

Zitierhinweis

van Meurs, Wim: Rezension über: Valeska Bopp-Filimonov, Erinnerungen an die 'Nicht-Zeit'. Das sozialistische Rumänien im biographisch-zeitgeschichtlichen Gedächtnis der Nachwendezeit (1989-2007), Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2014, in: Comparative Southeast European Studies, 65 (2017), 1, S. 186-188, <https://recensio-stag.lorax.syslab.com/r/554c0e386a3347c181abdb85b4ed8814>



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'how states are made' and spotlights some of the propagandistic use of lyrics and music.

Peter Mario Kreuter (Regensburg)

¹ The Fragmentation of Yugoslavia. Nationalism and War in the Balkans, Basingstoke 2000; Creating New States. Theory and Practice of Secession, Aldershot 2007.

² Anthem Quality. National Songs: A Theoretical Survey, Bristol 2014.

³ Resurrection. A Tale of Two Anthems Sung by Serbs, *Nations and Nationalism* 16 (2010), no. 3, 442-461; Of Love and National Borders. The Croatian Anthem 'Our Beautiful Homeland', *Nations and Nationalism* 18 (2012), no. 2, 247-266; 'Zdravljica' – Toast to a Cosmopolitan Nation Anthem Quality in the Slovenian Context, *Nationalities Papers* 42 (2014), no. 5, 828-847.

⁴ While generally agreeing with Pavković and Kelen's information, I must disagree utterly with the description of the Danish Royal anthem 'Kong Christian'. That anthem is *not* a 'marching song' (20), but part of the overture to an opera!

⁵ To be precise, this refers to the song 'Every Sperm is Sacred' from 'The Meaning of Life' (1983). It is even possible to sing the main verse of the film's song on the tune of 'Intermezzo'.

Valeska Bopp-Filimonov, *Erinnerungen an die 'Nicht-Zeit'. Das sozialistische Rumänien im biographisch-zeitgeschichtlichen Gedächtnis der Nachwendezeit (1989-2007)*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag 2014, (Balkanologische Veröffentlichungen, 61). 350 pp., ISBN 978-3-447-10142-4, €54.00

As much as previous generations of historians have consolidated the account of the actual processes and events of national history, current generations are preoccupied with the memory of the same events

and processes. Inspired by Maurice Halbwachs, Pierre Nora and Jan and Aleida Assmann, they explore the interaction between personal memories or traumas and state strategies intended to legitimize commemoration. In this expanding field of study, researchers have moved beyond juxtapositions of distorted and instrumental official views versus authentic personal memories. In Valeska Bopp-Filimonov's PhD thesis (Leipzig University) too, the starting point is the mutual influencing of collective and individual memories and identities rather than a regime imposing its views on society.

For reasons that are yet to be fully understood, Romania is something of an exception among post-communist East European polities in dealing with its national past. More often than not the communist era has by now been depoliticized and relegated to the domain of academic historians. In Romania, however, not only does the December Revolution of 1989 remain highly contested, but so does the entire communist era, for both are imbued with questions of political legitimacy. Contemporary historians who prefer to keep their distance from today's political trench warfare often choose to research the authoritarian and fascist regimes of the 1930s and 1940s rather than the communist decades.

Faced with an insurmountable pile of possible sources Bopp-Filimonov has competently and courageously selected four key moments in Romania's post-1989 history: the immediate post-revolution years, the era of excessive nationalism in the mid-1990s, the rule of the Democratic Convention and Ion Iliescu's second presidency. The historical and political controversies of those four moments focused on, respectively: Nicolae Ceaușescu, Ion Antonescu, the Securitate and the Holocaust. Bopp-Filimonov also identifies

well-known discourses: anti-communist, nationalist and post-communist, the latter remaining somewhat ambiguous because of the weakness of liberal discourse in Romania, in that it is legitimized neither by anti-communism nor by nationalist or anti-Semitic mobilization. In addition to the standard repertoire of studies of this type—newspaper sources, school textbooks and public debates—Bopp-Filimonov introduces a more anthropological approach. Interviews with members of a number of Bucharest-based families counterbalance the analysis of official policies without suggesting that their individual recollections offer the reader a more truthful account of the 1970s or 1980s. Quite the contrary in fact, for their narratives are painstakingly dissected with great diligence and skill. Overall, the third chapter on the families encompasses almost half the text pages in the entire book. Whereas older studies in this field tended to ignore non-official memories, this book clearly prefers individual recollections over ‘organized’ collective memories of whatever nature.

