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other inhabitants of Banat, settled in other parts of the world, turn to memorial practices to perpetuate the collective memory: monographs and memory books, especially Heimatfest, the celebrations of the native village, a memory and identity connector for those scattered around the world, a means of periodical revival of community solidarity. The Heimat as a memorial practice for both French and German Swabians is discussed in the fourth chapter, *The Heimat – memory and identity connector*.

After a thorough analysis of the types of discourses and identity practices used by the people of Banat, in order to provide a contrast, the last chapter, *The Banat of La Roque-sur-Pernes*, investigates the memories the Swabians settled in the French village have of Banat. Smaranda Vultur interviews six survivors, three from the Yugoslavian Banat and three from the Romanian Banat, born between 1923 and 1935. The chapter discusses their settlement in La Roque and the suffering of starting life over. The historical data are replaced by the lively faces of Swabians, fortunately completing the theoretical exposé.

The book offers an exemplary model of analysis of an ethnic community's process of

assuming an identity under the pressure of history, but one must avoid the generalization of conclusions, as the community of Swabians from La-Roque-sur-Pernes represents only a small percentage of the 10.000 Swabian refugees from France. The study of other communities of Swabians from Banat (who were not part of the current study) might have revealed other aspects of the process of assuming an identity, other memorial practices and discourses. All we can hope for is that the subject of the French Swabians will be resumed by the author in another study, in a grand gesture of recovering an almost unknown part of the memory of Banat.

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History and Anthropology. Special Issue: Politics and Performance in South-Eastern Europe (guest editors Rozita Dimova and Ludmila Cojocar), vol. 24, issue 1, March 2013, 183 p.

Reviewed by Stelu Șerban

The volume is dedicated to the performative and ritualistic dimensions of the identity processes in the post-Soviet and post-Yugoslavian space and focuses on the three republics of former Yugoslavia: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia / FYROM, Montenegro, together with Moldova, a former republic of the Soviet Union. The materials are

part of an international research project „on the processes of the construction of the national identity in South-Eastern European countries after 1945” (p. 10). Rozita Dimova and Ludmila Cojocar, the editors of the volume, inform from the very first pages of the introductory article - Contested Nation-Building within the International “Order of



Things”: Performance, Festivals and Legitimization in South-Eastern Europe (p. 1-12) – that, from a theoretical standpoint, the four selected cases are unique. That is the reason for the rejection of classical themes such as the dispute constructivism vs. primordialism or the nation as a model and the program of social modernization when building the theoretical analysis frame. Stressing the uniqueness of these cases, but also the identifiable grounded ambiguity in each of them, Dimova and Cojocaru focus on the development of concepts that would highlight and dissect the construction of the performative identities via which the new countries (self)legitimate their place in a world order of nations. On the one hand, works such as those of Sarah Green or Liisa Malkki are quoted, emphasizing the means adopted by the new nations to acquire their legitimacy in the „international order of things” or - more plastically put - in the „family of nations” (Malkki 1994). On the other hand, since the emergence of the four new states was a direct consequence of the sudden fall of geopolitical and ideological arrangements that had been controlling the balance of power either at a global level (USSR) or at a regional level (Yugoslavia) for a long time, the affirmation of the national identity of these new states was forced to structure itself on performative, intrinsic values. The classical theories of international relations do not apply to these four cases. At least this is what the two editors seem to be suggesting by the expression „governance by conditionality” (p. 3). Thus, national identity becomes an issue of affirmation, of visibility via the performance of traditions, customs, collective festivals, etc. The common daily culture, as well as the manners in which “ordinary people” perceive their new national political identity and are willing to affirm it by performing more or less politicized rituals, become the main theme. The editors draw their inspiration from postcolonial literature (Sami Bhabha or Akhil Gupta, for instance), to which they add the anthropological concept of „performance” (Victor Turner). The first part of the introductory article closes with the review of the most recent

papers on South-Eastern Europe, synthesizing the theoretical premises above. The second part of the article summarises the other authors’ contributions to the volume.

