellectuals employed in state institutions who, with the support of Josip Broz and the Yugoslav political leadership, elevated the

autonomy of Kosovo and Metohija to the status of a federal unit with its own constitution, supreme court and powers in the area of defence and international relations.

Kosovo and Diplomacy Since World War II: Yugoslavia, Albania and the Path to Kosovan Independence is a useful handbook for research concerned with the diplomatic history of the Kosovo-and-Metohija issue, the policy of Enver Hoxha's Albania on the issue, and the history of European diplomacy in the Cold War era. The parts of the book that deal with the history of Kosovo and Metohija and Yugoslav state policy are marked by the author's propagandistic slant, which takes away some of its scholarly value.

THANOS VEREMIS, *A MODERN HISTORY OF THE BALKANS. NATIONALISM AND IDENTITY IN SOUTHEAST EUROPE*. LONDON & NEW YORK: I. B. TAURIS, 2017, xi + 226 p.

Reviewed by Dušan Fundić*

The recently published book of Thanos Veremis is a condensed overview of a little more than the last two centuries of Balkan history. Veremis, Professor Emeritus of Political History at the University of Athens, founding member and former President of the Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy (ELIAMEP) and visiting professor at Princeton, Oxford and London School of Economics, is a prolific historian, whose better-known works include *Modern Greece: A History since 1821* (2010). The book reviewed here is structured into three parts whose titles – "The Balkans from the Nineteenth to the Twenty First Century: the Building and Dismantling of Nation States", "The Balkans in Comparative Perspective", and "Unfinished Business" – clearly show the main directions in which he takes his research.

Discussing the relationship between the influence of great powers and the dynamic

of the Balkan states' internal development, the author identifies the phenomena and processes he perceives as decisive for the outcomes and contemporary problems of the Balkan region. In that sense, he attributes responsibility for the state of affairs in Balkan politics and relations between the countries to the incompetence and irresponsibility of foreign and local political actors alike. Veremis focuses primarily on the most important developments in the political history of Greece, Serbia, Bulgaria and Romania, offering a comparative perspective and an overview of their foreign policy orientations.

By the end of the eighteenth century the Orthodox Christians of South-East Europe were inheritors of three cultural traditions:

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Greek, Latin and Slavic. Common to them was that they were engaged in trade and sought to evade Ottoman tax collectors. Also, Ottoman rule provided a single frame for all of them, despite differences, with the tradition of knowledge transmission and education within Orthodox churches. Towards the end of the eighteenth century, the peoples of the Balkan Peninsula became acquainted with the ideas of the French Revolution more directly, through the French rule of the Illyrian Provinces (parts of Croatia and Dalmatia) and the Ionian Islands, through various proponents of "French ideas": diplomats, agents, local liberals and revolutionaries as the human factor in the promotion of revolutionary ideas and concepts, the Balkan mercantile diaspora in Central Europe, and the phenomenon defined by Veremis as "tradition of local radicalism", until the early 1820s, exemplified by Riga Velestinlis. In the author's view, exposure to these ideas paved the way for the shaping of national identities and states in the Balkans along with the struggle against Ottoman rule which marked the nineteenth century.

Veremis's overview of the history of the Balkans states is balanced and offers a well-founded selection of key events and actors. He draws particular attention to the fact that the states of South-East Europe were built on the ruins of two empires, the Habsburg and the Ottoman, and that they spent a good part of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in mutual rivalries. On the other hand, to make it clear that modern Balkan history cannot be reduced to a string of conflicts and wars, Veremis points to a series of attempts at alliances and cooperation and provides examples of "multilateralism" between neighbours. He looks at the efforts to overcome rivalries, from the Balkan Pact (1934) of Greece, Romania, Yugoslavia and Greece to the period of communism and the disintegration of Yugoslavia.

