

BOOK REVIEW

Antoaneta Olteanu – *Homo Balcanicus, Characteristics of a Balkan Mentality*, Paideia Publishing House, Bucharest, 2004, 128 pages.

An excellent work of a real scientific value came to enrich the editorial landscape, we talk about **Homo Balcanicus, Characteristics of a Balkan Mentality** by Antoaneta Olteanu, a well established name in the European ethnology and anthropology.

It is a very useful book, opening ways to a dialog between people of culture, both in the Balkans as well as in Europe, on what today has pejorative meaning (synonym with excess, violence, intolerance and terrorism), rather than with a cultural landmark and civilization – the Balkans. The distinguished author renews a tradition of the Romanian Culture through **Homo Balcanicus** and, at the same time, she opens a dialog on the Balkans. Her scientific discourse is useful, because, in 1989, the Balkans were the place where a lot of tragic events took place which apparently cannot be explained, but at the same time confirm the historians' conviction that the Past, at least in this part of the world, repeats itself.

Reading **Homo Balcanicus** you get accustomed with the spirituality as well as the mentalities and stereotypes of this region. The author reaches the conclusion that we deal with old spiritual heritage, which can be found in all the peoples living in the Balkans. Antoaneta Olteanu's research included her travels in Bulgaria, Greece, Turkey and Serbia; they led her to a conclusion which makes her a voice apart from the other annalists of this phenomenon. Bringing historical, geographical, linguistic and ethnological arguments she sustains the idea that there is a Balkan mentality, a Balkan conscience, although most of the historians deny it. The inhabitants of this region don't like to define themselves as Balkan people, especially the Hungarians and the Romanians.

The excellent case study (page 71-89), dealing with mentalities and stereotypes in the Balkan peninsula, brings the characterizations of the Albanians, Bulgarians, Greeks, Macedonians, Turks, Romanians, Croatians and Slovenians using the point of view, of the theory of the image of the other. These aspects bring the author closer to another specialist in historic imagology, Maria Todorova, but, at the same time, detach her from the latter through her force to find her way through "the labyrinth of symbols" out of which the ideological foundation of the Balkans is made of. In spite of the emotional impact on the learned traveler which is Antoaneta Olteanu, her scientific research always takes into account the diversity and the individual picturesque of the regions she investigates. In this mixture of more or less harmonized ethnical ingredients, the author succeeds in underlining the essential and the general: "besides the exotic landscape and the people which strike the traveler, I soon noticed the common characteristics. Although they are modern and integrate themselves in the European framework, old influences are well assimilated by the Balkan cultures." What characterizes a Balkan inhabitant? He belongs to many nationalities because of his ethnic, mental and spiritual structure; he is able to be related with the others (pg. 61) because he can adapt his own identity to the identities of the others. In a turning point space, always defined by movable frontiers, by different languages and religions, Antoaneta Olteanu identifies a few zones of dialog, real representative institutions for "Homo Balcanicus" whether he is a Bulgarian, a Turk, a Greek or a Romanian. The market and the coffee shop are typical oriental elements that characterize the Balkan populations. As typical examples we can mention the great bazaar in Istanbul established by Muhammad II after the conquest of the city in 1543. In 1660 the bazaar of spices was build. Beyond the fabulous richness, the magic of the goods, the author mentions the colorful show of the Balkan trade,

namely two of its characteristics: bargaining and tip. For Greeks and Turks the pleasure of selling goods disappears if there is no bargaining. The seller and the buyer take part in an active tradition, based on a conversation animated by the former wish to sell and the latter desire to hoax the seller, obtaining a good price. (pg. 23)

The same characteristics are found by the author, when she analyses and compares the Balkan architecture, music, gastronomy and clothes. A common vision on life is shared in the ritual system, as well as in beliefs like "**martisorul, sorcova, caloianul, paparudele and calusarii**" that can be found in all the countries of the region. The author rightfully sustains the existence of a Balkan Mythology (pages 33-47) even the existence of a common Balkan epos connected to the traditional songs (Christmas carols, wedding and funeral songs and those dedicated to the agricultural works).

