

## Book Reviews

---

Mladen Lazic (ed.), *Protest in Belgrade – Winter of Discontent*. Budapest: Central European University Press, 1999. 242 pp. £13.95 (pbk).

This volume is a documentation of the 1996/7 demonstrations in Belgrade, which were the reaction to the falsification of the local election results of 17 November 1996. The nine contributions to this volume analyse the protest (which lasted for three months), the motives behind it and the composition of protesters on the basis of surveys carried out by the authors and students during the protest itself. In addition there is a chronology of the protest (twenty pages). This is a unique book providing important data on the civic opposition to Milošević and also recounting an event of high importance to the understanding of Serbian contemporary politics.

STEFAN IHRIG  
*Freie Universität Berlin*

Malcolm Anderson, *States and Nationalism in Europe since 1945*. London and New York: Routledge, 2000. 109 pp. £9.95 (pbk).

This entry-level book discusses the role of nationalism in the making of modern Europe. Usefully, a thematic approach is adopted, which introduces the reader to some of the main debates and developments associated with nationalism in post-1945 Europe. Malcolm Anderson importantly notes that there are varieties of nationalism, that they are not all bad, and in any case nationalism is probably here to stay. The themes contained in the short chapters include the superpowers' use of nationalism in prosecuting the Cold War; the resurgence of sub-state nationalism; the effect of European integration and globalisation on nationalism; the relationship between immigration and nationalism (and the important role ascribed to the European Union in this area); the role of nationalism in the break-up of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia; irredentism and separatism; and the notion of liberal nationalism and its challengers.

ADAM BISCOE  
*Open University*

Ida Blom, Karen Hagemann and Catherine Hall (eds.), *Gendered Nations: Nationalisms and Gender Order in the Long Nineteenth Century*. Oxford and New York: Berg, 2000. xviii + 347 pp. £42.00 (hbk), £14.99 (pbk).

With this book the contributors have consolidated the effort of scholars in women's, gender and feminist history to highlight gender as an important analytical category in studies of the nation and nationalism. In one sense this is a post-Benedict Anderson body of work, as the contributors' notion of the 'gendered' nation builds on Anderson's

central idea of the '*constructedness*' of nations. In contrast to Anderson's analysis, in which the category of gender is absent and sharply separated from nationality, the editors emphasise recent theoretical advances in historical research turning on the very constitution of subjectivities through national narratives. Thus the fifteen essays in this volume are informed by the view that one's sense of gender 'is inextricably and ineluctably intertwined' with one's sense of nationality and national identity. In Ruth Roach Pierson's words, this book indicates the commitment of all involved to continue the work of 'foregrounding the "technologies of gender" in studies of the constructions of nations, nationalities and nationalisms' (p. 41).

The first four essays elaborate these theoretical developments informed by feminist, post-structuralist and post-colonial approaches to the study of history, while the remainder of the book is a collection of applied examples, included amongst which are the national contexts of Egypt and Latvia, long considered peripheral in the realm of English-language historical scholarship. As the title suggests, the focus is primarily on the gender and nationalism nexus, although some authors such as Marilyn Lake and Helen Bradford focus on race as the integral and central component of their analysis given the imperialist and colonialist context in which much nation-building took place. An additional bonus of this volume is that the study of gender is not used as a euphemism for 'women' or femininity. Of particular note is Victoria Schmidt-Linsenhoff's art-historical analysis of the 'male other', as a national masculine ideal was imagined and portrayed in the age of the French Revolution.

Some of the essays focus on the conflict or tensions within feminist movements that occur when gender, class and race collide. Lake refers to the early twentieth-century Australian feminists who, in their campaign for the enfranchisement of women, became implicated in the racist oppression that grounded the nineteenth-century construction of both state and nation. The clash of gender, race and class is also discussed in Catherine Hall's account of the 1832 Reform Act in Britain. Throughout this volume the reader encounters engaging and well-researched essays outlining the myriad ways in which the gender axis figured in various constructions of nationhood. The prose encourages the reader to keep ploughing on and it only verges on the dense and convoluted infrequently (for example, Irina Novikova's essay).

Given the background of colonialism and imperialism in many of these case studies, the volume turns the spotlight decisively on what Pierson calls the 'inherent violence' of the national project, again in sharp contrast to Anderson's optimism about the 'eventual and easy inclusion of those initially excluded from the national community' (p. 42). Her judgement rests on the conviction that national identity can 'only be constructed in relation to bipolar opposites (masculine/feminine, white/black, pure/impure, foreign/indigenous) and is thus unstable, laden with contradictions, tensions and ambiguities' (p. 43). This is entirely true, but it seems to underestimate the real emancipatory potential of nationalism, or, at the very least, slides over this thorny issue. Nationalism's base in political and symbolic ambiguity, as well as its inherent violence, by no means annuls its liberating influence. For instance, Beth Baron identifies the birth of Egyptian nationalism with the end of harem slavery, making clear that the status of Egyptian women provided the chief vehicle through which national identity was negotiated. Helen Bradford's essay reveals how the Anglo-Boer war gave Afrikaner women a chance to recast emergent nation-building narratives in their own image. Jitka Maleckova dwells on the importance of nationalist imagery, specifically of two women warrior figures that feature prominently in Czech national myths and iconography, as a source of political and cultural empowerment for Czech feminists.

These and other examples illustrate the multiple ways in which nationalism and national narratives can empower or disempower previously subaltern groups. It is a strong message that resonates particularly strongly with me. For it brings to mind another example (not mentioned here) of both the virtues and perils of locating a politics of social emancipation within a nationalist logic: that of occupied Greece in the 1940s. While the post-civil war Greek state utilised nationalist arguments to re-'privatise' Greek women, women's mass participation in the Resistance (1941–4) was instrumental in shifting the balance of power in gender relations (at least within the Greek left) and in the construction of Greek women's political subjectivities and identities. The appeal of the Resistance for Greek women was precisely the framework of cultural nationalism upon which mobilisational narratives and iconography were based.

Overall, this volume serves to reinforce Nehru's famous dictum that 'nationalism is good in its place but it is an unreliable friend and an unsafe historian'.

MARGARET POULOS  
*University of Sydney*

Stephen May, *Language and Minority Rights: Ethnicity, Nationalism and the Politics of Language*. Harlow: Pearson Education Ltd, 2001. 384 pp.

This remarkable book by sociologist Stephen May combines various strands of scholarship and offers a comprehensive treatment of minority language revitalisation, language spread, nationalism, migration and indigenous peoples' rights. The pivotal idea of the book, presented in the introduction, is that the nation-state must be given a central role in any analysis of minority language issues. Establishing this very point requires a careful examination of concepts such as identity, ethnicity, nation, rights, etc., to which the theoretical substance of the book is devoted.

