

depth and authenticity to Dr. Pavlović's manuscript.

The story told in *Nezaboravljene. Britanke u borbi za svoja prava na dobrobit Srbije i saveznika 1914–1921* is, in many respects, a contribution to the comparative history of women's engagement on Europe's battlefields. It is a scholarly reflection on the horrors of war that reveal one aspect of human nature, but also a text that testifies to boundless compassion and the willingness to sacrifice in the service of others. The book stands as an epic testament to the dead, the wounded, the healed, the displaced, the exhausted, the mutilated, and the fearful—those whose lives were irreversibly changed by war.

Dr. Siniša U. Pavlović's work is distinguished by a remarkably high level of research rigor, a thorough and disciplined methodological approach, respect for the principles of historical scholarship, a wealth of factual material, a keen sense for the interplay of events and processes that give those facts meaning, and a refined literary style. In the "Afterword," the author speaks with heartfelt emotion about the personal motives that inspired the creation of *Nezaboravljene. Britanke u borbi za svoja prava na dobrobit Srbije i saveznika 1914–1921*.

Ljubodrag DIMIĆ

Serbia and the Balkans: Three Centuries of Embrace with Europe,
ed. Slobodan G. Markovich. Belgrade: Zepter Book World-
Faculty of Political Sciences, 2025, 464.

As the culmination of the Cultural Transfer Europe–Serbia (CTES) project—an interdisciplinary collaboration between scholars from the Institute of European Studies, the Faculty of Political Science, the Institute for Balkan Studies (SASA), the Faculty of Philology, and the Institute of Contemporary History, funded by the Science Fund of the Republic of Serbia's IDEAS program—the book *Serbia and the Balkans: Three Centuries of Embrace with Europe* offers an in-depth exploration of the intricate historical, intellectual, and cultural relationships linking Serbia, the Balkans, and Europe. The book's objective is to

map out the dynamic, often ambivalent exchanges that have shaped the region's modern identity and its evolving place within European civilization.

The opening section, *Europe, South-East Europe, and Serbia*, investigates conceptual and historical frameworks that define Europe's relationship with its south-eastern part. Professor Paschalis Kitromilides challenges the traditional dichotomy between "Europe" and "Southeast Europe." Kitromilides underscores the necessity of an inclusive and pluralistic conceptualization of Europe—one that acknowledges the multiplicity of its intellectual, cultural, and hi-

historical trajectories. This plurality, he argues, was realized through diverse channels of transmission throughout the era of European modernity.

In *Once Upon a Time, When Europe Became a Man*, Professor Wolfgang Schmale analyses the gendered representations of Europe from the Enlightenment onward. He argues that the 18th and 19th centuries saw the “masculinization” of Europe—an era dominated by the myth of the rational, heroic “great man.” This image persisted into the modern political imagination of the EU, visible in references to its “founding fathers.” Contemporary figures such as Conchita Wurst, who embodies both masculine and feminine identities, and artists like Kent Monkman, who portray Europe as a queer entity, serve as modern deconstructions of that Enlightenment inheritance.

Professor Slobodan G. Marković, in *Modern Europe and Serbia*, traces the multifaceted historical entanglements between Serbia and Europe. European interest in Serbia, he shows, was initially religious and geopolitical, developing alongside Habsburg–Ottoman conflicts. Eighteenth-century Russian cultural influence introduced Baroque and Orthodox elements, while Dositej Obradović championed Enlightenment ideals and the Europeanization of Serbian culture. Vuk Karadžić, during the Romanticism, deepened Serbia’s cultural ties with the German-speaking world. Marković identifies six main vectors of cultural transfer: Habsburg Serbs, Euro-

pean immigrants, Serbian students abroad, cross-border cultural interactions, Western scholars representing the Balkans, and émigrés working internationally. Over time, these exchanges moved from the German to the French cultural sphere, later supplemented by Russian and Soviet influences. In the socialist and post-socialist eras, Western ideas persisted through education, trade, and media despite ideological hostility. The disintegration of the Yugoslav socialist model engendered profound societal crises and conflict in the 1990s, a period marked by virulent anti-American, anti-European, and broadly anti-Western propaganda. Nonetheless, European intellectual and civic influences persisted—manifest in academia, media, trade unions, and civil society movements. After 2000, these currents intensified, reflecting renewed aspirations for European integration. Marković concludes with the symbolic 2025 Kragujevac student demonstrations marking Serbia’s enduring European connection.

