

Balkan Cyberia asks us to rethink the mechanics of COMECON and the values of second world economies. The second section of the monograph demonstrates that the second world was never a truly closed system. If western embargos limited Bulgarian access to western technologies, spies and personal connections served as conduits to the wider world. Bulgarian salesmen in India learned capitalist business techniques. Petrov makes it clear that the line between the capitalist and socialist world was porous. In his hands, this becomes a fruitful space to think about what Bulgarian socialism meant in (what turned out to be) its last decades.

Finally, the Bulgarian computer occupied important spaces of imagination: through the screen Bulgarians could envision new and improved forms of social organization made possible by advancements in cybernetics. The computer was a form of improved control and resistance: data promised the arrival of equitably distributed abundance, while truck drivers destroyed the systems meant to monitor and improve their performance, and science fiction writers bemoaned the inability of the Party to deliver on the promise of the information age. In this, the computer was a totem of Bulgarian socialism's failures . . . and successes. Contrary to the prevailing understandings of late socialism as a period of stagnation, Petrov gives us a story of innovation, creativity, and fierce debate about the nature and direction of Bulgarian society. It is an important story, well told.

Ed. Yana Hashamova, Oana Popescu-Sandu, and Sunnie Rucker-Chang. *Cultures of Mobility and Alterity: Crossing the Balkans and Beyond*.

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The Balkans have often been described as a historic crossroads between empires, states, and nations, a bustling place where heterogeneous groups of people have encountered one another for centuries. These encounters necessitated the constant coming and going of people, which is to say arrivals to and departures from the region. When it comes to the twentieth century, however, and even more so the postwar period, the Balkans have been cast as quite the opposite: a marginal place that is too volatile to sustain encounters among neighbors and too backward to be of interest to outsiders. When scholars of the region study migration, they often focus on departing émigrés, refugees, and displaced people. In other words, scholarship implicitly underlines that the modern Balkans is a place that people leave in order to get away from one another rather than one where they willingly come to connect with others. However, as *Cultures of Mobility and Alterity: Crossing the Balkans and Beyond* highlights, there are understudied trends of people moving to and through the Balkans that compliment those of people who moved from the region in recent history. In this innovative edited collection, Yana Hashamova, Oana Popescu-Sandu, and Sunnie Rucker-Chang bring together an interdisciplinary group of scholars to argue that the Balkans have long been—and still remain—a site of multidirectional movement and diverse interaction.

Each of the nine chapters included in the volume is premised on the question of how people have continued to encounter one another in and out of the Balkans in the postwar period, a time when the political climate across Europe has trended toward ideological forces aimed at keeping people apart. The authors show that postwar populism, xenophobia,

and ultranationalism undeniably shaped human interactions. Yet they also show that there are many nuances in these interactions depending on the particularities of the place, the participants, and the direction of movement. This makes the collection dynamic because it treats the Balkans and its inhabitants as active agents of history. The volume does not minimize the fact that the region is often subjected to essentialization from without, but it does elevate the fact that it is also an agent of many other forms of interaction, such as nesting orientalism, from within. As the editors succinctly explain, the volume offers three distinct lenses for exploring encounters among people: “how people within the Balkans view *their* others, how the West views people from the Balkans, and how emigrants from the Balkans reflect upon their experiences as members of cosmopolitan diasporic communities” (1). The first and the third are particularly interesting contributions to scholarship.

Some chapters in *Cultures of Mobility and Alterity* present surprising findings about encounters in the Balkans. For instance, Rucker-Chang’s fascinating chapter “(Re)imagining Solidarities, (Re)imagining Serbia: South-South Student Mobility and the ‘World in Serbia’ Project” explores a scholarship program that Serbia began offering to non-aligned member and observer states in 2010 that mirrored the one socialist Yugoslavia had once hosted. Rucker-Chang notes that this program was unusual because it launched at a time of global economic crisis, and, moreover, because it has been surprisingly successful. Relying on interviews with scholarship recipients from different states and at different stages in their education and postgraduation career, Rucker-Chang suggests that they have an overwhelmingly positive outlook on Serbia and that they serve as a sort of “cultural diplomats.” The volume also includes studies of grimmer engagements of Balkan residents with outsiders. In the chapter “Refugees and TV Current Affairs Journalism: The Epistemology of Conventions,” for instance, Breda Luthar argues that mainstream Slovene media was just as complicit as social media, fake news, and tabloid media in normalizing right wing populist and nationalist narratives toward people from Syria, Afghanistan, and Iraq during the refugee crisis in 2015.

The authors in the collection rely on an array of different methodologies, including psychological, anthropological, ethnographical, and cultural ones. They are also in dialogue with major disciplinary trends such as colonialism and postcolonialism, socialism and post-socialism, race and racialization, and media studies. Most notably, they investigate the questions of movement to, from, and through the Balkans by drawing on a variety of sources like oral history, theater, literature, and media. While it can sometimes feel like the volume lacks cohesion beyond the general theme, most of the chapters set out to combat the dehumanization ascribed to the region’s residents as well as outsiders or “others” everywhere. Additionally, they directly respond to global problems of migration, which are all the more relevant in the aftermath of pandemic border closures. *Cultures of Mobility and Alterity* is a collection of thoughtful reflections on encounters in and out of the Balkans, and scholars of the region will likely find a topic of interest therein.

Ed. James Pettifer and Miranda Vickers. *Lakes and Empires in Macedonian History: Contesting the Waters.*

London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2021. xvi, 217 pp. Appendix. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Photographs. Tables. Maps. \$28.76, paper.

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This monograph is a rare example of a history book that employs a *longue durée* perspective to narrate a regional transformation in the Balkans. The Prespa region, shared between