Chapter 1 reviews the evolution of scientific discourse about ethnicity. May, by and large, endorses a critical view of ethnicity and stresses its constructedness, but rejects the so-called 'post-modernist' approach which, while emphasising the allegedly contingent nature of ethnicity, fails to account for its resilience. Rather, ethnicity is constructed by modernity and is a by-product 'of the political, cultural and ideational processes of nation-state formation' (p. 25), although the proponents of the latter assign 'ethnicity' to non-dominant groups, blithely ignoring the no less ethnic character of majorities.

Chapter 2 offers a very good deconstruction of nationalism. Although the distinction between 'ethnicity' and 'nation' is not fully clear (and the definition of 'nation', imported from Montserrat Guibernau's *Nationalisms: the Nation-state and Nationalism in the Twentieth Century* (1996) is not robust to cases such as Switzerland), it successfully shows how the modern nation-state uses ethnicity and language to create 'nations', which in turn serve to legitimise the existence of the nation-state and its claims to hegemony in a particular territory. Hence, the state is elevated above mere ethnic groups, while 'national minorities' are given an ambiguous semi-legitimacy as 'nations', but 'without states'. May suggests recognising the objective role of ethnic identity as a source of nationalist sentiment, without *naturalising* ethnicity. This interpretation is compatible with the importance of 'cultural nationalisms', which do not call for new nation-states but reflect the understandable desire to express one's

linguistic and cultural identity, constructed as it may be. There is no reason to view this desire as intrinsically more regressive than claims to the same by dominant *ethnies*.

Chapter 3 turns to the issue of rights, recalling that in liberal political philosophy, rights are vested with individuals, whereas claims to recognition by minorities appear to require a non-liberal, particularist, ethnicist, collectivist stance. May rejects communitarianism as potentially regressive, but observes that democracy can only be achieved when people are given the possibility to live in a 'context of choice' in which their language and culture are given full validity. This point is typically overlooked by proponents of 'common values' or 'common language', who conveniently eschew the question of *whose* values and language should be chosen as common, and as a result of *what* processes.

In Chapter 4, May justifies language revitalisation efforts by recalling first that language shift is a genuinely disruptive process. The fact that some minority language speakers apparently 'choose' (for professional success, social mobility, etc.) not to pass on their traditional language is largely due to systematic social, political and economic oppression. Secondly, May debunks the often-heard claim that revitalisation efforts are manipulated by particular self-interests, because such charges can be levelled against advocates of majority languages as well. Thirdly, the related notion that revitalisation efforts are 'politically motivated' is also irrelevant, because the demise of minority languages is itself the result of a political process.

In Chapter 5, May shows that education systems are typically geared to the needs of majorities, but he also exposes the theoretical inadequacy of 'multicultural education', the emphasis of which on the socio-economic position of immigrants renders it incapable of dealing with some specifically linguistic dimensions, particularly in the case of autochthonous (that is, 'non-immigrant') languages. The chapter discusses models of minority-language education policies and users' responses to them, and contains an overview of minority-language and education rights in international law. May notes the shift in recent years from negative to positive rights, but points out that these rights may not amount to much in practice, unless majorities endorse the corresponding policies.

The rest of the book is devoted to a closer, robust and well-informed examination of selected cases: the United States, Québec, Catalonia, Wales and the Maoris. Chapter 9 sums up the main points made in the book.

This exceptionally rich volume covers considerable ground. The scholarship is impeccable and the facts right, aside from occasional lapses, such as the usual misinterpretation of the Swiss case (pp. 16, 117), which, contrary to what the author suggests, is emphatically *not* a country of national minorities (see François Grin, 'La Suisse comme (non-)multination: succès et limites d'un système', paper presented at the *XIIIèmes Entretiens Jacques Cartier*, Montreal, 3–6 October 2000; Nenad Stojanovic, *The Idea of a Swiss Nation: a Critique of Will Kymlicka's Account of Multinational States*, Master's Dissertation, McGill University, Montreal, 2000). Most errors are minor: 'joul' is not the same thing as 'Québec French' (p. 228); the European Charter for Regional or [not 'and'] Minority Languages aims at protecting linguistic diversity in Europe (not the 'European Community'), and it is accessible to members of the Council of Europe (not the 'European Council', which does not exist – p. 162); the minimum number of options states have to adopt under the Charter is 35 out of 68 (not 'nearly a 100', since many paragraphs in the Charter constitute mutually exclusive alternatives – p. 192).

One fundamental question bypassed in this volume, however, is *why* society as a whole (which includes more members of majorities than of minorities) should

invest resources in minority language revitalisation. A mere appeal to rights, being steeped in a moral argument, may carry little or no weight, because not all persons have the same notion of what is just. Therefore, what could be argued to be missing from this book is a positive argument for revitalisation, which requires a demonstration that society as a whole is better off when its linguistic diversity is preserved (François Grin and François Vaillancourt, 'On the financing of language policies and distributive justice' in R. Phillipson (ed.), *Rights to Language: Equity, Power and Education* (2000), 102–10). However, May's book is clearly intended to be about 'rights' and, as such, it is extremely useful in that it provides, well beyond the issue of rights, integrative conceptual clarification indispensable for others' work, including in the direction just suggested.

FRANÇOIS GRIN

*University of Geneva and ECMI, Flensburg*

Shari J. Cohen, *Politics without a Past. The Absence of History in Postcommunist Nationalism*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999. 281 pp. £19.95 (pbk).

The collapse of communism neither brought about the 'end of history', interpreted as the victory of Western liberalism, nor a clear-cut 'return of the past' in terms of resurgent ancient hatreds and continuity with the pre-communist period. In fact, the role of history and historical consciousness remains a subtle and underexplored dimension of post-communist transition. Shari Cohen's timely study takes the observation that 'references to the past resurface like debris, with little apparent meaning' (p. 1) as a starting-point for an astute analysis of the ideological vacuum, party weakness and societal apathy in Central and Eastern Europe. The author detects only small 'islands' of history and continuity with pre-communist ideologies behind the 'victory of a historyless elite' (p. 4). She engages critically with the theoretical literature on 'modernisation', 'transition' and 'nationalist mobilisation' and adds to the political entrepreneur argument of nationalist mobilisation. Transitionology and democratisation literature are criticised for overlooking the lack of ideological commitment of elites and society at large, but, surprisingly, the complex notion of 'ideology', the centrepiece of the overall argument, is only defined in passing as the 'social glue for building and sustaining institutions' (p. 33). In the absence of a narrow definition of 'ideology', tied to moral standards and commitment, one could take issue with Cohen's argument, as the absence of ideologies could also be seen as contributing to a certain degree of peace and stability in East Central Europe.

