

has been perceived as lacking in rigor and research. *Swans of the Kremlin* manages to disprove both preconceptions: in her analysis of the artistic significance and political machinations of Soviet ballet, Erzahi informs our understanding of one of the most important institutions of the Soviet regime and of national culture.

## Reference

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**Nationalism and the rule of law: lessons from the Balkans and beyond**, by Iavor Rangelov, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2014, xi, 217 pp., US\$95 (hardcover), ISBN 978-1107012196

As a scholar with a keen interest in the Western Balkans, Iavor Rangelov is acutely aware of some of the central questions that emerged after the collapse of the former Yugoslavia in the 1990s: What is the relationship between nationalism and the rule of law? Are they mutually reinforcing or conflicting? And, finally, can the rule of law be used to harness the negative potential of nationalism in the Balkans, and if so, in what way? Rangelov posits these questions within a broader framework of the contemporary literature on the rule of law and nationalism. This allows him to claim that the lessons from the Balkans resonate well beyond the region.

Rangelov offers a thorough overview of major concepts and European practices related to policies of ethnic citizenship, transitional justice, and international criminal justice. He also provides a balanced interpretation of the emerging complex web of relations between ethnic citizenship and liberal democracy in Slovenia, identity formation and transitional justice in Croatia, and finally, societal polarization in the context of international justice in Serbia. The two parts of the book are well integrated, as each chapter in Part One (Nationalism and the Rule of Law) provides a broader European context and the conceptual support for the cases that are being discussed in Part Two (Three Cases from the Former Yugoslavia). Simply, through the Balkan cases Rangelov aims to elucidate the broader tensions between nationalism and the rule of law as well as the role of international legal norms in managing this tension.

Overall, how successful is Rangelov in his endeavor? Rangelov argues that there exists a void in the literature covering the relationship between nationalism and the rule of law. Even though one may agree with the need for a more systemic account of the relationship between the two, one can hardly accept Rangelov's claim that the relationship between the two "has been largely neglected by scholars," or that there is a lacuna in the literature on the extent to which the rule of law shapes our sense of national identity. Certainly, the classic in the field is Brubaker's exceptional interpretation of the rise of German and French nationalism through the lenses of their respective legislative systems (*Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany*). More recently, Wayne Norman and Will Kymlicka have done something similar in the context of citizenship in diverse states, while, in his *Multicultural*

*Odyssey*, Kymlicka has also offered an insightful account of evolving international legal norms providing protection to indigenous groups, minorities, and immigrants.

I was surprised with Rangelov's decision not to address in a more substantive manner the tensions and contradictions between the law and nationalism in the context of Bosnia-Herzegovina. The reason for this overlooking of Bosnia is unclear. In my view, the Bosnian case incorporates all the issues Rangelov addresses in the book – the challenges of constitutionally supported ethnic citizenship, competing interpretations of who transitional justice is for, and, finally, whether the tools of international justice have the capacity to address the crimes committed during the war. Setting aside the omission of the Bosnian case, the three case studies are well presented, and informative. Area specialists, however, will find little new in Rangelov's analysis of developments in Croatia and Serbia. At the same time, they will benefit from his chapter on Slovenia that is usually "forgotten" in the analysis of the political dynamics of the post-Yugoslav states. The reader can gain an invaluable understanding of the ethnicization of Slovenian politics and the role the law played in the process of turning nonethnic Slovenian residents into illegal immigrants.


One of the reasons for the relatively uninspiring interpretation of the developments in Croatia and Serbia is linked to Rangelov's choice of literature. There is only a dart of references covering the past five years. This can be explained by the fact that the book sprung from the author's Ph.D. thesis in 2009, and, once the manuscript was published, the empirical investigation of the chosen case studies became somewhat dated. Also, almost all references related to the case studies are secondary sources and none of them are in the local languages. This seems odd given the author's interactions across the region with various NGOs whose publications represent a goldmine of primary sources on the issues related to the central topic of the book – the relationship between the rule of law and nationalism. This is a shame because some of the author's major claims do not fare well in light of troubling, recent developments in the region (in particular, in Serbia and Croatia). For example, the author finishes the book with cautious optimism in the ability of law to provide the necessary mechanism to tone down the aberrations of nationalism. However, hero worship of war criminals is as prevalent in the region as ever, while it is hardly news that the mechanisms of international justice lack any legitimacy in the eyes of most of the population in Serbia and Croatia.

