

Mihai Dragnea, Joseph Fitsanakis, Darko Trifunovic, John M. Nomikos, Vasko Stamevski, Adriana Cupcea (eds.),
***Aspects of Islamic Radicalization in the Balkans after the Fall of Communism*, Peter Lang Publishing Inc., New York, 2023, 282p.,**
presented by Mihaela TEODOR*

Peter Lang Publishing House, a famous academic publisher specialised in humanities and social sciences, launched at the beginning of 2023 the series *South-East European History* (<https://www.peterlang.com/series/seeh>), edited by Mihai Dragnea – the president of Balkan History Association from Romania.

The second volume of the series, *Aspects of Islamic Radicalization in the Balkans after the Fall of Communism*, was published in September 2023. The volume explores, as editors state in the volume presentation from the Peter Lang website, “the channels through which Islamic fundamentalism has spread among Muslims in the Balkans since the early 1990s” (<https://www.peterlang.com/document/1307454>).

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The volume was edited by Mihai Dragnea¹, Joseph Fitsanakis², Darko Trifunović³, John M. Nomikos⁴, Vasko Stamevski⁵ and Adriana Cupcea⁶, being the outcome of a research project of the Balkan History Association. *Isa Blumi*, Associate Professor of Turkish and Middle Eastern Studies at *Stockholm University*, considered in the Preface of the volume that the case studies covered by the volume “reflect different sensibilities that warrant deeper investigation by way of exploring this history with rival institutional authority” (<https://www.peterlang.com/document/1307454>). Moreover, according to the first editor, the volume proposes new aspects of radicalization such as “digital space, hybrid proselytism, the role of NGOs and charity activism” (p. 15) and does not necessarily brings new findings and insights.

A comprehensive introductory chapter on the *Post-communist Encounters in Islamic Faith and Security in the Balkans* is signed by Mihai

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³ Darko Trifunovic, PhD, is a founding member and Director of the Institute for National and International Security in Belgrade, Serbia, and a Senior Advisor at the Research Institute for European and American Studies in Athens (<https://www.peterlang.com/document/1307454>).

⁴ John Nomikos, PhD, is Director of the Research Institute for European and American Studies in Athens, Chairman at the European Intelligence Academy and Assistant Professor at Webster University (Athens Campus) (<https://www.peterlang.com/document/1307454>).

⁵ Vasko Stamevski, PhD, is full Professor at the Faculty of Law of the International Slavic University “Gavrilo Romanovich Derzhavin” in St. Nikole, North Macedonia, and Vice-Rector for International Cooperation (<https://www.peterlang.com/document/1307454>).

⁶ Adriana Cupcea, PhD, is a researcher in the Romanian Institute for Research on National Minorities, Cluj-Napoca, Romania (<https://www.peterlang.com/document/1307454>).

Dragnea, the first editor of the volume. All the twelve chapters authored by experts and researchers from the Balkans, USA and Germany identify, as Mihai Dragnea himself highlight in the Introduction, “the threat of the militancy of political Islam by highlighting not only the volatility of Balkan Muslims’ religious identities, but also their exposition to external threats” (p. 15). The contributors examine the spread of Islamic fundamentalist ideas among the Balkan Muslims after the Fall of Communism, with a particular focus on the reception of Salafism and its Saudi version, Wahhabism (p. 16).

The authors use different methodologies, sources and theoretical frameworks and brings various case studies of radicalization including explanations for the ideological climate that has generated volunteers for Islamic State (Daesh) in recent years. Thus, the content of the volume covers the risk of radicalization and Jihadi Extremism in Montenegro, Kosovo, Albania, Romania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Chechnya and Bulgaria: *Constructing a New Threat: The Securitization of Islam in Post-war Kosovo* (Joseph Coelho); *Islamic Radicalization in Kosovo: A Case in Multi-layered Identity* (Henrique Schneider); *Salafism in Albania between Deculturation and Post-socialist Legacy* (Gianfranco Bria); *Mainstream and Online Media, a Useful Tool on Fighting Violent Extremism in Albania* (Iris Luarasi); *Building a Community Resilient to the Islamic Radicalism: A Case Study of the Muslim Community in Montenegro* (Marko Savić and Almedina Vukić Martinović); *Risks for Islamic Fundamentalism and Radicalism after the Fall of Communism in Bulgaria* (Bogdana Todorova); *Missionary Islamic NGOs in Romania: Da’wah Materials Disseminated among Muslims in Romania* (Cornel Andrei Crișan); *Mujahideen in Bosnia and Herzegovina from 1992 until 1995* (Mijo Beljo and Lucija Zadro); *Foreign Fighters and Global Jihad in the Balkans: The Case of Bosnia and Herzegovina* (Michalis Marioras); *Factors That Moderate Islamic Radicalization in North Macedonia* (Zhidas Daskalovski); “Islamic

Terrorism” in the Serbian Sandžak under Salafi Influence (Darko Trifunović); *Beyond the Balkans: Islamist Terrorism in Europe with Balkan Connections* (Klemen Kocjančič).

The conclusive chapter signed by John Nomikos and Joseph Fitsanakis, highlights *The Trajectory of Islamist Militancy in the Balkans* concluding that “the governments and civil society groups in the Balkans must continue to amass political will and social support for comprehensive programs that favour integration, inclusion and – if need be – de-radicalization of vulnerable populations” (p. 265). Thus, the studies in the volume are “intended to help the reader understand the Balkan states’ foreign policy as a response towards the Muslim world in the context of the global war against terrorism” (<https://www.peterlang.com/document/1307454>).