The author has chosen Slovakia as an emblematic and theory-developing case, which serves as a microcosm and laboratory for a set of issues that are relevant for the whole region and beyond. Two factors, in particular, make Slovakia an illustrative case: first, Slovakia's only experience of 'independent' statehood was as a Nazi puppet state 1938–45 and, secondly, Slovakia's modernisation and nation-building were both predominantly shaped by the communist context. The author's frequent use of the generic terms 'Leninist regime' and 'Leninist nation-building' when describing the impact of the socialist experience from 1948 onwards, however, sits rather oddly with her attempt to draw attention to historical nuances. The term overlooks the different political and ideological stages of development in the Soviet Union and Central and Eastern Europe. Based on secondary materials, Cohen describes both the coercive and

transformative impact of the communist regimes. The second part of her book traces the implications of the pervasiveness of the 'mass-elites' – a term used to emphasise the atomised nature of the communist-era elites – and the absence of ideology in post-communist Slovakia. A range of sources, such as press accounts, parliamentary debates and personal interviews with public figures, back up the convincing argument that a certain type of elite rather than an ideology, a party, an individual or a policy choice won in Slovakia under Prime Minister Mečiar. The democrats and anti-communist nationalists, who staged the revolution in 1989, had wrongly assumed elite and societal cohesion, whereas the atomised 'mass-elite' could win precisely by being unidentifiable and uncommitted.

There are only few and extremely controversial historical points of reference for the current Slovak state and there is little agreement on the key formative moments in Slovak history. World War II is bound to occupy a central position in the debates about Slovak nation-building. Only small groups of democrats and Catholic nationalists embody the 'return of the past' in Slovakia after 1989. Before the communist takeover in 1948 Slovakia had still been a largely agricultural society without a strongly rooted national identity, and communism pursued its own kind of nation-building. Due to a mechanism Cohen aptly describes as 'organised forgetting', the World War II experience did not forge a collective memory and was effectively stripped of its meaning with frequent twists and turns in the party's interpretation of history, which also served as a justification for elite purges and fore-stalled the formation of any alternative ideologies and historical or moral standards. The only remnants of pre-communist ideologies, the Catholic nationalists and the democrats (including *emigrés*), were divided over their interpretation of World War II and did not re-emerge as a coherent national movement from the 1960s onwards. The different strands were linked in their anti-communism, but isolated from one another, from the 'mass-elite' and from society. In a fascinating account full of narrative detail Cohen demonstrates how the democrats and Catholic nationalists set the political agenda from 1989 to 1992 and prepared the ground and the idiom for the mass-elite to follow. Mečiar is the best example of the appeal of the mass-elite and reflects society's lack of commitment rather than representing an alternative point of view. It was precisely Mečiar's distance from any kind of past memory that appealed to the voters. Cohen concludes that democratic institutions were established in a context in which elites and society lacked a common interpretative framework and effectively proved an obstacle to the development of a new ideology. Hopefully, this interesting and well-written study can reach a wider academic community beyond those interested in Slovak history and politics.

GWENDOLYN SASSE

*London School of Economics*

Alison Palmer, *Colonial Genocide*. Adelaide: Crawford House Publishing and London: C. Hurst & Co., 2000. viii + 248 pp. £14.95 (pbk).

This is a book based on a PhD thesis that analyses two cases of colonialism, namely those of Queensland in the nineteenth century and Southwest Africa between 1884 and 1906. It seeks to analyse these by relating them to the concept of genocide asking whether there is a specifically colonial form of genocide. This is a complex set of problems since there are aspects of colonialism which, however evil they may have

been, do not necessarily involve genocide, and the definition of genocide has been developed to cover many other kinds of case.

In both Queensland and Southwest Africa an important question was who were the effective agents of colonial policy and genocide. They could have been the imperial governments, the governors, chartered companies, the military or the settlers. In both cases those on the spot seem to have had a fairly free hand in what they did. Some texts including official policy statements and journalistic comments suggest that what went on was not simply colonial exploitation but a deliberate intention to eliminate whole ethnic or racial groups. This did not necessarily mean massacre or anything like the death camps of the Jewish Holocaust in Europe, but could involve something as simple as forcing the members of the aboriginal groups to intermarry with white settlers. Moreover, the process went on over a fairly long period and now one aspect of colonialism/genocide was prominent. What this thesis does is to chronicle the process as it occurred in these two limited cases.

For anyone interested in colonialism as such, many other cases would appear to cry out for analysis. How does slavery in the Americas figure? What is the significance of the differences between North and South American race relations? What should be said about land-grabbing and the pursuit of mineral wealth on the Eastern Cape border, in the Transvaal and Rhodesia? What about the massacres carried out by the likes of Albuquerque in Goa? How far did any of these involve genocide? Curiously, because the concept of genocide is extended to include intermarriage some apparently benign forms of colonialism could be described as genocidal. On the other hand there are cases of the coexistence of different racial/ethnic groups.

The merit of Alison Palmer's study is that it poses these questions through a meticulous historical study of her two cases. But she also shows what the problems are in singling out genocide as a specific type of crime. Quite clearly, definitions such as those contained in United Nations conventions are highly problematic and do not provide a basis for specifying a particular type of genocide that is colonial. What seems to me to be lacking is the setting of the problem within a general theory of colonialism. To this, of course, being a historian, Alison Palmer might well point out that any such general theory needs to be supported and could be displaced by the actual historical record. This is another area of argument that this interesting thesis opens up.

JOHN REX

*University of Warwick*

Michael King, *Moriari: a People Rediscovered* (revised edition). Auckland: Penguin, 2000. 227 pp. NZ\$39.95 (pbk).

While studies abound of living nations, struggling for increased autonomy and self-determination, how truly rare it is to see a work on a dead nation (or perhaps 'ethnic') that once flourished, but was eventually wiped out through colonial conquest, massacre and slavery. The first edition of Michael King's history of the Moriari came out in 1989, when New Zealand Maori land claims were just getting off the ground. The debate about the ethnic origins of the Moriari, and what rights they deserve, has been mired by myth and misconception since the early twentieth century. This new edition has been reformatted, with new information and a host of new pictures. It also includes useful appendices and a mini Maori–Maori–English dictionary.

King is one of New Zealand's best-known and most prolific social historians, and his work is carefully researched and written. While dispelling the myth that Moriori were the original (lesser developed) inhabitants of New Zealand who were massacred and chased to the Chatham Islands, King argues that Moriori were indigenous to the Chathams (since the fourteenth century) and possessed a society ideally suited to their environment. He also rejects the theory that Moriori were simply Maori by another name. Physically, Moriori were reported to be shorter and stockier than Maori, with fuller lips and long 'Roman' noses. King also notes that while only a 10 per cent difference between Moriori and Maori languages was reported in the nineteenth century, three decades of Maori colonisation before this study 'may have disguised or obliterated earlier distinctions' (p. 31).

The first official contact between the British and the Moriori took place in 1791, but no real form of colonisation took place until 1835. In that year, two Maori tribes, the Ngati Mutunga and the Ngati Tama, led by Chief Matioro, hijacked the British ship *Rodney* and brought some 900 Maori to seize control of the Chatham Islands and their 2,000 inhabitants. Because of their earlier rejection of warfare and cannibalism (known as 'Nunuku's injunction'), the Moriori refused to fight against Maori invasion. Some 300 Moriori died almost immediately, and large numbers were also eaten. By 1862, some 101 Moriori remained after three decades of Maori enslavement, beatings, near starvation and sexual abuse. The British Land Courts of the 1870s legitimated this woeful state of affairs by affirming the Maori right of conquest, although King suggests that fears of a Maori uprising in New Zealand proper encouraged the government to privilege Maori over Moriori claims. In the end, the Moriori were outmanoeuvred, and lost some 97.3 per cent of their land.

