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unique overview while demanding more attentive reading. The value of the comparative framework is visible in the subchapters on agrarian reforms after 1918, the Balkan economies after 1945, but also in describing postimperial groups that found themselves engulfed in the process of peripheralisation: the Balkan Muslims (Turkish, Slavic, and Albanian speakers), parts of Hungarian, German and Jewish populations.

In conclusion, by consistently pursuing a comparative look at events and processes in regional and global context, Schmitt succeeds in highlighting various undervalued research perspectives, and approaches the history of the Balkans in a thought-provoking manner which opens room for further research while simultaneously offering a valuable survey of its history.

Marie-Janine Calic, *THE GREAT CAULDRON. A HISTORY OF SOUTHEASTERN EUROPE*.
Cambridge-London: Harvard University Press, 2019, 724 p.

Reviewed by Rastko Lompar*

Marie-Janine Calic, professor of Eastern and Southeastern European History at Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich, starts her voluminous global history of Southeastern Europe by paraphrasing Tolstoy: "All powerful empires are alike; every poor land is poor in its own way." This book is therefore an attempt to highlight what separated the "poor lands" of the Balkan Peninsula from one another and what brought them together, what was unique to each and what was shared amongst them, and ultimately what their place is within the global context. It was originally published in German in 2016 under the title *Südosteuropa. Weltgeschichte einer Region*, and translated, with minor changes, into English by Elizabeth Janik. The translation is excellent, although at times too literal.

This book is a rare attempt at a concise overview of the historical developments in the Balkans from the fifteenth to the twenty-first century. Starting with a brief outline of the region's early history, Calic describes the situation in the 1500s and the breakdown of the pre-Ottoman Balkan order. The rise of Ottoman power is also covered in detail. The struggle between the imperial powers (Habsburg, Ottoman and Russian)

for the region is looked at against the backdrop of the intellectual developments on both sides of the Atlantic. The author discusses the impact of the American and French revolutions in the Balkans and the nascent movements for national liberation in the Balkans. The rise of nationalism and the founding myths of national ideologies are also discussed. Calic follows the banishment of Turkey from the Balkans, the First World War, as well as the polycentric and complicated interwar Balkan order. Focusing on the dialectical relationship between globalization and fragmentation, the author looks at the rise and fall of communism and debates about the place of Southeastern Europe in the global world of today.

Although there are some excursions into economic and financial history, the book primarily focuses on political events, stopping short of Braudel's method. All major chapters contain subchapters named after a paradigmatic city for the period (Krüje 1450, Istanbul 1683, Dubrovnik 1776, Thessaloniki 1821, Plovdiv 1876, Belgrade 1913, Bucharest 1939 and Sarajevo

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1984). However, these subchapters are not case studies devoted to the urbanization and cultural life of these cities, as one would expect. Instead, the author continues describing political events loosely connected to the city in question. Given the vastness of the topic and the enormous task at hand, Marie-Janine Calic understandingly had to gloss over some aspects and focus on others, guided by her own research interests and expertise. Therefore, the book focuses disproportionately on the South Slavic lands. Also, some periods are given little attention, most drastically the Second World War, whereas others, such as the foreign policy of socialist Yugoslavia, are discussed in detail. The book suffers from chronological leaps, which sometimes blurs the distinction between causes and effects. For example, the Bărăgan deportations (1951–1956) are mentioned much earlier than the Tito-Stalin split of 1948, and the uninformed readers are left wondering why the Romanian regime undertook a brutal campaign of depopulation of its borderland with Yugoslavia.

Many of the shortcomings are compounded in the last two chapters dealing with the twentieth century. The depiction of the Second World War in the Balkans, despite its immense importance for the shaping of the post-war order on the peninsula, is hurried and contains many problematic and false statements. Also, there are some phrases which differ significantly between the two editions. For example, when describing the alleged goal of the Yugoslav Army in the Homeland and its leader Dragoljub Mihajlović, in the German original Calic writes that it was “the renewal of the monarchy under Serbian leadership” (der die Monarchie unter serbischer Führung wiederherstellen wollte). A quite different formulation than the one in the English edition that he “sought a Greater Serbian monarchy”. Also, the author fails to accurately describe the unique nature of the Ustaša regime and even avoids the term “genocide” for the murderous campaigns of

the Croatian fascists. The Jasenovac death camp or any other camp in the Independent State of Croatia is not even mentioned by name. When describing the violence of the SS volunteer divisions Handžar and Skanderbeg against the Serbs, the author employs vague formulations, such as “liquidating rebels” and “draining the swamp”. On the other hand, Calic greatly exaggerates the scale of the anti-Muslim atrocities committed by the Yugoslav Army in the Homeland, and falsely claims that these crimes brought large numbers of Muslims into the partisan resistance movement. This claim is promptly disproved by the author’s own statistics which shows that there in fact were a disproportionate number of Muslims in the partisan ranks.

Even though Calic masterfully avoided being drawn into nationalist and romantic discourses about the heroic past in previous chapters, she does not apply the same criteria to the founding myths of the communist movement in Yugoslavia. The author’s portrayal of Josip Broz is almost hagiographical, and she goes so far as to claim that “Yugoslavia became the second country in Europe (after the Soviet Union) where communism prevailed through its own volition”. This tendency is evident throughout the rest of the book, as the author paints a rosy picture of the communist regime in Yugoslavia choosing either to completely omit (as in the case of mass executions of the “people’s enemies” in 1944) or to gloss over (as in the case of the persecutions of alleged Stalinists in 1948) problematic aspects of Yugoslav post-war history.

In conclusion, despite its shortcomings, the book is a rare attempt at a succinct overview of the last five centuries of the tumultuous history of the Balkan Peninsula. It highlights global aspects of the region’s rich history and succeeds in showing what is unique about each “poor land”.

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