The amplitude of this work and the scientific method come from a multidisciplinary approach of the Balkan phenomenon. The geographical, historical and sociological studies are harmonized and thus the work is complete. (The chapter "The World of Stereotypes")

Homo Balcanicus is original because it tries to deal away with stigmatic elements that are used as a rule in characterizing the Balkans and the Balkan peoples. There had been and still exist a part of European society that sees in the Balkan region only decadence, regress, religious and ethnic fanatics as well as other "sins" (page 91). This assumption makes the author to allocate a very important part of her work to the comparative analyses of the Balkan region, seen from the inside, as well as from central Europe (page 91-97). The book reopens the discussion on the old dichotomy East-West: "For the Byzantine world, the center of civilized European world, after the fall of Rome, the West stood for barbaric customs and regress; but the fall of Constantinople lead to the disappearance of Eastern values ... the Westerners erased all that was good in the Byzantine civilization: the diplomacy of peace and the culture" (page 96). The author identifies certain kind of a discourse meant to identify Byzantine world with the Balkan world. "As it generally happens with stereotypes, their origin consists of the unwillingness to know the realities of this part of the world", the author says. The western world looks at the Balkan peoples through a deformed mirror, a stereotype. The worst is yet to come, the author underlines. The Balkan communities deny their traditions because they want to be recognized; in doing so they take over western values although not all those values are real ones, or can be adapted to the traditional values". The author concludes that as long as the people living in the Balkan region deny their origin and like to be seen as Europeans instead of the barbarians at the gates of Europe, there will always be conflicts and misunderstandings. Although the process of globalization is undergoing, **Homo Balcanicus**, a book that stands for itself, is a turning point in reflecting the image of the other and the image of our own self. We, after all, are the Balkans.

Ecaterina Căpățână

Simona Ștefănescu— *The Media and the Conflicts*, Bucharest, Tritonic Publishing House, 2004

In an era when the media have grown to be one of the most dominant forms of culture – so dominant, in fact, that they can now be seen as the pinnacle of commercial culture – an explanatory theory of the relationship between media and the conflicts becomes a paramount. Yet considering the intimate relationship between conflicts and the media and that, for many, the media have become their culture, a theory that views the media outside the context of culture will be afflicted with myopia. Thus, for completeness, a theory of the media requires a firm connection to reality in its every step. Though, considering the strong connection between national and international conflicts and the media, it was necessary such a study as "Media and Conflicts" to make some useful connections. Walter Lipmann said: "We must remember that in

time of war what is said on the enemy's side of the front is always propaganda, and what is said on our side of the front is truth and righteousness, the cause of humanity and a crusade for peace".

Probably every conflict is fought on at least two grounds: the battlefield and the minds of the people via propaganda. The "good guys" and the "bad guys" can often both be guilty of misleading their people with distortions, exaggerations, subjectivity, inaccuracy and even fabrications, in order to receive support and a sense of legitimacy.

The book comprises three parts, structured in eight chapters.

After making a few conceptual observations, the author concentrates on presenting the theoretical aspects of the relation between media and the conflicts. There are some theories which should be mentioned in order to incite the public to read the book: the theories referring to mass media as "extensions" of the state in crisis and conflict situations. John Keane and Douglas Kellner affirm that the paradigms of the freedom of communication have to present the statal point of view and its role in forming the public opinion.

The second theory refers to mass media as the main instrument of preserving the social order.

Other theories see the crisis as a media product or analyze the changing and contradictory role played by the media in a situation of crisis.

Generally, the journalists sustain that they present detached the facts, but, by reconstructing the news, they add a personal note to their commentaries. *Beginning with the Gulf War (1991)*, the military conflicts became the most mediatized events.

All these theories presented by Simona Ștefănescu are put into practise in a case study. She has chosen the conflict from the ex-Yugoslavia (1991-1995). It is our opinion that the author has that option because here we can meet "revolutions" that had overthrown communism, *coupes d'État*, terrorist acts, inter-ethnic conflicts, inter-confessional and international conflicts. The conclusions drawn by Simona Ștefănescu underline that the role played by mass-media during this conflict is hard to be established because of its multi-dimensional and unique nature.