During this time, the numbers kept falling: 90 Moriori in 1870; 32 by 1883; 12 by 1900; 6 by 1904. The last 'full-blooded' Moriori was one Tame Horomona Rehe, a jovial and prosperous farmer who died in 1933, leaving only scattered 'mixed' relatives behind him. King's history is a sad litany of Maori cruelty and British indifference, and at times complicity, in the destruction of the Moriori. Both groups saw Moriori as racially and culturally inferior, applying social Darwinism to those whom they denigrated as 'black fellas'. King hesitates to use such labels as 'genocide', 'ethnic cleansing' or 'holocaust', although perhaps the term genocide is appropriate here. Certainly, the fate of the Moriori is little different to that suffered by the Aborigines of Australia in the early days of British rule, or the sufferings of South American Indians under Spanish colonialism.

This book has both the merit and the detraction of being straightforward and descriptive. The existence of the Moriori and their eventual fate has been highly controversial, with historians such as Ranginui Walker suggesting that Moriori victimisation has been little more than a propaganda device for justifying British colonialism. King fails to elaborate on the many political ramifications of his work, such as how the destruction of the Moriori detracts from the righteousness of Maori claims of victim status. He does, however, problematise Maori claims to be the Tangata Whenua (original people) of the Chatham Islands, pointing out the hypocrisy in having colonisers set themselves up as an indigenous population. King could certainly have gone further with this theme, demonstrating that while Maori were for the most part losers in colonial struggles, some could be just as ruthless as the British (if not more so) when given the chance.

Due to this book's immense popularity, we might eventually see a third edition. The Waitangi Tribunal – charged with hearing and redressing Maori grievances (for the

most part) – finally delivered a report on the Moriori, after seven years of research and hearings. This material will form a new chapter in the history of these people. Overall, this is a seminal work in the study of indigenous peoples, and is certain to form the bedrock for the future study of the Moriori, now that their descendants, King tells us, are enjoying a ‘renaissance’.

DAVID B. MACDONALD

*Ecole Supérieure de Commerce de Paris*

Gurharpal Singh, *Ethnic Conflict in India: a Case Study of Punjab*. London: Macmillan, 2000. 231 pp. £47.40 (hbk).

That provocative academic writing is a good ingredient for policy-making is slowly being recognised the world over. The good thing about such a genre of writing is that it cleverly masks potentially explosive issues while presenting them in an acceptable format to the general public, intellectual community and politicians at large. And, in the process, these ideas convincingly knock down a whole series of popular notions whose demise was long overdue. In his inaugural professorial lecture – some two years ago – Gurharpal Singh suggested that there was an urgent need for multinational states to undertake ‘downsizing’ of their sovereign authority.

He argued that many multiethnic states, in their current form, had become ungovernable; that there was a genuine need for a divorce between the central authority and its restive units; and that communities urging such surgical separation were justified in their demand. The audience took to Professor Singh’s central idea surprisingly well – perhaps because it was delivered to a sophisticated British and continental gathering familiar with the devolution process taking place within the United Kingdom and aware of the rapid decline in state sovereignty, in the wake of expansion of the European Union.

Subsequently, this thesis was employed by Gurharpal Singh to analyse one of the long-running ethnic strifes in India. Throughout the 1980s, the Sikhs of Punjab waged an undeclared war against the Indian federation. Although it started as a social movement, the uprising soon gained all the hallmarks of secessionism where ethnicity was liberally used by the aggrieved Sikhs to claim a separate statehood. In *Ethnic Conflict in India: a Case Study of Punjab*, Professor Singh tries to situate the event in the broader context of rights of minority communities in multinational states.

Singh dares to be both austere and flamboyant in his arguments. He dismisses the very notion of a secular, multicultural and tolerant India. His is a chronicle of a nation where, although the national ethnic fabric is made up of millions of different hands, the colour and pattern that dominates this political and cultural canvas is that of its majority community. In a text dotted with references, Singh stresses that India is anything but a plural democracy. The culture of democracy that persists in India, in his view, was always the sole preserve of its numerically superior Hindus and remains so. I can sympathise with Singh’s scholarly anguish, but would not commit myself fully to this line of argument.

If it is a hegemonic democracy, it is better explained by the fact that the architectural sketches of the modern Indian state were drawn by politicians with reason to distrust the true potentials of minorities. Indian political culture – that of a young country with a fragile identity – was appropriated by the majority by default, owing to

the partition-induced traumas and a recurring anxiety about a future minority backlash of far worse proportions.

But more importantly, this asymmetry in terms of cultural and political space was also a natural inheritance. The supposed anomaly between ethnic communities or the hegemony of the Hindus can be understood in the context of traditional Brahminic hierarchical order that perpetuates inequality as a norm and thus treats any manner of dissent as unreasonable. The structural deficiency of this political architecture is profusely amplified in Singh's work under review. Although he does not spell it out, one way of explaining Singh's central argument would be that, in a multiethnic polity, politicians aided by the ethnic majority consciously devised a system of interaction that relegated non-Hindus to subordinate positions *vis-à-vis* the superior position of Hindus.

Opposition to this rule of interaction by various minorities has often led to state-sponsored disciplining programmes that Singh prefers to term as 'hegemonic control'. He sees through the policies of Indian government and rather bluntly calls it a sham. Unfortunately, most modern states have resorted to the use of violence in order to maintain the state's authority in the peripheral regions. But Singh ignores the fact that this course of action may be the outcome of a failure of both parties to reach out to each other. In so doing he merely betrays a narrowness of vision, where nothing is offered in terms of viable and effective policy mechanism to arrest such conflicts without the use of force.

Singh will have little difficulty selling this idea in the West but would certainly face a hostile audience in those political systems where minority cultures flourish and enjoy some form of equilibrium owing to the majority community's genuine commitment to equality. Moreover, since the question of Sikh ethnicity and their right to a separate sovereign homeland is considered a closed chapter, by a majority of Sikhs and their non-Sikh counterparts in India, Singh's assertion that Punjab could well be on a slow-burning fuse, is perhaps one extravagant claim. None the less, the book under review provides an excellent introduction to ethnic conflict management programmes in developing multinational states and situates the problem in a comparative perspective. In spite of the shortcomings highlighted earlier, it is an original book in content, style and approach. Pity about its prohibitive price tag – a cause of constant frustration when recommending it to students.

AMALENDU MISRA  
*University of Sussex*

Crispin Bates (ed.), *Community, Empire and Migration: South Asians in Diaspora*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Press, 2001. xii + 319 pp. £47.50 (hbk).