The two editors also sign the second article of the volume, “Nature” and “Nation” in the Republic of Moldova: Rebirth and Rebuilding Through the International Festival of Music “Mărțișor” (p. 13-35). The ritual of “Mărțișor”, a term registered in Romania and the Republic of Moldova, takes place in the first week of March in most South-Eastern European countries. In the 1960s, however, the ritual was taken over by the political power and turned into a collective identity scheme. The content of the article is structured on three aspects: the first refers to the procedures of the transformation of the ritual – traditionally marked by familiarity and intimacy / privacy - in the Soviet period into a collective ceremony organized and legitimized by the local representatives of the Communist power; the second aspect refers to the revival of the Soviet legacy regarding this ritual between 2001 and 2009, the period of the rule of the Communist Party in the Republic of Moldova. The third aspect is the analysis of the efficiency of this latter government policy, as a public policy, that is, the way simple citizens of Moldova interpret this ideologically reconstructed ritual. The authors’ argument converge towards the idea of the efficiency of the collective performance of “Mărțișor”. By reviving the original significances of rebirth, renewal, return to „Mother Nature” (authors’ term), the feeling of identity affiliation to an imaginary homeland named „Moldova” is transmitted. Although removed from the intimacy of the family and being endowed with a public, performative dimension, the festive policies of the Communist governments have failed to transfer the “sacredness” of the tradition of Mărțișor to the mythology of creation of a „Moldovan nation”. The field data derives from the daily newspapers of Moldova, from disparate interviews, as well as from the direct observation of several “Mărțișor” festivals in Chișinău.

The next article, Wine and Speed: The

Post-Soviet Holidays in the Republic of Moldova (2001–2009) (p. 35–54), fully illustrates what the editors term in the introductory article as „branding the nation” (p. 5). Virgiliu Bîrlădeanu, the author of the article, approaches the way in which two secular, collective events, Sărbătoarea Vinului / The Wine Festival and Cupa Independenței/ The Independence Cup, were reinterpreted in the years of the Communist government of the Republic of Moldova so as to affirm the new models of „production” and “consumption” of the discourse on the nation (p. 37). The introductory part of the article is dedicated to the theoretical frame (p. 35–40). The article quotes works of social anthropology and Soviet studies approaching the social engineering of reinvention of festive times and their symbols from the Soviet period. Furthermore, in order to highlight the continuity and changes, the author sketches an ideological genealogy of this social engineering. The references are older, the architects of this ideological project being Vladimir Ilici Lenin, I.V.Stalin, Leon Trotsky, or more recent, the works of Soviet authors of the 1980s. The central idea is the attempt of the totalitarian regime to irradiate the symbolic past from the collective memory and replace it with another festive calendar, fully controlled by the Communist power. The second part of the article focuses on the analysis of two collective events manipulated according to the Soviet pattern during the two parliaments of the Communist Party (2001–2005 and 2005–2009) in the Republic of Moldova. Cupa Independenței is a particularly interesting case. Initiated in 2005 as an auto rally „under the high patronage of President Voronin” (p. 44), it reaches its climax in 2007 and 2008, when the route of the rally covers the entire territory of the country. The public local participation combines with the festive speeches of the local authorities. The balance between the performance of the event, which makes the audience real from the common people, and its interpretation from the perspective of the national pride depends on concrete factors which the author stresses:

financing the organization, the deplorable road infrastructure, the defects of the cars. “Wine” and “speed”, according to Bîrlădeanu, were the metaphors of the political theatricality that was supposed to catalyze the feeling of unity and sacredness of the Homeland and the Nation (p. 51). Although the idea of the article is tempting, the empirical data is drawn exclusively from the journalistic reports of events. In addition, the lack of accuracy of the theoretical frame in comparison to the field data is glaring.

The next article, *Performing Hospitality in Moldova: Ambiguous, Alternative, and Underdeveloped Models of National Identity* (p. 56–77), is signed by Jennifer Cash. The author, who has recently finished her doctoral studies in social anthropology with a field research in Moldova, includes in her article intimate everyday forms of social and civic socialization through which the people of Moldova express their nativity when coming into contact with foreigners. This nativity represents a sort of affiliation to a domestic space that might become national, but which, for now, according to the author, is „underdeveloped” from this point of view. Furthermore, the manner in which Cash describes and analyzes the Moldovan code of welcoming foreigners, is founded in a sort of sui-generis „civil” society that Gerald Creed sees in Bulgaria, another part of South-East Europe (Creed 2011: 105–130). Creed is also quoted by the editors of the volume (p. 6) and by Cash herself in her article. The larger frame of the analysis is given by the process of development of the national model in the case of the Republic of Moldova. In relation to the latter, the abovementioned collective code of „hospitality” generates three paradoxes: 1. the failure to develop a national model strictly based either on territoriality or on multi-ethnicity. 2. the temptation to transform this „hospitality” code into a political model that would reconcile both the traumatic past and the current complexity of inter-ethnic relationships within the republic and 3. the consolidation of the hospitality code in a model of civic Moldovan identity apt to com-



pensate for the marginalization of the majority of the population. This latter paradox is vital for the construction of the political identity within the Republic via the ability to contest the authority of the state (p. 59). The author focuses on this latter direction by approaching correlative issues such as „performances of hospitality” (p. 65ff) or „politics of hospitality” (p. 71ff).