Dragana Grbić’s study *School Textbooks and Teaching Materials as Channels of Cultural Transfer in the Metropolitanate of Karlovci* highlights how 18th-century ecclesiastical institutions within the Habsburg Monarchy functioned as agents of Europeanization. Russian educators initially influenced curricula, later adapted to Habsburg and Serbian contexts. Exchanges between the Protestant Lyceum in Halle and the Metropolitanate of Sremski Karlovci reflect early transnational educational links.

The educational reforms initiated under Emperor Joseph II and Empress Maria Theresa catalysed the influx of Western pedagogical paradigms, prominently disseminated through figures such as Teodor Janković Mirijevski, Avram Mrazović, Dimitrios Nikolaou Darvaris, and Jovan Rajić. Furthermore, the translation of Serbian works into other Balkan languages—facilitated by intellectuals like Adamantios Korais and Darvaris—exemplifies the region's integrative cultural dynamics.

In *Impact of the Ideas of the Enlightenment and of the Absolutist State – Central Europe, Serbs in the Habsburg Empire and the Creation of the Modern Serbian State*, Professor Goran Vasin examines how Enlightenment and absolutist ideas shaped the Habsburg Serbs' political thought. Figures such as Obradović, Vuk Karadžić, and Dimitrije Davidović acted as intermediaries of European ideas. Print culture, facilitated by Viennese publishers and periodicals, diffused Enlightenment values across the Serbian intelligentsia. Habsburg Serbs not only absorbed European thought but also transplanted it to Serbia, laying the institutional foundations of the modern Serbian state. Subsequently, Serbian intellectuals educated abroad contributed to the articulation of liberal and nationalist discourses, forging transnational connections with Serbs across the Balkans.

The second section, *Between Imagination and Reality: Serbia and the Balkans between Europeanness and Balkanisation*, explores how the Balkans ha-

ve been imagined—by both outsiders and locals—as Europe's Other or its incomplete self. In *Ruritania: Reflections on an Aftermath*, Vesna Goldsworthy revisits Western literary constructions of the Balkans as exotic and unstable, citing *Dracula*, *Arms and the Man*, and *The Prisoner of Zenda*. Such "Ruritanian" imagery cemented stereotypes of Balkan backwardness, though contemporary scholarship increasingly recognizes the region's internal diversity and modern agency.

Misha Glenny, in *The Balkans and Europe*, insists that the Balkans are not Europe's periphery but its historical crucible. He provocatively contrasts the Ottoman Empire's relative tolerance with Europe's own religious wars, arguing that the Balkans' reputation for violence is itself a European projection.

Siniša Malešević, in *Wars, States and Nationalisms: From Western Europe to the Balkans*, offers a rigorous critique of prevailing nationalist theories. He challenges the historiographical assumption that the Balkans were an epicentre of nationalism, arguing instead that nationalist ideologies were belatedly imported from Western Europe. The paradigms advanced by Gellner, Anderson, and Hobsbawm—emphasizing literacy, education, and mass media—are problematized in the Balkan context, where high illiteracy and underdeveloped civic culture impeded such processes. Neo-bellicist theories, which posit state militarization as central to nation-building, are similarly flawed in their neglect of

ideological dimensions. Contrary to these models, the Balkans experienced limited conflict in the early modern period and possessed rudimentary administrative and military infrastructures. The expansion of state apparatuses in the twentieth century was marred by economic instability, indebtedness, and clientelism. Ultimately, nationalist movements in the Balkans emerged through cultural diffusion from Western Europe, rather than endogenous development.

Gordana Djerić authored the article *Balkan Studies and the Stereotype Phenomenon after 1989*. She examines how the concept of the Balkans became a repository of European stereotypes from the Enlightenment thought established the civilizational binary of “civilized West” and “barbaric East,” later modified by Romantic particularism. After 1989, the re-emergence of stereotypes during the Yugoslav wars revealed how Slovenia and Croatia deployed the term “Balkans” to distance themselves from south-eastern “non-Europe.” Djerić argues that even as racial and national typologies disappeared from academia, cultural stereotypes persisted as subtle instruments of exclusion. Within this regional context, Djerić identified that Slovenian and Croatian political elites strategically employed the term Balkans to assert their countries’ European identity.

