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Review of Extremism and Violent Extremism in Serbia: 21st Century Manifestations of an Historical Challenge

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features of this small artistic and intellectual elite in interwar Bucharest. Since Bejan is essentially interested in shedding light on Criterion's key figures, the Legionary Movement receives only little attention. Accordingly, some of the attempts to dialogue with works on comparative fascism appear fragmentary. Roger Griffin's interpretation of fascism has remained contested until today, contrary to what the author claims, and alternative approaches are not taken into consideration. There are also some inadequacies in classifying the various regimes between 1938 and 1944, for example, when the rule of King Carol II, Horia Sima's Legionaries, and Marshall Antonescu's military dictatorship are lumped together into a single category of fascist dictatorships (xvii). But apart from these quibbles, *Intellectuals and Fascism in Interwar Romania* provides a well-researched study of interwar intellectual discourses, which will be especially valuable for English-speaking readers unfamiliar with previous Romanian publications on this topic.

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Extremism and Violent Extremism in Serbia: 21st Century Manifestations of an Historical Challenge. Ed. Valery Perry. Balkan Politics and Society, 1. Stuttgart: ibidem Press, 2019. 370 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Illustrations. Plates. Photography. Figures. Tables. \$54.00, paper.

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This volume brings together original research on the topic of extremism and violent extremism in Serbia. It consolidates existing research and further develops an emerging policy area in Southeast Europe, that of preventing and countering violent extremism (P/CVE). It is edited by Valery Perry, who has been working in policy and scholarship in southeastern Europe since the 1990s, and the chapter contributions present rich empirical and conceptual discussion based in grounded studies by researchers living in and/or studying Serbia.

The volume is made up of seven chapters framed by an introduction and concluding remarks by Valery Perry. The substantial introduction deals with difficult conceptual issues that haunt any attempt to define terrorism, radicalization, or (violent) extremism. In doing so, it reviews a rich scholarship in both academic and policy literature and introduces a key concept that shapes many of the later chapters: reciprocal radicalization. Julia Ebner's (*The Rage: The Vicious Circle of Islamist and Far-Right Extremism*, 2017) concept deals with the dynamics between far-right and Islamist extremism. Even though Ebner does not deal with the Balkans herself, the introduction recognizes the same dynamics in the region: "opposing groups falling deeper into fear, grievance and exclusionary world views increasingly incompatible with one another, and often tied less to concrete issues but to one's sense of identity and ambient alarm. . ." (21).

This tale of two extremisms drives the majority of the chapters: out of the seven contributions, five are designed to take into account both far-right and Islamist extremism. Niké Wentholt examines the use of history and "narratives of historical violence" to study the extent to which "both sides frame each other as an historical enemy" (73). Davor Marko scrutinizes how two key figures (one far-right, and one conservative Islamist) use online channels in processes of radicalization. Kristina Ivanović similarly focuses on online content, but uses focus group discussions to explore how youth in Serbia perceive extremist online messages. Tijana Rečević investigates how the movements of migrants and refugees along the so-called

Balkan route intersect with extremist dynamics in the country. Finally, Miloš Milenković shows how UNESCO-based protection of intangible cultural heritage can fuel extremism by further marginalizing minorities excluded from the process. His chapter ponders the changes needed for this mechanism to be used “for promoting intercultural dialogue and sustaining existing peace efforts” (347).

Despite the centrality of the story of “two extremisms” to the book’s framework, the chapter contributions show that the actual dynamics in Serbia are not evenly distributed between the two. As Perry writes in the conclusion, there are “more concerns about rising threats from the far-right than from ISIS-inspired militants” (353). Accordingly, even though the chapters are based on meticulous empirical investigations and creatively use a variety of literatures, their design is somewhat strained by trying to holistically approach phenomena that might be less connected than the “reciprocal radicalization” thesis allows.

There are two chapters that pursue more narrowly-defined topics. Ana Dević takes a sociological perspective to understanding the relationship between Serbian far-right and Russian academic, para-academic, and political spheres. By focusing on key figures and events, she presents a compelling story of a changing relationship, and contextualizes the often oversimplified and naturalized affinity between Russia and Serbia. Boris Milanović, instead of choosing a particular group, probes a particular platform: the infamous 4chan/pol/users posting from Serbian IP addresses. In his rich (and disturbing) empirical material, we see not only the evolution of far-right discourse in Serbia but also its global connections and aspirations: it is on such online platforms where global connections like those found in the Christchurch and Norway shootings (that both drew on Balkan history and Serbian extremism) are made and become visible.

