were radicalized as a result. Franz Ferdinand was Brătianu's last hope; his assassination in 1914 was a blow in more ways than one.

At the outbreak of the war, Brătianu pursued neutrality. Prof. Hitchins finds his dogged adherence to what he saw as Romania's interests in the face of intense internal and external pressure between 1914–1916 „remarkable" (p. 71). Unlike most foreign commentators, the writer does not make it a point of stressing Ionel Brătianu's oft-cited Machiavellian politics. His father has been double-crossed by the Russians in 1878. In World War I, Brătianu similarly „felt not only abandoned but betrayed. He could forgive neither the Allies for making promises which it now [1916] appeared they had little intention of fulfilling... He found in the present circumstances confirmation of his often-repeated observations that small states could hope at best to be treated as tools by the Great Powers and must therefore be prepared at every turn to defend their legitimate aspirations without compromise" (p. 87). Indeed, why should it be less reprehensible for big countries to lie and deceive?

And so it went at the Paris Peace Conference, with Brătianu bluntly confronting the patronizing arrogance and hypocrisy of Great Power leaders Clemenceau, Lloyd-George, and Wilson toward small countries. That honey might catch more flies than vinegar could be argued, since the pacific Alexandru Vaida managed to wring more concessions out of the Paris conference than Brătianu did. And it is also the case that the advent of the Bela Kun Communist regime in Hungary was „a god send" for Brătianu as it allowed him to flout the will of the conference and occupy much of Hungary in 1919. In the end, Brătianu (and Vaida) got almost all that Romania wanted in 1919–1920, more than doubling its territories and nearly the same for its population. This came with costs, not least of which was the increase of Romania's minorities populations from 8% to over 25%.

Though the National Liberal Party lost the 1919 elections they had conducted, it returned to power from January 1922 to August 1926. Steps were taken to consolidate Greater Romania (a new constitution in 1923, dramatically increased centralization, and rigid control of minorities); to promote economic modernization (through protectionism and agrarian reform); and to defend the security of its new borders (through the Little Entente, created as a counter to Great Power assertion in the area). The Brătianu era came to a close rather abruptly with the death of King Ferdinand in July 1927, followed by that of Ionel Brătianu in November 1927, aged 63.

Though Romanian economic development after 1930 continued to follow the general path laid out by Brătianu and the National Liberals, Romanian political life rapidly deteriorated in a period in European history aptly named by Élie Halévy „The Era of Tyrannies". Dictatorship, World War, and finally occupation and takeover by the USSR followed, and all the things „characteristic of the Romania that Ionel Brătianu had striven to put into place were swept away" (p. 157).

In addition to a few well-chosen pictures and several maps, the book includes a number of useful „insert" biographical notes on individuals relevant to Romanian history in the 19th and 20th centuries. Prof. Hitchins'study is an excellent introduction to Ion I. C. Brătianu and his times and makes the career of this crucial figure in Romanian development accessible to English speakers in a deeply scholarly fashion for the first time. It is well worth reading.

Paul E. Michelson

Bernard LORY, *La ville balkanissime. Bitola. 1800–1918*, Les Cahiers du Bosphore, LX, Les Éditions Isis, Istanbul, 2011, 888 p.

An impressive work dealing with the heyday of a Balkan city which now can only surprise its visitors with its melancholy-ridden air. A couple of years after the release of a great book on a city that made history through its cosmopolite past (Mark Mazower, *Salonica: City of Ghosts, Christians, Muslims and Jews, 1430–1950*, Harper Collins, London, 2004, 525 p.), we welcome the equivalent on Bitola – „the consuls' city", as it was called a century ago. Bitola for Macedonians, Bitolja for Bulgarians, Bitolj for Serbs, Monastiri for Greeks, Bitule for Aromanians, Monastir for the French, Manastir for Turks and Albanians, the city is only second to Thessaloniki as the largest metropolis of the 19th century in the Ottoman Balkans: nearly 50,000 inhabitants around 1913. As a multi-denominational,