The third section, *Europeanisation(s) of Serbian and South-East European Culture*, investigates the processes by which European identity and cultural forms took root in the Balkans. In *Mo-*

dernization and Europeanisation(s) of South-East Europe, 1800–1914, Slobodan G. Marković outlines the gradual emergence of European identity in the region’s semi-peripheral context. Most Balkan Christians were peasants, with minimal bourgeois structures. Diasporic communities—Greeks, Serbs, Vlachs, Bulgarians, Albanians and others living in European centres—acted as primary agents of modernization. Competing cultural spheres of influence—Germanophone, Francophone, and Anglophone—each left distinctive legacies. The Philhellenic movement initially drew European attention to Greece, then to Serbia during the Romanticism, while American Protestant missions focused on Bulgaria. After World War I, the French sphere became predominant, while German influence persisted mainly in Bulgaria. Marković identifies shifting Western perceptions of the Balkans, from classical romanticism to Christian sympathy and later modernization interest, reflecting the region’s evolving symbolic position within Europe.

Professor Zoran Milutinović’s essay *Modernization, Europeanization and Aesthetic Modernity in the Balkans* distinguishes between socio-political modernization and cultural Europeanization. Modernization entailed a complex constellation of interrelated transformations encompassing economic structures, political institutions, and social norms. Nonetheless, an authoritarian dimension frequently characterized modernization, positing that progress

should be orchestrated top-down by elites in economic, social, and cultural domains before permeating to the broader populace. Divergent scholarly viewpoints interrogate whether socialist or alternative modernization trajectories represent anomalies within the broader modernization paradigm. Invoking the theory of “multiple modernities,” Milutinović argues that no single model of progress could encompass Balkan experiences. Europeanization, by contrast, entailed the selective adoption of European cultural and aesthetic norms. Serbian literature exemplified this dialectic: writers simultaneously admired European universalism and sought authentic national expression. Their artistic modernity reflected both the aspiration to align with Europe and the resistance to cultural subordination.

In *Serbian Travelogues and the West*, Vladimir Gvozden analyses interwar travel writing as a form of cultural self-definition. Serbian travelogues of the 1920s and 1930s combined narrative artistry with nostalgia for European high culture, particularly Italy’s Renaissance heritage. Travel writers presented the past as a stabilizing counterpoint to the dislocations of modernity, revealing Serbia’s aspiration to reaffirm its European identity through aesthetic contemplation rather than political imitation. The fourth section highlights the reciprocal exchanges between Serbian and European cultural traditions. In *Serbian Folklore and the European Framework*, Nemanja Radulović situates Serbian fol-

klore within European Romantic and philological scholarship. German Romanticism’s fascination with the “folk spirit” spurred Western interest in Serbian epic poetry. Even before Romanticism, curiosity about the “Morlachs” of Dalmatia introduced the South Slavs to European intellectual circles. While early ethnographers and philologists championed folklore as an expression of national genius, historians such as Ilarion Ruvarac marginalized its historical value. In addition to ethnography, the classical philological sciences engaged with Serbian oral tradition, especially in connection with debates over the “Homeric question.” Importantly, the direction of cultural transfer was not unidirectional. Nevertheless, the exchange was mutual: Serbian scholars such as Vuk Karadžić, Milan Ćurčin, and Vojislav Jovanović Marambo also contributed to European debates on authenticity, myth, and poetics, illustrating Serbia’s active participation in continental intellectual life.

Ivana Pantelić, in *The Liberation of Women: International Influences and National Practices in 19th-Century Serbia and Yugoslavia*, explores the intersections of liberal and socialist feminism. Serbian students in Zürich and Petrograd engaged with European radical thought, while Svetozar Marković’s 1871 translation of John Stuart Mill’s *The Subjection of Women* linked liberal and socialist emancipatory ideas. Early feminists such as Milica and Anka Ninković participated in international socialist

networks, while liberal activists later pressed for suffrage reforms inspired by Western movements. Under socialism, the Anti-Fascist Women's Front (AFŽ) institutionalized women's participation within a communist framework, while the 1970s revival reconnected Yugoslav feminism to Western liberal and critical traditions, illustrating the ongoing dialogue between global and local emancipatory practices.