This interdisciplinary and eclectic volume is the result of a conference on identity, community and communalism amongst groups of South Asians in the diaspora, primarily in the Indian Ocean region, held in Edinburgh in the summer of 1997. Although the intention was to celebrate fifty years of independence, as the various contributions to the volume make clear the imperial legacy still casts a deep shadow over contemporary post-colonial identities.

In all the contributions, considerable attention is paid to the policies of the colonial power in reifying communal categories. In Sri Lanka, as Nira Wickramasinghe points

out (pp. 153–85), British administrators believed Arya to be a fixed, racial category as opposed to the pre-colonial notion of Arya as a ‘status obtainable through the performance of meritorious acts’. This had the effect of inscribing boundaries between ‘migrant’ and ‘Aryan’ communities, leading to a politics of exclusion and violence against the former. Amarjit Kaur (pp. 185–206) examines the identity of Malaysian Indians, particularly the descendants of ‘coolies’ from the south in their journey from sojourners to settlers. ‘Indian’ identity was ‘constructed’ by colonial authorities in opposition to Malay and Chinese ethnic communities just as Indian communities in East and South Africa were forged in opposition to white settlers and Africans, as both Michael Twaddle (pp. 109–23) and Ravi Thiara (pp. 123–53) point out. In all these cases, Indians did not choose their identities as rational-choice theorists would have us believe, as much as had it thrust upon them.

However, whilst as Said claimed, the discourses of the West may have constituted the Orient, they did not reduce the Oriental subject to silence. As John Kelly demonstrates in his excellent chapter (pp. 46–87), Fijian Indians attempted to move away from the colonial stereotype of the Indian and from a ‘colonial hierarchy of peoples, attempted not to be the ‘Indians’ of the Colonial Imagination’ (p. 62). Indian women emerge from Sumita Chatterjee’s chapter (pp. 206–24) as ‘ethnic entrepreneurs’, merging and generating new traditions in order to help build a sense of community. ‘Mohajir’ identity in Pakistan provides another contrast with the colonial construction of communal identities. The Mohajirs, Urdu-speaking Muslims from post-partition Hyderabad who settled in the new state of Pakistan and currently make up 20 per cent of the total population of Pakistan, are the subject of the contributions of Karen Leonard (pp. 224–45) and Mohamed Waseem (pp. 245–61). For Waseem, Mohajir ethnic nationalism defies classical theories of nationalism, being both non-elite and not built up upon primordial association with the land. Perhaps rather than ethnic the term ‘migrant’ or diasporic nationalism would be more suitable in the case of the Mohajirs. Certainly, the Mohajirs may well share what Thomas Blom Hansen terms a ‘migrant culture’. In the most interesting chapter in the volume, Blom Hansen recounts his conversations with returning Muslim migrants from the Gulf in Nagpada, Mumbai, including Europe-*raja*, the local cosmopolitan and former Amsterdam toilet-cleaner. Of particular interest to Hansen are the three interrelated discourses of the Middle East: as the land of material plenty, as the centre of Islam ‘which purifies your soul and gradually makes you a better Muslim’ (p. 274) and the third, rarely articulated, discourse of the land of ‘abuse, betrayal [and] beatings’ (p. 275) at the hands of their Arab employers and superiors. For Hansen, ‘global horizons’, myths of the Occidental and Islamic world, are not ‘out there’ but are ‘folded into the everyday practices of localized lives and imaginings’ (p. 282).

A central theme running throughout the volume is a critique of Eurocentric models of ethnicity and nationalism and with Benedict Anderson’s ‘imagined communities’ model in particular. As Crispin Bates points out in his introduction, ‘the problem with the Andersonian framework is that it too closely resembles the colonial conditions which it contemplates’ (p. 7). Consequently, following Kelly, ‘if we really want to study the whole politics of imagined communities, we should also study attempts to evade its impositions’ (p. 62). However, there are clear limits to the agency of colonial subjects. Indeed, the overriding conclusion drawn from the various contributions, as noted by the editor, is that ‘the imperial legacy in all these areas has often been profound, imperial institutions enshrining caste, class, race and religion as the boundaries of South Asian communities’ (p. 37). To speak of the possibility of a pan-Asian

identity begs the question of what the various peoples of the Subcontinent have in common apart from the shared experience of colonial rule. Only Aminah T. Mohammad, in the final contribution to the volume, addresses this issue (pp. 286–306). For Mohammad, the prospects for South Asian pan-ethnicity (at least in the United States) seem to be strongest amongst second- and third-generation offspring from migrant families who culturally have more in common. However, aside from Nusrat Fath Ali Khan, Bollywood and Neo-Bhangra, it is not clear what South Asians share that other ethnic Americans do not. I suggest that Crispin Bates is nearer the mark when he writes of South Asian migrants being bound only by the experience of migration itself and any racism to which they are subjected by the indigenous population (p. 21). South Asians are forced to look for commonalities in their places of settlement because very often they are lumped together as one ethnic grouping in government censuses and the popular consciousness of the indigenous population. Although Mohammad is correct to refer to *Mlecchas* versus *Kafirs* in the US diaspora, in the United Kingdom, which still has the largest South Asian community outside of the Subcontinent, the term ‘Paki’ is used as a derogatory term for *all* South Asians, regardless of religion, caste or language. I suggest that the use of this term has already given rise to a distinct South Asian pan-identity in Britain.

GIORGIO SHANI

*SOAS/Kitakyushu University*

Yoram Hazony, *The Jewish State*. New York: Basic Books, 2000. 432 pp. \$28.00/£12.99 (pbk).

Toward the end of term, an unsolicited paperback book arrived in my in-tray and those of many other academics who study nationalism. Given my marking load, I was tempted to shelve the book immediately as space filler. Thankfully I did not, for Yoram Hazony has written an extremely erudite, controversial volume that serves at once as both a neo-Zionist tract and a powerful academic study of the social impact of Jewish cosmopolitanism on the state of Israel. Hazony, a thirty-something intellectual close to Benjamin Netanyahu and one of the leading lights of conservative Jewish thought, never hides his ethno-nationalist cards. He is outspoken about the need for Israel to function as a Jewish state, with all that this entails in terms of security, immigration policy, historiography and the university curriculum. The primary narrative of the state of Israel, Hazony maintains, must be a this-worldly eschatology of messianic biblical Zionism, wedded to a modern myth of Israel as the 2,000-year-old salvation of the Jewish *ethnie*. It is the deviation from this path – so evident in the cultural sphere of Israeli life – that forms the central concern of Hazony’s work.