Gabriela Popa is the author of the following article, *War Dead and the Restoration of*

Military Cemeteries in Eastern Europe (p. 78-97). Although the title refers to Eastern Europe, Popa analyzes the way political authorities and influential voices within the civic space of the Republic of Moldova managed and reinterpreted the memory of the foreign soldiers in WW2, deceased and buried in the military cemeteries of the Republic. More precisely, the reference is to the German, Romanian and Soviet soldiers. The fundamental premise is outlined in the very beginning, that is, the solid relationship between the commemorative policy and its role in the articulation of the national unity (p. 79). Most of the article is divided into three descriptive sections regarding cases and situations of revival and conservation of military cemeteries of the soldiers from Germany, Romania and the Soviet Union.

Ala Şveţ's article, *Staging the Transnistrian Identity Within the Heritage of Soviet Holidays* (p. 98-116), brings into discussion the „Transnistrian nation” case, perhaps the most risky example of social engineering regarding the invention of the idea of nation in South-Eastern Europe. Without having a specific historical past, emerging as a separate identity from interwar Romania only in 1925 in the troubled context of manipulated revolts such as the one of Tatar Bunar, it was not until its period of integration in the Soviet Union that Transnistria gained a regional identity. According to the author, although, ethnically speaking, the Moldovans, the Russians and the Ukrainians each make up around 30% of the population of the Republic of Transnistria, the identification as „homo sovieticus” is highly important (20% (p. 101)). That is why model-

ling the nation is based on the Soviet past, Şveţ analyzes the way collective Soviet celebrations (the October Revolution, 1st of May, Victory Day / 9th of May) are politically orchestrated within this context. The latter festivity is also the most consistent one, precisely because it subliminally references to the victory of the Transnistrian people against fascism (not necessarily Nazi Germany, but „fascist” Romania) (pp. 110-112). The theoretical frame of the article is relatively elaborate, the author quoting classical papers on the concept of nation, such as those of Anthony D. Smith, Benedict Anderson, Stuart Hall, Erich Hobsbawm, Thomas Nairn. Nevertheless, there is a sense of inaccuracy of the theoretical perspective in reference to the analyzed data.

Ajvatovica: A Bridge Between Tradition and National and Religious Identity, (p. 117-136), the article opening the part dedicated to the other „young nations” from South-Eastern Europe covers Bosnia and Herzegovina. Dženita Sarač Rujanac, the author, did a field research in 2007 during the performance of this ritual. The data gathered from direct observation and several qualitative interviews are analyzed at the end of the article (p. 129-133). The rest of the article is dedicated to the older and newer history (especially after 1990) of this ritual. The ritual was founded in the collective memory of Bosniaks because of the connection with the life of a legendary figure, Ajvaz-dedo, a dervish who arrived in Bosnia in 1463 with the Ottoman army. The town where Ajvaz led a series of collective prayers to discover water sources became, following this miracle, the traditional location for the performance of the ritual of Ajvatovica and for a pilgrimage. However, the author emphasizes the fact that these beliefs date back even before the Ottoman conquest, to the period when bogomilism was predominant in Bosnia, acquiring institutional expression (p. 121). In time, the town (today known as Prusac) was an administrative and military centre where the Bosniak cavalry corps of the Ottoman army would gather. Nowadays, the fact is reflected in an adjacent ceremony on one of the festival days.



During the Communist period, the festival was prohibited, but immediately after 1990 it was revived following the initiatives of religious organizations and local politics, turning into a mark of the national Bosniak identity in the years of the conflict that followed the separation of Bosnia (1993 - 1995). In the period of the secessionist conflict, besides the religious dimension, Ajvatovica also presumed a special collective prayer for the victory of the Bosniak army which led to the retrieval of the political, national dimension of the ritual and its celebration in the present.