The essay *Religious Minorities as Important Agents of Cultural Transfer during the Interwar Period*, by Aleksandra Djurić Milovanović, Jovica Pavlović, Srboľjub Peović, and Nikola Tucakov, underscores the role of minorities as mediators of Europeanization. Protestant, Muslim, and Jewish communities within the Kingdom of Yugoslavia maintained transnational links that transmitted values and ideas. Protestant denominations, though marginalized, were connected to missionary networks in the United States and Central Europe. Educated Muslim ulema, many trained in European universities, promoted cultural renewal through associations such as Gajret and debated the implications of Kemalist reforms in Türkiye. The Jewish community, divided between Ashkenazi and Sephardic, Reformist and Orthodox groups, served as cultural intermediaries through institutions such as B'nai B'rith, musical societies, and reading clubs. Despite differing internal orientations, these minorities fostered cosmopolitanism and contributed to the intellectual modernization of Yugoslav society.

In *Representations of Heroes in the Serbian Modern Novel and European Cultural Transfer*, Aleksandar Gajić traces the evolution of the Serbian literary hero within European aesthetic paradigms. His analysis traces the impact of canonical European literary movements—including the eighteenth-century novel, Romanticism, Realism, Biedermeier, the Avant-garde, Modernism, Symbolism, Neo-Romanticism, Existentialism, and Postmodernism—on the evolution of Serbian prose. Serbian authors have historically drawn inspiration from the intellectual and aesthetic paradigms of German, Russian, French, English, and Spanish literary cultures, thereby embedding their works within a broader European framework of cultural exchange. Gajić categorizes the literary hero across several types: historical, rural, urban, avant-garde, revolutionary, and postmodern. These literary currents and thematic orientations coexisted and intersected throughout the historical trajectory of Serbian literature, enabling the continual reconfiguration of heroic and anti-heroic paradigms. This evolution reflects Serbia's continual negotiation with European literary models, balancing imitation and innovation, tradition and critique.

The concluding section, *The Transformative Power of the EU: Serbia and the Balkans*, addresses the present and future of Serbia's European integration. In *Transformative Power of the EU – From a Dream to Reality*, Sonja Licht examines Serbia's shifting perceptions of

the European project since the 1990s. The 1996–97 civic protests marked a symbolic embrace of European democratic values, epitomized by slogans like “Belgrade is the world.” EU support through diplomatic initiatives, aid programs, and post-2000 assistance—such as the “Oil for Democracy” scheme and the 2001 donors’ conference—reinforced this alignment. Licht notes, however, the persistent ambivalence: Serbia’s delayed accession to the Council of Europe, the imposition of neoliberal economic reforms, and contentious environmental issues like lithium mining have fuelled Euroscepticism. Nevertheless, EU humanitarian gestures, including aid during the 2014 floods, underscore enduring solidarity between Serbia and the Union.

Ivan Vejvoda, in *Transformative Power of the EU in Serbia and the Western Balkans*, situates Serbia’s democratization within broader European dynamics. Historically agrarian and authoritarian, the region has struggled to develop participatory political cultures. Since the 1990s, gradual democratization and market reforms have proceeded unevenly, with visible setbacks across Central and Eastern Europe. For Vejvoda, the Western Balkans’ economic and political viability depends on sustained

European investment, rule-of-law reforms, and integration into Euro-Atlantic structures. The region’s pro-European youth—symbolized by student delegations to Brussels—embody a generational commitment to European values despite political retrenchments.

Serbia and the Balkans: Three Centuries of Embrace with Europe presents a panoramic yet nuanced account of the continuous and multidirectional exchanges that have linked Serbia and the Balkans with Europe. Across five thematic units, the collection dismantles simplistic binaries—Europe versus Balkans, modernity versus tradition, periphery versus centre—revealing instead a complex web of interactions. From Enlightenment universalism to Romantic nationalism, from socialist internationalism to European integration, Serbia’s engagement with Europe emerges as an ongoing process of negotiation and reinterpretation rather than mere imitation. The contributors collectively portray Serbia not as Europe’s “Other” but as one of its many constitutive margins, whose intellectual and cultural transformations illuminate the broader story of Europe’s own self-definition.

Petar S. ČURČIĆ

Edin Omerčić, *Brzina mraka: Politička djelatnost Srpske pravoslavne crkve u Bosni i Hercegovini 1989–1996*. Sarajevo: Institut za istoriju, 2024, 495.

Faith and religious communities occupy a significant place in questions of identity and politics in the Balkans. Until now,

they have predominantly been the subject of various political science and sociological studies, while historiography has lar-