An interesting question that Rangelov only partially deals with is what is the reason for such lack of trust in transitional justice and (international) law? In her book on *Hijacked Justice*, Jelena Subotic offers a powerful analysis of the mechanisms the Balkan states' elites use in order to appropriate transitional justice initiatives according to their own respective political objectives that are not necessarily in accord with the principles of justice. Even though Rangelov is aware of her work, he has not tried to incorporate her argument within his own, or provide the reader with his own evaluation of the mechanisms of the hijacked justice. His deliberative approach and a rather vague trust in the pluralization effects of the public discourse point toward the role of civil society as a possible solution for opening up the political space that will allow the rule of law to play its part in harnessing nationalism. The extent to which civil society is up to such a task in the region, however, is as open a question today as was 20 years ago.

In the end, there is a tendency in the literature to emphasize the uniqueness of the Balkans. Rangelov's nuanced understanding of the dynamics of ethnic citizenship and the rule of law within the broader European framework will serve as a needed corrective to those interpretations that lack a clearer comparative focus. Ultimately, I would recommend the text to senior undergraduate and graduate students. They can benefit greatly

from Rangelov's careful analysis of some of the key concepts in political science – nationalism, citizenship, and law – and their application in the context of the Balkans.

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**Visions of annihilation: the Ustasha regime and the cultural politics of Fascism, 1941–1945**, by Rory Yeomans, Pittsburgh, PA, University of Pittsburgh Press, 2013, 456 pp., \$29.99 (paperback), ISBN 978-0822961925

In *Visions of Annihilation*, Rory Yeomans considers how the Croatian Ustasha movement, which came to power in 1941 after Axis forces dismantled Yugoslavia, used popular culture in an effort to gain popular support and legitimize the leadership's brutal campaign of national purification against perceived racial, national, and political enemies. The mere effort to examine how the Ustasha movement used cultural politics during their four-year rule distinguishes *Visions of Annihilation* from most scholarly works on World War II Croatia. Instead of treating the Ustashes as a small clique of extremely violent fanatics, Yeomans takes the movement seriously and attempts to situate it within a broader framework of mainstream European fascism. Only such an approach, Yeomans argues, can enhance our understanding of the Ustasha regime's ideology, policies, and historical legacy. By considering the Ustashes as a mainstream European fascist movement, Yeomans' study moves beyond conventional accounts, which depict the Ustashes as a marginal group of poorly organized Italo-German puppets whose propensity for extreme violence antagonized most of the population and resulted in the Ustashes' eventual demise at the hands of Josip Broz Tito's multiethnic Communist partisans.

Yeomans' approach is bound to generate criticism from scholars who have retained some aspects of the Titoist historical narrative about World War II, which the partisan leadership developed during the war and strictly enforced until Yugoslavia's dissolution in the 1990s. Partisan propagandists presented the Ustashes as a handful of Croatian "degenerates" (*izrodi*) who loyally served their Axis masters while working against the interests of the Croatian masses on whose behalf they claimed to rule. Such an oversimplified depiction of the Ustasha period has influenced some otherwise excellent works on World War II Yugoslavia, leading several scholars to conclude that the Ustashes maintained power solely through terror and cared little about how the population perceived their policies. The extensive source materials Yeomans reveals indicate otherwise. Yeomans' discussion of regime-sponsored newspapers, radio broadcasts, ceremonies, poems, novels, films, festivals, and several programs through which the movement sought to engage the public reveals that Ustasha leaders and activists took their project of remaking the Croatian nation very seriously. They cared deeply about how the public viewed the new state and devoted tremendous resources to presenting the leadership's campaign of national regeneration and purification in a manner they hoped the public would support.