In the following article, The "Nation of Poetry": Language, Festival and Subversion in Macedonia, (p. 137-151), Rozita Dimova examines the role the international festival of Struga (established in 1961) had in the promotion of the idea of a Macedonian nation in the international arena, as well as its role in the construction of a national Macedonian conscience. The Macedonian nation emerged relatively easily within the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, after the end of WW2, recognized together with the Croatian, Serbian, Slovenian and Montenegrin nations. Only subsequently, via a programme of social linguistic engineering, emphasized by the author (pp.140ff), as well as via international events such as the festival of Struga, did the national Macedonian identity become real and palpable. The breakdown of Yugoslavia after 1990 brought to light the frailty of the Macedonian nation, confronted, after the declaration of FYROM, with the pressure of the Albanian minority, which becomes an open conflict in 2001 (p. 142ff). Thus, since Struga is in a region with a majority of Albanian ethnics, the festival of Struga became a space for the affirmation of the Albanian identity and was „Albanized" (p. 144). The author proposes to determine what might this Albanization of the festival mean, starting with the 2007 edition. The interviews taken in the four days of the festival, as well as the subsequent echoes in the daily press, the requests for the implementation of Macedonian-Albanian bilingualism in the performance of

recitals or favouring the Albanianophone poets make her conclude that the festival „has become the site of a battle over how to institute major political changes related to claims of "ownership" of a nation and territory of the majority, or ethnicity and the ethnic integration of a previously marginalized group" (p. 147).

The last two articles refer to the Republic of Montenegro. The authors' task regarding the outline and analysis of the process of „nation building" is highly more complicated in this case. Montenegro gained its independence quite late, in 2006, a process done via a referendum, without any sort of conflict. In addition, historically speaking, the Montenegrins considered themselves, as Vladimir Dulović, the author of the second article, observes, „the best of the Serbs" (p. 168). Therefore, it seems that in the case of Montenegro one could speak rather of „nation branding", as does Lidija Vujačić in her article *Madonna, Glamour and Politics: Nation Branding and Pop Concerts in the Promotion of Montenegro as an Elite Tourist Destination*, (p. 152-164). Unlike the cases of nation branding presented by Ala Şveţ and Virgiliu Birlădeanu, the example of Montenegro seems to have been a successful one. The decision of the political elite who influenced the separation of Montenegro to transform the new country in a touristic target led, on the one hand, to the globalization of the local society and, on the other hand, to the emergence of a specific popular culture (p. 155-156). International concerts of pop or rock music (Madonna, Rolling Stones) are examples of the mechanisms of producing this new national identity. What is interesting is the author's emphasis on the ability of this type of events to eradicate historical, ideological conflicts. For instance, the presence of a powerful Russian construction firm among the main sponsors of Madonna's concert, contested in the beginning, was ultimately accepted, the Montenegrin government stressing the strictly touristic character of the event (p. 160).



In *Socialist Intercessions: The Earliest Demands for a Separate Montenegrin Language (1967–1972)* (p. 165-181), the last article of the volume, Vladimir Dulović discusses the attempts of the Montenegrin political and intellectual elite to create at the beginning of the 1960s a separate language. The author begins with the problems present even in the 19th century regarding the unification / differentiation of the standard languages within the Yugoslavian space (p. 167-168) and insists on the disputes and the agents involved in the years of the Communist regime. Towards the end of the article the author highlights the inconsistency of this project. Even after the emergence of the state of Montenegro, although the official language is Montenegrin, „the present status of the Montenegrin language is far beyond the nativists' wildest dreams of half a century ago” (p. 178).

The dramatic image of the emergence and consolidation of South-Eastern European nations is a leitmotif in the history of political modernization. The events after 1990 cemented this violent, cataclysmic image at times that particularly imposed the construction of new branches in social anthropology, “the anthropology of urgency” (Željaskova 2004). The volume edited by Dimova and Cojocaru brings in, however, a more tonic and promising sight for the future of South-Eastern Europe, which truly represents a positive aspect. In addition, the conceptual frame of the volume, as is outlined in the introductory article by the two editors, is unquestionably unique. A few critical observations are required, especially when placing the rest of the volume within this theoretical frame. In the other articles, the reference to the international environment is lost. It is true that the new nations are conceived as performative agents, but the analysis of the

symbolic conflicts against common traditions is absent (for instance, the Mărțișor in the Republic of Moldova, a theme approached in the second article, in relation to the similar tradition from other South-Eastern European countries, such as Romania or Bulgaria). Generally speaking, the comparative frame of the analysis is lacking, although the authors set out to make adequate the concepts of the theoretical frame for each country. This is probably the reason for another major drawback of the volume: the lack of balance between the representation of the Republic of Moldova and the other three countries in the articles. While the Republic of Moldova is the focus of five articles - over half of the content of the volume -, the other countries are represented only by two articles (Montenegro) or just one (Bosnia Herzegovina and Macedonia).

Despite these imperfections, the volume represents an important element for those interested in the study of the performative dimension of the processes of construction of nations in the post-socialist space. Therefore, we warmly recommend this new issue in the academic world of social sciences.

Translated by: Alina-Olimpia Miron

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