The work itself is not a manifesto, however. Instead, we are treated to a tightly argued, well-documented and analytically subtle treatment of Jewish anti-nationalism: a discourse that springs from sources deep in both traditional Judaism and the nineteenth-century ecumenism of American and German Reform Jewry. From there, Hazony follows the cosmopolitan path to the spiritual Zionism of Hermann Cohen, Martin Buber, Hannah Arendt, Hans Kohn and others within the German-speaking pre-WWII Jewish world. These individuals treasured a secular myth of the Jew as homeless exile, rendered uniquely sensitive (through suffering) to the Other, and therefore singularly suited to found a universal civilisation and a higher spirituality for

all mankind. Hazony contends that this constellation of ideas was extremely influential among the German-speaking Jews who formed the community's elite in both Central Europe and America in the first half of the twentieth century. Though Zionism, aided by the assiduous diplomacy and effort of leaders such as Herzl and Ben-Gurion and abetted by disasters such as the Russian pogroms and the Holocaust, did carry the day, it was always a fragile reed, claims Hazony. More to the point, he claims, the cosmopolitan strain in the Jewish psyche has enjoyed a renaissance in Israel since the 1960s because the arid materialism of the Founders' Labor ideals failed to motivate a younger generation. Instead, the children of Zionism were weaned on the anti-nationalism of Martin Buber and his protégés, who dominated the social sciences and humanities faculties of Hebrew University from its inception in 1925.

It all amounts to a fascinating read, full of gripping prose and powerful anecdote, but does it stand up as an academic contribution? Yes and no. On the one hand, it is a well-documented and fascinating account of the history of Jewish cosmopolitanism, the institutional retreat of Jewish nationalism post-1963 and the creeping 'post-Zionist' neutrality of the Jewish state. This is insightful. On the other hand, the book fails to trace the sociological shift in 'new class' attitudes that Hazony claims has transpired. There are no surveys and no detailed content analyses to trace such a large-scale change. And though I agree with Hazony's emphasis on culture, even a confirmed culturalist must give weight to the role of rising affluence and, in particular, the upheaval of demographic change. This might have rendered a more nuanced picture of Zionism's health, an account more in accord with the facts on the ground that have given rise to phenomena such as Shas, the election of Sharon and the tenacity of the settlement-building programme. Finally, there is almost no awareness of simultaneous anti-nationalist trends outside of Israel which redefined citizenship, opened doors to immigrants, smashed ethnic myths and championed a 'multi-culturalist' mode of cosmopolitanism throughout the West.

Like myself, many readers in the Anglo-Saxon world will find Hazony's ultra-Zionist stance disturbing – especially in the wake of the recent tragic events of the Middle East, which have been compounded by Israeli policy. But Hazony's nationalism has focused scholarly attention on the woefully neglected hegemonic social force of our times: cosmopolitanism. Nationalism scholars tend to resound with talk of national revival, but it is imperative that we understand the equally significant *anti-nationalism* of our day. For this reason, Hazony's book deserves to be read by all who purport to understand the vicissitudes of nations and nationalism.

ERIC KAUFMANN  
*University of Southampton*

Yaacov Ro'i, *Islam in the Soviet Union. From World War II to Gorbachev*. London: Hurst & Co., 2000. 764 pp. £65.00 (hbk).

This book, which is a product of Professor Ro'i's lengthy and scrupulous research, conducted in Central Asia and other Islamic regions of the former Soviet Union, is one of the best I have read on Islam in the USSR. As far as I am aware, it is the most detailed and objective published historical study of Islam under post-war Soviet communist rule. It is based on extensive and diverse primary sources drawn from the Communist Party of the USSR and the government archives in Moscow and

Tashkent, and the author's personal interviews with Soviet-era politicians who were directly involved in the decision-making processes regarding Islam and Muslims, as well as representatives of the official and unofficial Soviet Islams. The book's pioneering role in the historiography of Soviet/Russian Islam is determined by the fact that, until Gorbachev's political liberalisation, Western researchers had no access to the Soviet archives and were therefore forced to deal with limited and fragmented sources, which impacted detrimentally in some way or other on their analyses. As for their Soviet colleagues, they were strongly 'discouraged' by the regime from researching Soviet Islam on the grounds of its marginality and alleged eventual disappearance under Soviet socialist construction. Until the break-up of the Soviet communist system in 1991 Soviet academia lacked departments specialising in Soviet Islam, which was dealt with primarily by party and KGB functionaries who were not independent in their judgements.

The volume consists of twelve chapters and is divided into five parts, which provide a detailed and critical study: the place of Islam within the Soviet regime; official Islam, represented by four regional Muftiyats; unofficial or 'parallel' Islam, embodied by 'mosqueless' mullas and Sufis; Islamic rites and rituals; and the official Soviet position on and perceptions of domestic Islam. Chronologically, the book is divided into five sub-periods according to the major fluctuations within Moscow's policy on Islam. The book also contains maps of Islamic regions of the USSR, an index and a large bibliography, which includes the major existing books and other publications on Islam in the USSR in English and Russian.

Although the author addresses the Soviet Muslims as a distinct totality he reveals their diversity in terms of their ethnicity, culture, the level of Islamicisation and the history of their relationship with the Russian/Soviet state, which has *de facto* jeopardised their consolidation on a pan-Islamic basis. The book's central argument is that despite the devastation inflicted by the atheist communist regime, there was a continuity in Islamic tradition and in the patterns of interaction between the Russian centre and its Islamic periphery throughout Russian imperial and Soviet history. Besides, Soviet Islam followed the Islamic dynamic that was characteristic of much of the Third World and therefore should not be perceived as a specific and self-contained Soviet phenomenon. At the same time, under the Soviet regime Islam persisted mainly in its unsophisticated, popular form, as the essence of the way of life of a largely rural population rather than as a belief system. Its survival in unfavourable political and cultural conditions was due to its flexibility and adaptability, as well as its ability – unlike the Russian Orthodox Church – to do without formal prayer-houses and clergy. The traditionally close-knit extended Muslim family, which remained outside the regime's effective control, was the major repository and transmitter of Islamic identity. In this respect Soviet Muslims suffered less than Russian Orthodox believers, whose religiosity was undermined as a result of the mass destruction of churches and the purges of Orthodox clerics.

Among some controversial issues raised in the book is the nature of the *modus operandi* of the relations between the *umma* (the Islamic community) and the Soviet system. One could argue that a vital component of this relationship, which is not considered by Ro'i, was the affinity between the *umma* and communism in some of their fundamental principles related to social justice, communalism, the priority of the group over individual interests, concern for the poor and the denunciation of slavery, all of which were first identified by Muslim communists in the early 1920s. This could explain, for example, why the *kolkhoz* system fitted well into the traditional social

networks of rural Muslim communities and why the Muslim regions hung on to the Soviet and Communist Party structures longer than other parts of the former USSR. Also, it could be argued that Ro'i's dichotomy between official and unofficial Islams is rather problematic since there was never a clear-cut distinction of functions and always more fluidity between them than Ro'i gives credit for. This has been confirmed by the many examples of the rapid transformation of Soviet-era unofficial Islam into official Islam and the subsequent transfer of the opposition role to non-traditional fundamentalist Islam embodied in so called *Wahhabism*.

Overall, this book is the product of scholarship at its finest and it deserves an enthusiastic welcome. It is an indispensable source of reliable historical reference for specialists and all others who are interested in the subject.