The particularly important chapters on nationalisms and identities in the Balkans, mostly unstable economies and the role of

the military in the domestic politics of Balkan states are concluded with a look at the views of Western authors on the south-eastern part of Europe. Veremis places particular emphasis on the economic instability of nineteenth-century states which, following the penetration of Western capital, declared bankruptcy one after another, from the Ottoman Empire (1881), Greece (1893) and Serbia (1896) to Bulgaria (1902), indicating difficulties in their development. The section devoted to the Balkan economy in the second half of the twentieth century takes a look at the differences between and consequences of Yugoslav self-management, socialist countries, Albania, Bulgaria and Romania, and Greek capitalism. The part of the book dealing with economic issues contains a few useful tables which make it easier for the reader to understand the author's line of argument which is concluded with the observation that the future of the Peninsula will to a great extent depend on the fiscal policy of Germany and the EU.

A major strength of Veremis's book is his response to various tropes about the Balkans that prevail among Western publics. Following the emergence of a Eurocentric perspective on the Balkans since the work of Edward Gibbon, an eighteenth-century British Enlightenment historian, whose influential book on the history of the Roman Empire described the Balkans as a "dark" part of the Byzantine world, Veremis argues that such a perspective has been strengthened by more recent but not much different work of Samuel Huntington. Huntington saw the Orthodox and Muslim cultural worlds as contrasting with the "more European" Catholic and Protestant countries. Veremis also points to the oversimplified media presentation of the disintegration of Yugoslavia.

The last part of the book is devoted to the Greek-Macedonian dispute, Kosovo's self-proclaimed independence and the "Dayton" Bosnia and Herzegovina. Veremis points to inept and insufficiently effective

policies of Western countries, including US involvement in the disintegration of Yugoslavia under the veneer of support for multicultural democracies. The outcome was the creation of two EU-financed Western protectorates that can hardly be described as multicultural. The involvement of Western diplomacies is criticized as largely indecisive and insufficiently concerned about its long-term consequences. It is important to know that the book was published a year before the Prespa Agreement (2018) concluded between the governments in Skopje and Athens which settled the issue of the name of Greece's northern neighbour, now known as the Republic of North Macedonia. Can this be described as the "flexible strategy that will not depend entirely on foreign priorities" that Veremis favours, in the conclusion of his book, as the approach to resolving Balkan issues?

The book ends with a "Chronology", a list of the major events that took place between 1774, the year taken as the beginning of the Eastern Question, and 2016, the year of the Brexit referendum which, along with other difficulties of the EU, is seen as a sign of the protracted wait of the rest of the Balkan countries in the antechamber of membership. Some shortcomings of the book include the occasionally imprecise or/and inconsistent spelling of personal and geographic names. The virtual absence of Montenegro is conspicuous. Apart from its role in the Balkan Wars, no further information about it is given. These shortcomings notwithstanding, this book raises a number of interesting questions and offers original interpretations and answers both to students and to professional historians of Balkan history.

THEDE KAHL AND IOANA NECHITI, *THE BOYASH IN HUNGARY. A COMPARATIVE STUDY AMONG THE ARGĒLENI AND MUNČENI COMMUNITIES.*

VIENNA: AUSTRIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES PRESS, 2019, 235 p.

Reviewed by Annemarie Sorescu-Marinković*

The Boyash (Bayash) are an ethnic group living today in scattered communities across the Balkans, Central and Eastern Europe, but also in the Americas. They speak Romanian, preserve the memory of a common traditional occupation (woodwork), and are usually considered Roma by the majority population. The last two decades have seen an explosion of interest in this ethnic group, partly triggered by the publication, in 2005, of the volume *The Bayash in the Balkans. Identity of an Ethnic Community*, by the Institute for Balkan Studies in Belgrade and under the editorship of Biljana Sikimić. Today, researchers already talk about a new emerging discipline, Bayash studies, which has by now gathered an impressive corpus of studies. The present volume, *The Boyash*

in Hungary. A Comparative Study among the Argēleni and Munčeni Communities, authored by Thede Kahl and Ioana Nechiti, is a valuable addition to this growing body of study.

The volume, which is the first in the series edited by the Vanishing Languages and Cultural Heritage Commission of the Austrian Academy of Sciences, is a thorough dialectological and linguistic comparison of the Romanian linguistic varieties spoken by two subgroups of the Boyash in Hungary: *Argēleni* and *Munčeni*. It must be highlighted that the *Argēlean* variety is the one undergoing standardization, as Hungary has

* Institute for Balkan Studies SASA