
BOOK REVIEW

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Pamela Ballinger, *History in Exile: Memory and Identity at the Borders of the Balkans*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003, 368 pp.

History in Exile: *Memory and Identity at the Borders of the Balkans* concerns a little-known region: the border zone between Italy, Slovenia and Croatia known as the Julian March. Historically part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, this region became part of Italy after World War I. At the end of World War II, the Julian March was partitioned by Italy and Yugoslavia, followed by the exodus of the majority of the ethnically Italian population. After the break-up of Yugoslavia, the region was divided between Slovenia and Croatia. Today, ethnic Italians form a minority amongst a largely Slavic population.

The book narrates the history of the Julian March during the course of the twentieth century, focusing in particular on violence associated with war which is variously silenced or voiced in different periods by different actors and groups. The study is centered in particular on a comparison between the ethnic Italians who left the Julian March for Trieste after World War II and the remaining Italian minority.

Ballinger, who conducted multi-sited archival, ethnographic and oral history research in the Julian March in 1995-1996, focuses in her study on how marginal populations located in transborder zones experience and narrate the processes of state formation and break-up. She asks, what is the relation-

ship between national(ist) history and the history and identity of local groups? How is the history of violence silenced/voiced in official/individual narratives?

The organization of *History in Exile* demonstrates the meticulous historical research conducted by the author on the region. In Part I, "Making and Breaking States," she examines how the history of the Julian March at three important junctures, World War I, World War II, and the break-up of Yugoslavia, is narrated by different local actors and groups. She shows how different groups narrate differently their experiences of war and violence. In Part II, "Making Memory," Ballinger relies in particular on oral histories to demonstrate how different groups create narratives of suffering and victimization based on claims about purity or hybridity. She shows how local groups link their more marginal histories to national histories in order to make claims for reparations in a contemporary environment in which the term "genocide" is increasingly used to resuscitate silenced histories of violence.

In an intricately layered narrative, Ballinger shows how different and opposed groups mutually construct a story of their own victimization. More specifically, Italians in Trieste focus on the violence perpetrated by the partisans against the ethnic Italians, whereas the Slavic population in the Julian March accuses the fascists of committing violence against the non-Italian population. As Ballinger shows, in the course of time, ideological oppositions (fascist vs. communist) give way to ethnic oppositions (Italian vs. Slavic or European vs. Balkan) as each group attempts to portray itself as autochthonous and therefore justified in its claims for reparations.

This study is an important contribution to the anthropology of Europe, to the study of displacement, and to the literature on memory. By focusing on both displaced populations and the interior displacement of the populations left behind, Ballinger contributes to our understanding of the complex relationship between space and identity. Ballinger shows how, while depicting themselves as victims, ethnic Italians at the same time maintain an opposition between the "European" (read "civilized") Italians and the Slavs/Balkans. Most importantly, privileging neither local nor official history, she demonstrates the constructivist nature of *both* memory and history. She shows the complicity of the historian, the local actor and of the anthropologist in their various attempts to narrate the history of the Julian March. In her analysis of the regional, supranational model of identity put forth by the ethnic Italians who remained in the Julian March, she incisively shows how a discourse of cosmopolitanism can nevertheless remain rooted in notions of territorially based autochthonous cultures. This insight has important implications for contempo-

temporary analyses of an enlarged European community where, it seems, some citizens remain more "authentic" and therefore the possessors of a "higher" culture, than others.

One of the consequences of Ballinger's primary focus on ethnic Italians in the Julian March is that we learn less about the Balkan part of the equation: the Slovene, Croatian and other populations of the region are viewed largely in terms of their construction by the Italians as the non-European Balkan "other" rather than in their own terms. Given the complex history of the region, it would also have been useful for the author to provide a brief summary or chronology of the main events discussed in the text in the introduction or in the form of an appendix. All in all, *History in Exile* is a formidable piece of scholarship that will enrich the ethnography of Europe and the literature on memory.

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