GALINA M. YEMELIANOVA  
*University of Birmingham*

Marta Dyczok, *Ukraine. Movement without Change, Change without Movement*. Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers, 2000. 164 pp. £21.00 (hbk), £12.95 (pbk).

The well-chosen title of this book goes to the heart of Ukraine's ambivalent post-Soviet experience. Marta Dyczok tells a compelling story of Ukraine's independence and the country's ongoing transition process. The author aims to 'take a look at how an unrecognised nation changed the global power balance and became an international player on the eve of the new millennium' (p. 28). Her familiarity with the events on the ground and her genuine concern with Ukraine's development are obvious throughout. Contrary to the generally bleak picture in the international media, Dyczok's narrative emphasises the considerable achievements of Ukraine within a relatively short period of time, such as the maintenance of political and social stability, thereby calling into question the universally applied economic benchmark criteria which tend to be devoid of any historical and political context. Moreover, she highlights the importance of social and cultural issues as factors mobilising popular support and underpinning a functioning democracy. In becoming an independent and internationally recognised state, Ukraine has contributed to the reconfiguration and reconceptualisation of Europe and European security. It is still 're-claiming and re-examining its history' (p. 8), a process that is bound continuously to challenge Russia's identity as a former empire and as a nation. While Dyczok is right in treating Ukraine consciously 'as a subject rather than an object of international relations' (p. 28), it is surprising that her study does not discuss Ukraine's serious economic constraints in more detail, most notably its economic dependence on Russia, which has so far prevented it from acting decisively and independently on the international stage. The whole issue of EU enlargement and its potential implications for Ukraine, in particular in terms of its relations with Poland, are also absent from this study.

The book begins with a brief historical background, highlighting the recurring importance of history in the region and lasting historical controversies. It then moves on to a description of Ukraine's starting point in 1991, which was shaped by different Soviet legacies such as the Soviet institutional and economic infrastructure, the political mentality of a formerly peripheral elite, and the lack of a clear-cut cultural and international identity. The rest of the book provides a systematic overview of political, economic, social, cultural and foreign-policy issues and singles out the

survival of the old nomenklatura and the high level of corruption as the biggest obstacles to structural reforms, although the author's prediction that 'it will become in the interest of those who succeed in securing power to eradicate corruption' seems over-optimistic, particularly given the current political climate in Ukraine, which has increasingly been dominated by the influence of corrupt oligarchs. Dyczok's statement that 'Ukraine's economic performance has been surprisingly positive given its starting point and the enormity of the task it undertook' also asks for a more detailed analysis of specific economic policies, such as budgetary policies and privatisation, and the timing and implementation of these policies. A certain degree of simplification and generalisation glosses over some nuances, for example when giving the impression that Kuchma railroaded through his constitutional package without facing major obstacles (p. 59). Ukrainian–Russian relations are singled out as the key to stability in the region. Despite going to press before the controversial constitutional referendum about increasing the president's powers (April 2000), this book points to 'a return to authoritarianism' (p. 140) as the biggest threat for Ukraine.

This study belongs to Harwood's series on post-communism, which aims to provide the reader with a general overview of events and issues in individual countries without necessarily locking each case into the academic debate that has evolved over at least a decade or referencing claims or data in detail. The study is, therefore, a most useful source of reference for people with little background knowledge about Ukraine. It presents the author's view on Ukraine's post-independence period, but its structure and the information it provides resemble previous studies in the field of Ukrainian area studies, although its engagement with other books in the field is limited. Thus it fits a broader trend, which has become more apparent in recent years: the image of Ukraine as an unknown entity in both academia and policy-making – 'the lingering information gap on Ukraine' (p. 28) – is continuously being reproduced by broad overview studies, while in-depth analyses of individual themes or issues are still a rare occurrence.

GWENDOLYN SASSE

*London School of Economics*

Nebojša Popov (ed.), *The Road to War in Serbi – Trauma and Catharsis*. Budapest: Central European University Press, 2000. 720 pp. £17.95 (pbk).

Branimir Anzulović, *Heavenly Serbia – From Myth to Genocide*. New York: New York University Press, 1999. 250 pp. £14.95 (pbk), £35.00 (hbk).

Within a growing literature on the wars in the former Yugoslavia, two books, dealing with the Serbian side of the war, merit special attention.

*The Road to War in Serbia* is the product of a research project by twenty-three Belgrade scholars from such diverse backgrounds as politics, law, sociology, statistics, economics, history and philosophy, who met regularly to discuss their research. The initial impulse for the project came from the New Serbian Forum, one of its goals being to support open discussion about the future of Serbia and its responsibility for the Yugoslav wars. Concurrent with these goals, many of the contributions were published earlier in *Republika* (Belgrade) and other oppositional papers. The Serbian version appeared in 1996 (*Srpska strana rata*, Belgrade). It has also been translated into French (*Radiographie d'un Nationalisme – les Racines Serbes du Conflict yougoslave*, Paris, 1998) and into German (*Serbiens Weg in den Krieg*, Berlin, 1998).

Although partly differing views are expressed in the contributions, all scholars seem to agree that the wars as such were not planned long in advance, but that the public was systematically prepared for the option of war. To analyse how this was achieved is the aim of this volume. The period covered here is roughly from the mid-1980s up to 1993. The twenty-six contributions to this volume are grouped into six chapters.

The first chapter is especially interesting, as it contains articles giving an overview and presenting more general themes. Vesna Pesić's article on 'The war for ethnic states' analyses the dynamics of nationalism in Yugoslavia up to the 1990s. Olivera Milosavljević discusses how the concept of Yugoslavia came to be regarded as a 'mistake' especially since the mid-1980s. The article by the editor, Nebojša Popov, 'Traumatology of the party state', is perhaps the most tone-setting piece in this volume, as it deals with the overarching analytical approach of the research – the use of trauma to present nationalism and war as a means to catharsis. He surveys different cultural aspects (idealisation of war, aversion to the multicultural city) and myths (Kosovo myth, economic exploitation myth, etc.), some of which are the subject of articles in the subsequent chapters. His thesis is that under communist rule, not only were certain myths kept alive, but that the party state was responsible for the creation of additional myths (such as about the number of inter-Yugoslav victims in World War II) and traumas such as collective 'atheisation' (in a region where religious identity used to be the prime marker of identity), rapid urbanisation, modernisation and militarisation of society. He compares the revival of nationalism to a Freudian return of the suppressed and is of the opinion that the prime mobilising factor was the Kosovo myth, which portrayed the Serbs as a chosen people and offered paths to redemption.

The next chapter focuses on the 'Roots of the trauma' (chapter 2) with, amongst others, articles on modernisation (Perović), the perception of the city (Vujović) and the alleged economic exploitation within Yugoslavia (Madžar). The third and fourth chapters discuss the role of various players and institutions in the preparation for war. Amongst the articles that are especially interesting is Ivan Čolović's 'Football, gooligans and war', in which he tracks the transformation of football fans into the most-feared fighters of Arkan's Tigers. The fifth chapter is devoted to a survey of various parts of the mass media. The last chapter, which comprises only one article (by Vojin Dimitrijević), is on the international community's reaction to and action in the Yugoslav crisis.

