

# Abstracts

*Christian Voß*

## **Muslims and Jews in Southeast Europe – An Entangled History of Exclusion**

The article examines the entangled history of Jews and Muslims in Southeast Europe, particularly in the context of religious intolerance and the exclusion processes that both groups experienced over the last two centuries. While Jews and Muslims were part of the urban elite during the Ottoman period, the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire led to their drastic marginalization. The Holocaust and ethnic cleansing in the 20th century resulted in a significant decline of both communities, when the vast majority of Balkan Jews had been killed.

The author argues that despite shared experiences of exclusion, there were no conflicts over victim competition between Jews and Muslims, as the culminations of exclusion did not occur simultaneously. The study also highlights the role of solidarity and interreligious dialogue, as exemplified by the activities and narratives of the Sephardic NGO “La Benevolencia” in Sarajevo. Through a critical analysis of Balkan discourses, Voß refutes stereotypical notions and demonstrates that the region has exhibited remarkable religious coexistence over centuries, which has been threatened only by processes of nation-building and modernization.

*Xhabir Deralla*

## **How Authoritarian Politics, Media, and Lies Join Forces**

Lies, propaganda, and nationalism form a destructive triad that manipulates public opinion and destabilizes democratic institutions in the Western Balkans and other parts of Europe. Propaganda weaponizes disinformation to craft narratives that appeal to nationalist sentiments, fostering division and scapegoating marginalized groups. These falsehoods are often amplified by political elites, religious institutions, media outlets, and even cultural entities such as sports fan groups, creating an ecosystem of deception. Radical groups and political parties propagate hate, division, and violence, and weaponize fundamental democratic principles such as freedom of speech and political assembly. Over decades, this corruption has become a surrogate system, undermining democracy while maintaining a deceptive facade of legitimacy. Genuine civil society struggles to remain influential, often retreating into academic or detached activism, leaving democratic institutions vulnerable to manipulation. This deeply rooted phenomenon not only threatens regional stability but also highlights the urgent need for systemic reforms to safeguard democratic values against such exploitation.

**Nina Mirić**

## **Never Again Goli otok – Titoist Re-education Camps as a Building Block of Yugoslav Visions of the Future**

At the centre of this article lies the series “Ibeovci” by the (former) Yugoslav SKJ party newspaper Borba, which was published between January and September 1990. In the series, survivors of Yugoslav re-education camps recounted their experiences, as well as contemporary witnesses, political decision-makers and camp guards who orchestrated the political persecution and re-education of so-called Ibeovci between 1948 and 1956. With this multi-perspective approach, Borba initiated a collective negotiation of the past, with the aim of designing a liberal-democratic future vision for a united Yugoslavia based on the collective memory of Goli otok while discursively distancing itself from the Tito regime. The series of articles makes clear how the public debate in the power vacuum of 1990 was shaped not only by national(ist) separatist voices, but also by the effort to develop an alternative narrative to the supposedly preordained disintegration of Yugoslavia.

**Vesna Madžoski**

## **Being (a) Negative – The Spectre of Socialism in Photographic Archives**

In rare anthropological interpretations of the glass smashing custom in the Balkan Peninsula, it is written that this could be understood as a manner in which one informs the environment of transiting to a different state of consciousness. This article analyses, on one hand, the questions encountered while working on the exhibition “Fragile – Glass Narratives, Broken Histories” (December 2022, Museum of Applied Art Belgrade), and on the other the possibility of interpreting socialist history from the fragments found in the former glass and crystal factory “Kristal-Zaječar.” The focus is on the discovery of several hundred rolls of discarded photographic negatives. The theory of photo negatives is fragmentary in the history of photography and this article is an attempt to change this. Negatives offer a unique possibility to write versions of history not complying with the official narratives: a new plane of understanding the new post-socialist “normality” is created.

**Philine Bickhardt**

## **Imagining “Central Europe” as Southeast Europe – Mental Mapping in the Work of Danilo Kiš**

When the renowned historian Karl Schlögel (2002) says that the center of Europe lies in the East, one could argue by referring to the South Slavic and Jewish author Danilo Kiš that the center in fact lies in the Southeast. With the help of the concept “Pannonia” (often also “Kakania”), which Kiš uses in many of his literary places and texts, I will analyze how Kiš creates a mental map of Central Europe as the center of European history (in his trilogy “Jani radi”, “Bašta Pepeo”, “Peščanik”). Since Ivo Andrić, Yugoslavia’s only Nobel laureate in literature, Miroslav Krleža, and other important South Slavic writers processed “Pannonia” as Central Europe in their texts, I will attempt an outlook on the meaning of the concept “Central Europe” for South Slavic writers in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.