Certainly, the chapter on the individual memories of Bucharest families is the most original and analytically sophisticated part of the thesis. However, the preceding exposé of theoretical and methodological considerations of memory politics as well as the outline of the post-communist decades in Romania (both in Chapter Two) are less convincing. The author has opted for a complete separation between on the one hand theoretical views of collective and individual memory and methodological tools of discourse analysis, and on the other hand the empirical material on the Romanian case. In doing so she abides by the implicit rules of a PhD thesis, but at least in a published book examples from the case-studies might have been very helpful in demonstrating the effects of the various

tools discussed for the hands-on analysis of the primary sources.

Similarly, the section on the political and societal context of the post-communist era, the identified discourses and the most controversial topics of memory politics has been written with a small ‘in-crowd’ in mind, the small group of experts on Romanian history and politics. A steep learning curve is therefore inevitable to master the authentic oral history material analysed in the next chapter, and such an approach in an introductory chapter is highly unfortunate for it makes this study as a whole virtually inaccessible to generalists interested in East European memory politics and communities at large. With only an informed audience in mind, the author fails to introduce and explain key events, individuals and debates adequately for the uninitiated. More importantly, the organizing principle of this section is imperfect, for its structure is partly chronological, partly based on the identified discourses and is partly a collage of items—such as a particular debate on new history textbooks.

The accounts of history and memory by the three families from Bucharest follow an anthropological methodology. The representativeness of the sample is not the problem, although the analysis is based on a much larger set of interviews. Essentially, the discursive threads that appear and reappear in the interviews are what binds them together. The first family is represented by a literary scholar born in the 1940s and his son, some thirty years younger but old enough to remember Ceaușism and the revolution of 1989. The second family consists of an Orthodox priest born before the war and his daughter who has hardly any recollections of her youth under communism other than the demolition of their residential quarter to make way for the *conducător*’s Palace of the People,

in Bucharest. The third case-study is an unusual one, as the interviewee eventually decided not to agree to publication of the author's analysis of his recollections. The author's 'stop-gap' is therefore a loose set of reflections on the limits of oral history, communist careers and the use of fiction literature in memory studies. Insights from the other interviews (albeit in cumbersome transcription) and their intertextuality are used in the fourth chapter that rounds off the empirical part of the thesis.

In sum, the imperfection of this study with its rich material is its aggregation state. Accessible organization of analysis and simpler presentation of the Romanian case with a more generalist readership in mind might not be priorities for a PhD thesis, but they should certainly be so in a book intended for general publication. Nevertheless, Bopp-Filimonov's study points up the value of this type of analysis of individual memories and life scripts for a differentiated rewriting of national histories, too many of which have been written from the perspective of official grand narratives with their communist 'Nicht-Zeit' (non-time) and suppression of unwelcome truths.

Wim van Meurs (Nijmegen/Kleve)

Gayle Munro, *Transnationalism, Diaspora and Migrants from the Former Yugoslavia in Britain*, London et al.: Routledge 2017. 121 pp., ISBN 978-1-138-69778-2, £ 45.00

This book by Gayle Munro is a welcome contribution to the scholarship on migration studies. In it, Munro examines how the Yugoslav wars of 1990s changed and challenged diasporic and transnational experiences and identities of migrants

from the former Yugoslavia who for diverse reasons reached Britain in the period 1953-2010. In particular the book focuses on (self)representations of the migrants in order to reflect on distinctions and overlap between economic and war-related population movements. Moreover, by stressing the importance of the individual rather than the collective dimension of transnationalism, Munro's main aim is to help to overcome essentialist understandings of transnationalism by showing that nuances exist in migrants' transnational belonging and practices. Those nuances are illustrated in five chapters which, the author explains, explore the variety of contexts and identities of individual migrants. They investigate the elaborations of the migrants' relationships with their homelands as well as their sense of belonging to their home community abroad. In order to do so the author refers to a rich body of diverse sources and research methods: analysis of 179 surveys and 46 interviews with migrants resident in Britain; discourse analysis of media and parliamentary material; autobiographical contemporary fiction; material in cyberspace and ethnographic observation of events related to the former Yugoslavia but held mostly in London.

The first chapter deals with the context of departure. The author provides a list of key moments in the history of the region 'which were foregrounded in the interviews' to explore 'how the history of the region of origin was portrayed by my participants and how such portrayals have affected the transnational relationship' (13). By listing these events—the battle of Kosovo Polje, World War One, World War Two, the purge after the Croat spring of 1971, Tito's death and the wars of the 1990s—Munro describes how historical ethnic antagonisms were vaguely referred to by male respondents from all regions and that