

for the new leadership that interfered. Historiography experienced attempts to offer a new perspective on history whereas literature, as shown by Emily Lygo, focused on lyrical poetry that was soon forced out of the Soviet literary life. After a brief renaissance of lyrical poetry, the Union of Soviet Writers intervened against J. Brodski and thereby put an end to the poetical euphoria. On the other hand, as stressed by Lygo, the Union supported a younger generation of poets; however, only those that had some experience from the literary groupings (LITO) and that thus more or less had control over them. Renaissance of poetry is also discussed in the last article of the volume by Katherine Hodgson. Contrary to Emily Lygo, she does not focus on poets of the older generation but her conclusion is very similar: there was no major liberalization and many authors of this period were banned from publishing. However, one could still talk about an emergence of a sort of cultural Destalinization movement when these poets who experienced the war tried to reconcile with their own past.

Susan E. Reid describes the changes that ensued the 20<sup>th</sup> Congress in the realm of art. She presents a discussion that erupted between Soviet artists on the so-called modern style (*sovremennyyi stil'*). She comes to the conclusion that despite disagreements over the need for a new modern style, all artists agreed – just like in any other sector – that no revolutionary changes had come about.

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Tim Judah, ***Kosovo: What everyone needs to know***. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008, 208 pp. ISBN 978-0-19-537673-0.

Tim Judah is a correspondent of the British news weekly *The Economist* in the Balkans. His new book *Kosovo: What everyone needs to know* indirectly extends his previous work on the circumstances of the Kosovo conflict in 1999 (*Kosovo: War and Revenge*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000). The main aim of his newest publication is to provide any reader with a general and basic overview of the historical, political and cultural development of Kosovo in its broader international context and to offer possible alternatives of the future evolution of the region. As the author pointed out in the introduction, the aspirations of this book do not go any further than what the title suggests. It is meant only for the general public interested in the topic that wants to acquire some understanding of the problem, and certainly not for scholars, knowledgeable of the issues.

Judah brings forward two important reasons why Kosovo should be of interest to the general public. Firstly, due to its geographical position, Kosovo geopolitically gained on importance with the accession of Romania and Bulgaria to NATO and the

EU in 2004 a 2007 respectively. Together with other states of the Western Balkans, the region has become encircled by Euro-Atlantic structures. Profaned appellations of the Balkans as the European backyard have come to nought. A mere glimpse over the map of Europe suffices to see that the region has become rather a sort of a European courtyard. The author sees the second reason for a close study of Kosovo in the manner in which it gained independence in February 2008. Judah does not embark on a detailed description of the issue, nor does he impose his views on the reader. He only states that the establishment of Kosovo as an independent country could have severe implications for the rest of the Western Balkans as well as for other unresolved territorial issues such as the status of the region of Basque or Kurdistan.

Judah divided his latest publication into thirteen chapters. The first two provide a brief demographic overview of contemporary Kosovo and surrounding areas. Third chapter introduces a historical analysis of the region and deals with popular myths and Kosovo's medieval past. Chronologically ordered seven chapter that follow focus on the crucial historical developments until the presentation of the Ahtisaari plan in 2007. Chapter eleven goes beyond the borders of Kosovo and briefly assesses the current perspectives of a potential establishment of the so-called "Greater Albania". The penultimate chapter puts the question of Kosovo into the context of frozen conflicts of the post-Soviet realm. The last part of the book describes the situation of the independence proclamation, formation of an independent administrative system, and the deployment of EULEX mission.

Judah's historical analysis that comprises the largest part of the book is based on the widely accepted (although in some respects controversial) work of Noel Malcolm *Kosovo: a short history* and a book of a leading French Balkanist Jean-Arnault Dérens *Le Piège du Kosovo* (Paris: Editions Non lieu, 2008). Another frequently quoted source is Miranda Vickers's *Between Serb and Albanian: A history of Kosovo* (London: Hurst, 1998). Passages dealing with the contemporary political development are an outcome of Judah's long-time experience as a journalist and his incessant stay in the region. Sources used in the last chapters mostly comprise of personal interviews of the author with prominent political figures, important local business people or even the clergy. The book includes useful maps, brief bibliography and links to recommended Internet resources.

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