multi-religious and multi-linguistic place (no less than seven languages could be heard on its streets), Bitola was a space of peaceful co-existence, but a place arduously fought for, at the crossroads of the territorial ambitions of all the surrounding Balkan nations. The advent of the national state sentenced the traditional spirit of the city to an irreversible decay. For the author, Bitola's past is a major subject of Balkan history rather than an instance of micro-history. This is because, unlike some Balkan historians that parochially approached the subject just in terms of a city „of their own" (either Greek or Bulgarian), the Frenchman Bernard Lory successfully set out to reconstruct the history of Bitolia as a whole, without leaving aside any of the communities inside it. An approach justified by the fact that none of such groups could claim absolute majority in the 19th century. The French historian asks himself whether the practice of cohabitation among the Bitola communities might not provide the lessons we need nowadays for a peaceful coexistence, a convenient device for people of various backgrounds and traditions in our continuously growing cities.

A city without a firm ethnical majority is the ideal medium for an investigation into how consensus was managed in the multifarious Balkan society until nationalism destroyed it. Lory is examining all the city's communities, their internal developments and how they interacted with one another. They underwent profound changes and defined themselves in national rather than denominational or religious terms. Originally there were three clear-cut religious communities: Muslims, Christians and Jews, what we may call a society of *millets*. The national idea that permeated the city by the mid-19th century emphasized new identity elements, such as native language and national historical background. What followed, after 1878, was a devotion to territorial topics and this later development aimed at sharing the Ottoman Empire's European provinces among the emerging Balkan states. Such states would convert Bitola into a ground for scholarly battles and a hotbed for revolutionary movements, as education was purported to show off the high degree of „civilization" of each individual community and, what was more, to condition future generations of passionate activists. In that highly verbal and multilingual world, where the *čaršija* (the city's commercial hub) – as trading is the main binding factor in a multicultural society – played a schooling role, the school ruined the old order, by producing citizens educated with a nationally exclusive and anti-Ottoman frame of mind. The sequel was a significant decrease in the number of multilingual individuals. This is also the drama of modern day's Balkan studies, finds Bernard Lory, i.e. a shortage of genuine Balkan experts, acting as academic counterparts of the merchants in *čaršija* of old times.

The author believes that, despite that religious and linguistic hotchpotch, Bitola was an "organic whole" for as long as the rising national intolerance was mastered. He also goes to great lengths to identify the aspects that contributed to multicultural coherence. First and foremost, people were proud to live in a city; it imparted them a sense of superiority towards their fellow-countrymen, irrespective of their Christian or Muslim background. Moreover, such citizenhood was shown by their familiarity with multiple linguistic codes, multiple calendars and multiple monetary systems. Citizen's ethics is the ethics of the *čaršija* and of the *esnafs* (guilds): a society hierarchically layered according to its members' seniority and experience, where personal interest is always trumped by collective interests. The rules of conduct are embraced by almost everybody, and honesty, integrity, respect for the elders are part of a set of shared values. Such values are not opposed to a curiosity for modern fashions, which makes it easier to receive well some new elements of European civilization. The agents of modernization are numerous and do not necessarily share common pursuits: they are as diverse as officers and clerks of the *Tanzimat*, rich merchants, missionaries and consuls, and high school graduates. Bernard Lory concludes that, in spite of the diversity of its population, this Ottoman city leaves the impression of a strong social homogeneity and cohesiveness. Nevertheless, such picture would soon fade away after the conflicts that raged around the turn of the century. The havocs related to wars and the mass immigration phenomenon, both brought on by the re-mapping of the Balkan, would have fatal results.

Finding here a chronological account of the events that put their imprint on Bitola from 1800 to 1918 along with elements of social history and history of mentalities, those who take interest in the urban history of South-Eastern Europe will greatly benefit from this book.

Daniel Cain