

Book Reviews

Francis W. Carter, editor, *An Historical Geography of the Balkans*, New York, Academic Press, 1977, pp. 580.

During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries Western travelers, especially British, were indefatigable in exploring out of the way places and producing well-written and informative accounts of what they had seen. They were drawn to many of these spots as much out of a desire to experience the exotic as from a concern to advance scientific knowledge. With its geographic, ethnic and religious diversity the easternmost peninsula in southern Europe was particularly enticing to adventuresome souls. By the end of the nineteenth century the "mysterious Balkans" had become a vexing place of great power diplomatic and economic interests and small, factious nation states. Despite the pejorative connotation that was, in some measure unjustly, attached to the term "Balkans", the peninsula was and is of great strategic importance. Western interest in this region, worthy as it was some two centuries ago, is even more so today. And nothing could be more welcome than the interest of historical geographers.

This work is as diverse and wide-ranging as the complex region that it deals with. Among those who contributed to this volume were historians, archaeologists, a sociologist and of course geographers. In time the essays range from the neolithic culture to twentieth century nationalism, and in scope from an area-wide consideration down to the analysis of a small Adriatic island. Yet, as the editor himself points out the book is comprehensive neither in geographic nor in topical coverage. It is the kind of work that would tempt a reader to dip in wherever his particular temporal and topical interests may happen to lie. There is a value, however, to reading through this book for it offers the opportunity to draw out insights about an area almost overwhelmed by history, as well as the significance of the concepts of development and modernity to our times. It is in this sense that a reviewer may perhaps best comment on the book, for to discuss each contribution separately would be counter-productive.

While many regions of the world contain both physical and human diversity, this is a salient feature in the Balkans to the point of generating contradictory and conflicting forces. As the first essays in the book make clear, the Balkan peninsula has seen human habitation for tens of thousands of years. In recorded time alone several cultures have arisen from the peoples who have settled in the area. Its strategic geographic location has guaranteed not only settlement but also the constant movement of peoples. The nature of these migrations has varied significantly. The coming of the Slavs was a steady and fairly peaceful movement while the entry of the Ottoman Turks was marked by dramatic and forceful change. If this were not enough to unsettle things, there was also movement from within. In the Yugoslav area, as George Hoffman points out, the Serbs withdrew from certain areas in instances where they were forced to do so for protection. In other cases, Albanians migrated out of areas of early settlement to fill in places like Kosovo and the region south of Athens when lands fell open. Human experience is one of the keys to an explanation of the formation of distinct ethnic groupings and the attendant ethnic complexity of the Balkans.

The impact of the physical environment on peoples and their culture has intrigued intellectuals since the age of the Enlightenment. Romantic nationalists in the nineteenth century

turned this notion into the doctrine of a "national soul" derived from a people's natural surroundings. One of the merits of this book is that it helps make clear the interrelationship between a people's historical experience and its environment without tendentious arguments. Physical geography—climate, terrain, and plant and animal resources—has influenced the location, size and purpose of human settlements from neolithic to modern times. In the process it has had an impact on the cultures that have been created by the inhabitants of the settlements. The chapters on aspects of economic development in Greece, Yugoslavia and Romania serve to illustrate this point. The divergent paths towards modernization that the several Balkan states have followed make clear the inapplicability of one model of development as well as the intertwined relationship between society and physical geography.

The conflicts that have wracked the peninsula during the past century and a half and given it a reputation of instability cannot be understood until one realizes that there have been at least three worlds competing for an individual's loyalty. Two have existed for centuries: the state culture of empires beginning with the Romans which has been the broadest in scope, and the various regional cultures based on geographic areas (islands, mountain regions) in many instances. The newest on the scene and in between the other two in size is of course the nation state. Each world has produced its own network of communications, economic system, urban-rural pattern, military order and political plan based on its own unique rationale for existing. During the nineteenth century these three worlds competed for the effective loyalty of their members with the nation state culture emerging triumphant by this century. What the contributors to this volume have demonstrated in their varied essays is the degree to which all three worlds have been shaped by the human geography of the peninsula.

This is a much-needed contribution to Balkan studies and one which should fulfill the editor's hope of encouraging interest in this part of Europe.

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Jelavich, Charles and Barbara, *The Establishment of the Balkan National States, 1804-1920*, Seattle, University of Washington Press, 1977, pp. 358.

Happy is the culmination of a conjugal academic life in the appearance of this volume in the reputable series, *A History of East Central Europe*, partially funded by the Ford Foundation and edited by Professors Sugar and Treadgold of the University of Washington, which the Jelavichs have produced. Having earned their rightful places in scholarly output on the Balkans, this Indiana University pair have collaborated in writing a remarkable synthesis of the evolution of the peoples of southeastern Europe up to the achievement of their national independence after the First World War.

Perhaps the most challenging task confronting the authors was one of balance. How to rewrite what has been hitherto written in so many accounts? And how to produce a manageable monograph without sacrificing essential items? A disclaimer affidavit appears in their preface: "...the authors have attempted to adhere to the statement in the editors' foreword and to present an introduction to the subject to the 'scholar who does not specialize in East Central European history and the student who is considering such a specialization'". Thus this volume should be appraised as one fitting into the scheme of the entire series.

Beginning, as it should, with the familiar story of Turkish rule over the Serbs, Greeks, prototypical Romanians, Bulgarians, and Albanians, the book then proceeds to give detailed treatments to the national revolts among the Serbs, Greeks, and Romanians. But the Turks