This case study is well illustrated by lots of diagrams and plates for a better understanding of an extreme complex situation.

The American senator, Hiram Johnson (1917) said: "The first casualty when war comes is Truth."

The author makes an ample analysis of the conflict in ex-Yugoslavia. We noticed that she emphasizes "the image of the other" and the way in which the peoples taking part in the conflict saw themselves and the way in which they perceived the other participants. Mass media was the means of directing those perceptions.

The second case study refers to the conflict in Kosovo (1999). The form of presentation is concise. Kosovo is a muslim island surrounded by an orthodox sea. The conflict was not only the subject of "live" transmissions, but also the theme of many TV documentaries. These movies presented the reality as it had been perceived by the reporters that made them.

The conclusions drawn by Simona Ștefănescu are very important for the content of the book: "I consider that this research is able to open an interesting perspective on the mediatic coverage of a conflict, in general... The analysis of the mediatic coverage of the Kosovo conflict reveals semnificative differences between different newspapers and televisions, from the viewpoint of their neutrality or of their lack of neutrality. The media gave birth to certain stereotypes, prejudices and representations that built a reality that rarely reflects the truth.

The lecture of the book rises the interest of the reader, but a researcher will feel the need to go beyond this volume and to deepen the analysis. I am convinced that more and more studies will deal with the same theme, which is very actual and cannot be dealt with in just one volume.

We live in a dirty and dangerous world. There are some things the *general public does not* need to know about and shouldn't. I believe democracy flourishes when the government can take legitimate steps to keep its secrets and when the press can decide whether to print what it knows.

In democracies, people like to believe that they and their countries are generally good, for if it was any other way then it brings into moral question all they know and hold dear. The histories of some nations may have involved overcoming adversaries for legitimate reasons. Such important history is often recounted and remembered as part of the collective culture of the country and those same values are projected into modern times. Mass media sometimes work by creating the fear of losing such cherished values.

Vlad Alexandrina

Romanian Journal of International Law – The Association for International Law and International Relations, year I, number 1, October 2003, Bucharest.

The first issue of the Romanian Journal of International Law is a truly remarkable event. Not only because it is the very first publication of this kind in Romanian exclusively dedicated to International Law, but also because this journal has the significant of a new start for the Romanian School of International Law.

Having solid and bold developments of the Romanian doctrine of International Law is not just important from academic point of view. Historically, the Romanian scholars – some of them also play important roles on the international arena as diplomats or high level politicians – brought valuable contributions to the progressive evaluation of International Law principles, concepts, institutions, norms and standards.

The beauty of International Law resides in combining at the same time, idealism and pragmatism, both values and instruments, both policy and pure legal reasoning – sometimes in a very delicate balance.

The first issue of review includes the following parts: essays; the second – Commentaries upon the working sessions of the international bodies in the field of international law; – Recent events; – Commentaries on case law and legislation; – Restitutio – Great contribution of the Romanian School of International Law in developing Public International Law; – Book review; – Ph.D. candidate's contribution.

“It is being said that we wish to be governed by International Law, yet the world is passive witness to its repeated violation “. This is what Nicolae Titulescu was thinking sixty-six years ago, and we believe that his role, the function, the principles and concepts themselves, and even the prospect of International Law are – more than ever – put under the pressure of certain legal factors presented in the essay of the Professor Adrian Nastase and Ph.D. Bogdan Aureescu “The strategic role of international law in contemporary international society” of influence that tend to avoid, ignore or to subordinate International Law to particular political interest.

Taking into account this feature of International Law – relating international relations by obliging the International Law subjects to follow a certain, conduct, and thus respecting important values of the international society – one could conclude that this regulating role of IL is very closely connected to a concept of security and stability of the international society, in a broad sense. IL is supposed to be the “guardian” of the International Public Order, and to avoid anarchy in international relations.

The contemporary system of norms of International Law was crystallized in the half of century between World War and the end of the Cold War on the basis, of course, of the most important pre-existing rules of International Law.