The quality of the articles is generally very high and they offer in-depth analysis of various aspects of the radicalisation of Serbian society. Taken as a whole, this is a very authoritative account of how the Serbian public was prepared for war. Although coming from Serbia, most authors are very critical not only of Milošević and his obvious allies, but also of parts of the (former) opposition (see the article by Dubravka Stojanović).

A different, arguably more one-sided, approach is offered by Branimir Anzulović's book, in which the author tracks the development of the various components of the myth of 'heavenly Serbia'. Although Anzulović's thesis is similar to Popov's approach, he focuses almost exclusively on the historical and literary myth of heavenly Serbia. This core myth was developed in poems on the Kosovo battle of 1389, in which Prince Lazar is represented as having chosen the heavenly kingdom instead of the earthly kingdom, as advised by a messenger of god. This myth, which was taken up time and again in the Serbian popular/folk and literary tradition, established the view of the Serbian people as a chosen people, which, because of its virtues, is condemned to suffering at the hands of its evil enemies. Anzulović discusses at some length the

literary works relevant to the establishment of this myth and other correlative myths and cultural traits (such as the idealisation of violence, and the harmony of state and church), yet, when he is transferring the literary myth on the Serbian people and their actions, he is not able to do so convincingly. He does not expand on how the myth was utilised, neither does he attempt to test the broad popular acceptance of it (interviews are not used), but he willingly presumes that it was in fact accepted by 'the Serbs' and was influential on their actions. Especially dangerous here is a general condemnation of the Serbian people on the basis of certain myths and the alleged cultural cult of violence, as it leaves no room for a detailed political study of mobilisation through myth and tradition. In addition it neglects the existence (and possibility of) such works as Popov's and of any opposition to the war effort.

STEFAN IHRIG

*Freie Universität Berlin*

Ger Duijzings, *Religion and the Politics of Identity in Kosovo*. London: Hurst & Co., 2000. 256 pp. £16.50 (pbk).

Julie A. Mertus, *Kosovo – How Myths and Truths Started a War*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999. 406 pp. £12.50 (pbk).

In recent years, Kosovo has often been presented as an area where two ethnic groups – Albanians and Serbs – are clashing and centuries-old hatreds are being unleashed. Yet not only is this a simplified version of historical and political facts, it is actually a nationalist distortion and represents the outcome of agitation rather than describing root causes. The books by Ger Duijzings and Julie Mertus try to present an alternative picture of Kosovo and of the conflict by using very different approaches.

Duijzings' book is a collection of case studies on identity and politics. His primary concern is the formerly mixed character of religious practice in Kosovo, especially the cases of mixed pilgrimage (chapter 3), but he also discusses the case of Albanian Crypto-Catholics (chapter 4) and the specificities of (Albanian) Islam in Kosovo (chapter 5). The general theme of the book is Kosovo as a 'frontier society', which is not solely characterised by coexistence nor by conflict, but a mixture of both (p. 11). There are/were many ethnic groups (Serbs, Albanians, Croats and Gypsies), and many religious identities (Orthodox Christianity, Islam (Sufi/dervish-orientated), Catholicism) existed – not side by side, but with cross-cutting symbolism and a rather fluid individual allegiance.

However, as Duijzings started research in the area in 1991, the situation he is anthropologically describing and analysing is now part of history, as the processes of 'ethnic unmixing' (a term borrowed from Rogers Brubaker) and of creating stable one-dimensional identities through violence have eliminated much of the fluidity and interrelatedness of Kosovo society. In his first case study on the exodus of Croats of southeastern Kosovo (chapter 2), he is charting one such aspect of 'ethnic unmixing'. Another aspect of the need to redefine one's position a society with new ethnic divisions is the emergence of a new ethnic category – that of the 'Egyptians' (chapter 6). This new category is made up of people formerly defined as Gypsies.

In the two last chapters of his book he discusses the relationship between religion and nationalism in the Albanian (chapter 7) and Serbian (chapter 8) case. He counterpoises these attempts at the creation of simple stable identities with the micro-identities

he has described earlier. The purpose for this is, amongst others things, to illustrate how multiple identities came to be aligned along two conflicting lines, or at least came to be seen as such. He is of the opinion that it was mainly achieved through the employment of violence. But it is not the scope of this study to explain the dynamics of the conflict, but rather to establish a picture of the interrelatedness of Kosovar society, different from that which is usually offered in the media and by other studies.

In comparison, Julie Mertus's book focuses on the macro-political cases of myth-making in Kosovo and Serbia; as such, her overall focus is on the relativity of the notion of 'truth' in Kosovo. By introducing the capital-lettered notion of 'Truth' she wants to highlight the fact that what people actually think of certain events is not so much influenced by historical facts, but rather by a combination of experience and myth. She examines four events, which were instrumental in setting the tone for the Serbian-Albanian conflict and for the feeling of victimisation on both sides, even though it is still not clear what actually happened or who was responsible. Each of these events is covered in one chapter comprising an analysis of accessible 'facts' and 'Truths', with an additional section containing interviews. The most important event for the Serbian propaganda was perhaps the so-called 'Martinovic case' (chapter 2), where a Serbian farmer was apparently sexually abused by a group of Albanians. Although it is still not exactly known what actually happened – and there is even strong evidence that he had not been attacked at all – the case was taken as the main proof of 'human rights' violations by Kosovo-Albanians and as symbolic for the general suffering of the Serbs at the hands of the Albanians. Other such events discussed are the 1981 demonstrations in Prishtina (chapter 1) and the 'Paracin massacre' (chapter 3). Only the fourth chapter about the alleged poisoning of Albanian schoolchildren is devoted to an incident that showed apparent 'aggression' against the Kosovo Albanians.

The last part of the book is devoted to the difficulties and conceptual problems faced by as well as created by NGO work in the region. Mertus again underlines her basic finding, that there is no basis for totally neutral work there, since no agreement on fundamental 'Truths' can be reached and compromise is – as of now – impossible, due to the propaganda of both groups, especially in relations to the events discussed earlier. It is regrettable that this last part of the book as well as the Postscript amount to little more than a personal political manifesto. However, the book is obviously successful in showing that the recent political history of Kosovo is far from clear and that for the moment the perception of members of both groups is more important than factual truth.

Both books are to be recommended as they add to a more differentiated picture of the region and the conflict. Yet it should be borne in mind that Mertus's work is written from a human rights lawyer's background with a clear focus on the political aspect of ethnic truth and mobilisation, and that Duijzings's book is focussing more on the anthropological aspects of ethnic practice and identity in Kosovo. These studies do not substitute for a history of Kosovo, but make good complementary reading and do offer some additional insights to such works as Noel Malcolm's history of Kosovo (New York, 1998). Both books constitute a strong plea against the simplification of highly complex issues.

STEFAN IHRIG  
*Freie Universität Berlin*