All of the contributors show the importance of methodological diversity in studying these phenomena: they use discourse analysis, explore online spaces, and utilize interviews and focus groups. However, the donor-driven nature of the project (of the book and the larger policy area in Serbia) that Perry herself reflects on in the Introduction (48–50) also imposes particular time (and probably financial) restrictions. This might explain one important omission: the absence of voices of those against whom extremist narratives and potential violence are directed. For example, multiple contributions reflect on particular gendered narratives observed (these are highlighted in the concluding remarks on women on page 356), but there is no discussion of the rich feminist scholarship and activism in Serbia that would help better understand the changing gender dynamics. Similarly, Rečević’s chapter discusses experiences and attitudes of migrants and refugees exclusively as told by others (relying on interviews with employees in asylum and reception/transit centers or policy makers). While such choices are inevitable with practical constraints that shape any research project, dealing with these sensitive topics requires appropriate methodological choices that pay special attention to the targets of extremist narratives and actions. A useful example is provided by Milenković, who uses interviews with minority representatives to tease apart the problems embedded in the UNESCO mechanisms for protecting intangible cultural heritage.

Two aspects of extremism (especially that of the far-right) remain undiscussed. One is its global dimension, which I have already mentioned: while Dević deals explicitly with Russia and Milanović examines some online interactions, the increasing transnational elements of these movements should receive explicit attention (as it has been in journalistic investigations). The second aspect left unexamined is the (re) emerging connection between ecologism and far-right narratives that is visible both globally and in Serbia.

In its consolidation of existing literature, original empirical contributions, conceptual development, and identification of burning policy and research issues, this volume presents a much-needed contribution in the emerging scholarship on extremism in Serbia and the Balkans more generally.

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Frontiers of Civil Society: Government and Hegemony in Serbia. By Marek Mikuš.
New York: Berghahn Books, 2018. xvi, 339 pp. Appendix. Notes. Bibliography.
Index. Illustrations. Photographs. Figures. Tables. Maps. \$130.00, hard bound.
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The transition process of postsocialist countries since the 1990s towards western-style democracies and their integration into a global economy has been the topic of numerous studies. One is tempted to ask why it is worth reading another account about—in this case—Serbia’s “failure to catch up” with the west. But Marek Mikuš, because he critically engages with the transition debates with detail and does so from an anthropological perspective, demonstrates that it is not only worth exploring the transformations of post-Milošević Serbia further, but also that it is possible to do so in more nuanced ways. He meticulously carves out the contradictions and ambiguities that emerge from his empirical research. Using multi-sited ethnography and microhistories as methods, his focus is on civil society, which is involved in the practices and discourses of reforms that he analyzes. Taking a Gramscian perspective, Mikuš sees civil society as a “terrain on which social forces develop political strategies oriented to the state” (35). The main actors analyzed are NGOs that in different and often ambiguous ways emulate their western (neo-)liberal counterparts. He argues that the NGO sector in 2010/11—the period of his fieldwork—is very different than in the 1990s: it is characterized by an ambiguous strategy that includes an increased orientation towards the state, on the one hand, and attempts to “indigenize” NGOs by rooting them in national society instead of relying on foreign funding, on the other (6).

After an extensive introduction in Part I, Part II discusses Serbia’s trajectory of transnational integration from two contrasting perspectives: the liberal, pro-European NGO sector and counter-hegemonic nationalist civil society. Unsurprisingly, the liberal NGOs are complicit in a hegemonic project of European integration. Of interest here is, first, that Mikuš shows the tensions in the NGOs’ internal discussions about whether or not to take a pro-European stance. He concludes that “the hegemonic narratives about ‘Europe’ and transition, as well as the political identity and political economy of the NGO sector, imposed ideological, social and material limits on such radical critiques [of the EU, IMF] in public” (105). Second, Mikuš analyzes some of the transnational entanglements by studying the NGO-run Slovak-Serbian EU Enlargement Fund and Slovakia’s development aid to Serbia. The Slovakian government and NGOs aimed to become brokers of democratization and EU integration, especially for Serbia. Although the fund lobbied for EU integration, the visits of Serbian NGO workers to Slovakia, “ironically, led some of them to question the modernizing impact of integration” (81).

The workings of pro-European discourse are contrasted with an analysis of the opposition to the Pride Parade in Belgrade and the activities during Statehood Day. Mikuš shows the attempts to broaden a popular movement of Serbian ethnonational self-sufficiency and retraditionalization (108) by partly emulating the practices and