Nevertheless, especially after the end of the Cold War, the international society has suffered, more that before, a lot of sudden and sources of the new pressure on International Law, challenging its existing configuration at the beginning of this new period after 1990. The dynamics of action of these sources determined the symptoms of this new crisis of International

Law, as well as important effects. The most relevant changes of the international society are well known: the collapse of the bipolar system and a new distribution of power, the globalization and the unprecedented growth of interdependence of the International Law subjects which contain, for instance, the concept of sovereignty and the way it is exercised; the prevalence of economics over politics; regionalization and multiplication of regional structures of cooperation; a growing and enlarged European integration process, which might lead to the replacement of International Law by the Community Law; the dissolution of certain States and formation of other on the basis of the will of the international community, which affects the concepts of succession and recognition in International Law; the permeability of borders, the "erosion" or so called "failure" of the nation-States; the unconventional threats to the domestic and international security like terrorism, illegal traffic, which also call for creation of new norms in order to regulate and protect international stability and security.

Either multipolar or unipolar – and perhaps with even more necessity in the latter situation – Contemporary International Relation must be regulated by a modern and efficient International Law. In fact, after 1990, the power was not only redistributed among States, but also to "non-classical" international actors.

International Law should have the capacity to adapt itself to all these radical changes and should respond accordingly to these challenges, so that it maintains its relevance for international security and stability of the International Society.

Recent events on the international scene raised important questions related to the scope and content of fundamental pillars of International Law order, as well as to the inter-relation between principles of International Law. The most important question refers to the legality and legitimacy of the "unauthorized" intervention – the aspect is debated in the study of Ion Gâlea "The theory of intervention from a legal and ethical perspective". At the same time, not only the legal equilibrium of the international society has been subject to question, but also moral and ethical aspects were raised in order to double legal arguments, either for or against intervention. But intervention is not new in contemporary International Law.

The political and legal purposes searched by intervention determined International Law scholars to introduce notions as humanitarian intervention or democratic intervention is not unanimous. If we take the positivist approach, the conclusion appears quite clear: intervention does not comply with International Law. The positivist approach is very attached to the rule of law principle.

The realist approach, although not strictly consistent with rule of principle, has the merit to respond to international contemporary reality, which occurred after the fall of the bipolar system.

A continuous development of international norms against terrorism is of a paramount importance also in front of developing methods and forms of terrorist activities. International community should react in such cases without any delay. The study of Professor Zdzislaw Galicki "International and treaties terrorism" is situated along these lines.

Sixty-six years have already passed since the adoption of the Convention for the prevention and punishment of terrorism (Geneva, 1937) – the first international treaty against terrorism. In 2002, the last comprehensive international legal instrument in this field has been adopted under the auspices of the Organization of American States namely the Inter-American Convention against Terrorism. These two conventions may be considered as the milestones on the road of long lasting efforts of international community of States to create an effective legal response to one of the most disastrous and horrifying phenomena of our times - international terrorism.

The Romanian Journal of International Law has the distinct privilege to present in *Restitutio: Vespasian V.Pella – A life dedicated to International Law*.

Most of the Romanian and foreign authors of IL* know V.V. Pella as one of the important pioneers of International Criminal Law - he was the initiator of the first Convention on the creation of an International Criminal Law, signed in 1937 in Geneva, and brought a substantive contribution to the development of this new branch of International Law through its constant contributions in the International Law Bureau for the Unification of the Criminal Law, in the International Association for the unification of the Criminal Law and in many other international forums, including before the Nuremberg International Tribunal, in May 1947, where he presented his new theories on ICL** - which were, in fact, consecrated in the decisions of the first ad hoc international tribunal.

But V.V. Pella was also an extremely gifted lawyer of IL and a very skilful diplomat who perfectly knew to use the instruments of IL to achieve the important objective of preserving peace and order in the international society of that time - between the two World Wars.

Pella was an advocate for the doctrine of the primacy of IL, which is now the dominant doctrine as far as the relationship between IL and Domestic Law is concerned.

