



# **The Balkans: Revolution, War, and Political Violence since 1878 (Zones of Violence)**

*Mark Biondich*

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The Balkans has long been a place of encounter among different peoples, religions, and civilizations, resulting in a rich cultural tapestry and mosaic of nationalities. But it has also been burdened by a traumatic post-colonial experience. The transition from traditional multinational empires to modern nation-states has been accompanied by large-scale political violence that has resulted in the deaths of hundreds of thousands and the permanent displacement of millions more.

Mark Biondich examines the origins of these conflicts, while treating the region as an integral part of modern European history, shaped by much the same forces and intellectual impulses. It reminds us that political violence and ethnic cleansing have scarcely been unique to the Balkans.

As Biondich shows, the political violence that has bedevilled the region since the late nineteenth century stemmed from modernity and the ideology of integral nationalism, employed by states that were dominated by democratizing or authoritarian nationalizing elites committed to national homogeneity. Throughout this period, the Balkan proponents of democratic governance, civil society, and multiculturalism were progressively marginalized. The history of revolution, war, political violence, and ethnic cleansing in the modern Balkans is above all the story of this tragic marginalization.

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