It is no doubt that this theory is now the most and widely accepted in the Contemporary International Law, but at that time it was just beginning to spread.

To sum up, this review is a very useful one as it conveys much substantial information and very interesting studies.

Vasilica Mucea

The Romanian Review of International Studies – Association of International Law and International Relations, new series, year I, number 1, Bucharest 2004.

“Habent sua fata libelli” is the Latin aphorism frequently used when we refer to books with a complex destiny. We may say that the periodicals have their fate as well. *The Romanian Review of International Studies* has followed, in one way or another, a parallel road with that of the Association of International Relations (ADIRI) with its moments of creative affirmation, followed by stagnation, up to the interruption of its publication.

The ADIRI relaunching in 2003 has opened new prospects to the Romanian debates and researches, on topics from a large array of international studies. These circumstances have also created the possibility to resume the issuing of the Review, in a new series, meant to mark both the current European and international situation of Romania in the context of the change witnessed by the political community at the turn of the millennia.

Obviously, the governmental positions of the countries are still important in international negotiation but, at the same time, the share of independent thinking and the contribution of the non governmental organizations are increasing.

The Review is published under the aegis of three sections of ADIRI (the Section for European Integration, the Section for International Relations, the Section for the History of the Romanian Diplomatic Relations), the fourth section of the Association - that of International Law - issuing, as it is known, the twin publication *The Romanian Journal of International Law*.

Romania is in a climax period of its process of integration into EURO-ATLANTIC structures, NATO and respectively the European Union. The themes to focus on are the concept of the integration and the negotiations carried out to this effect. Inevitably, in conceiving this issue, the share of those who are professionally dealing with the integration issue, either in the academic or in the governmental bodies is higher. The articles do not express party-minded

* IL - International Law

** ICL - International Criminal Law

opinions, although the authors who held governmental offices have decided to present the "technology" as well as the stages of the accession negotiations to the European Integration.

The opinions presented here have frequently the mark of personal approaches towards issues which have not been finalized yet, where the views and the interests of the community and each state specifically have not been harmonized yet in an ideal manner. Adrian Severin Ph. D. peremptorily affirms in his essay "Challenges and solutions for an enlarged Europe": "unanimity is the recipe for paralysis for the EU foreign and security policy". According to other opinions, unanimity, like consensus, remains an ideal which can not be easily abandoned in favor of an expected but still uncertain efficiency. As a matter of fact, analysts are not certain if through simplified formulas they will overcome the deficit of democracy in the European Union. Undoubtedly, the optimization of the solutions pertaining to the adoption of the decisions in the European Union will be a long-lasting process which will be extended after the ratification of the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe, as well.

As far as what we expected in the predictable future is concerned, we find information in the judicious contribution of Professor Augustin Fuerea on the Treaty, conveyed upon in its substance but whose working out is still underway from the point of view of its form.

In his systematic and austere contribution, Mircea Coșea Ph. D. affirms that "Romanian integration into the European Union is essentially an economic issue", and that "the large scale industry remains the major link of a competitive economic structure" on our road towards European integration; these affirmations will remain a useful suggestion for any governmental programme. The assessment of finance specialists Bogdan Baltazar and Bertrand Isnard, pertaining to the role of the banks as "genuine growth propellers", is of a similar importance.

The optimism expressed by Alexandru Fărcaș and Răzvan Pantelimon, in the essay "Romania's negotiation for European integration: the premises of success", on the finalization of the accessions negotiations under European Commission mandate in its current membership, is robust and proves a full awareness of the success premises.

The European Union is a lively body which can not remain rigid in its maturation process, anchored in regulations, texts and concepts agreed upon at a certain moment of its evolution. It will be impossible to avoid the continuation of the debates on the interpretation of the essential principles of international relations, such as for instance sovereignty, a pretty extensively disputed topic, not only at a theoretical level. Both the political phenomena as well as the integrationist processes and the globalization lead to a transformation of sovereignty in its very substance included, towards a "new sovereignty".

The favorite formula is that through European integration the state do not renounce their sovereignty but agree that certain prerogatives of the latter should be exerted jointly.

This follows the tradition of the opinions expressed by the Romanian intellectuals as early as the period between the two World Wars, related to the coordinates of the League of Nations or to other project. The wealth of European ideas formulated by Romanian thinkers of those times, these evinced in the study of Professor Constantin Bușe Ph. D. "The Romanian opinions regarding the European integration" is quite impressive.

To underline the sensitive character of the topic in "the new Europe" we mention the prevalingly political study of the Polish writer Piotr Wierzbicki "Sovereignty - a good God" in which he expresses, in essence, the opinion that the misfortunes of the world have not been generated by an excess of sovereignty, but on the contrary, "the world is also governed by ideas".

Equally confident in the European future of Romania are the other studies or articles included which have determined the first issue of the Romanian Review of International Studies - new series to be a substantial and attractive issue.

Vasilica Mucea

Călin Hențea, Cornel Scafes, and Horia Șerbănescu – *The Romanian Army in International Missions*, C.N.I. Coresi Publishing House, Bucharest 2004, pag.

Edited by C.N.I. Coresi Publishing House, *The Romanian Army in International Missions* is made up of 80 written pages, 50 photos and 8 pages of colored plates. It represents a very important event for the Romanian military literature. The readers have now a very concentrated work about the missions conducted by UNO, OSCE and NATO in theatres of operations situated in Europe, Africa and in the Middle East. The book is a part of the "DOROBANȚUL" collection, published by the Military National Museum. This collection wants to present the military history from a fresh point of view. The authors of the book, Călin Hențea, Cornel Scafes and Horia Șerbănescu, do not want to reconstruct in every detail the missions; they want to make them known by the public. The book presents the military missions from the contemporary history of our Armed Forces. It is written in a modern style, it can be considered non-conformist compared to the classical way in which history books are written. The book combines the style used in newspapers with history.

For many reasons the book is very easy to read. The inter-linguistic criteria, for a reader that does not know Romanian, means that the book can be viewed as a photo album. The commentaries of the photos and the colored plates as well as the short summary can form themselves a book. Another reason for which the communication is so successful is represented by the direct presentation of each military mission. The book becomes a very important material for the reader who wants direct and complete information on military missions, or who wants to get accustomed to this domain.

The material is built up of three parts, each of them representing the Romanian military missions on each continent. The missions in Somalia, Rwanda, Angola, Congo and Ethiopia form the first part, called "Missions in Africa". Seven missions are presented in 12 pages. The next 10 European missions in the Republic of Moldavia, ex-Yugoslavia, Albania and Georgia represents the main material of the book. The role played by Romania as a factor of stability in Europe is very well underlined in 17 pages, very well written, both in Romanian and in English. In the last part the missions in the Middle East are presented. During the 5 missions in Afghanistan and Iraq, the Romanian Armed Forces proved to be a modern army, able to have a great contribution, besides its allies. From a historical point of view, the book is very valuable because all the changes in commanding and in preparing the actions are minutely presented.

The subject is current because out of 22 missions presented, at least 8 are still continuing. This thing raises some problems from the historical perspective. Still the sources presented are official and the work does not leave room for interpretations and speculations. That is why the material is an excellent source of documentation. The images presented in the book have both an artistic value and a technical one. The images selected underline the importance of the equipment and other important moments. The commentaries that go with the photos concentrate on each detail caught in the image. The plates represent soldiers that have taken part in different missions. Together with the commentary they form a kind of a fresco. The same style is used by the same authors in another book, **The Romanian Army from 1941 to 1945**, a very interesting volume worth reading by those who want to enrich their knowledge in the history of the Romanian Army. We live in an epoch in which our perspective on the future depends more and more on the degree in which we succeed in understanding the past and the present, which are complex, especially in what military missions are concerned. The book is a guide that helps us to face the crucial moments that are to come in the next years.

Although the volume is written on the structure of a book on military history, adressed mainly to the military staff, the information presented can be useful to other categories of readers that want to get accustomed with this domain.

Radu Cătălin