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The next part of the book focuses on the attitude of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia toward the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Although the conflict was not formally at war, the FRY found itself in a highly complex situation as it came under international isolation from 30 May 1992. This prompted numerous peace initiatives from Belgrade, which did not exclude aid sent to the Serbs in Bosnia and Herzegovina. After sections on the military operations conducted in the second half of 1992 in Posavina and around the town of Jajce, the author once again returns to Sarajevo, covering events up to the beginning of summer 1993, followed by the final part of the book. This section covers the beginnings of the war in Srebrenica and neighboring municipalities, serving as an introduction to the controversial events of the summer of 1995.

At the time of the events described in this book, Kosta Nikolić was among

the first authors whose objective perspective on World War II contributed to the progress of Serbian historiography. Thirty years later, Nikolić once again takes on that role, thanks to his work on the dissolution of socialist Yugoslavia. While a comprehensive assessment of his monograph on the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina will have to wait for the remaining two volumes, it can already be concluded that this work provides a vast number of facts about the armed conflict. Through thorough research of the extensive documentation housed in The Hague, as well as digital archives of US President Bill Clinton and German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, Nikolić has not only significantly illuminated these events but also has provided a valuable guidepost for those intending to pursue similar research.

PAUL H. STAHL, *STRUCTURES SOCIALES EN EUROPE DU SUD-EST*
[Social Structures in South-Eastern Europe]

Edited by Irina Stahl, Stelu Ţerban and Andrei Timotin (Collection of the Institute for South-East European Studies of the Romanian Academy).

Brăila: Editura Istros a Muzeului Brăilei Carol I, 2024, 463 p.

*Reviewed by Annemarie Sorescu-Marinković**

Paul Henri Stahl (1925–2008) is a well-known Romanian ethnosociologist who made crucial contributions to the comparative sociological research of the South-Eastern European area. His studies of premodern forms of property, organization of social groups, religion and sacrifice represent important landmarks in this field, remaining points of reference

to this day. Paul H. Stahl was a continuator of the tradition of Romanian interwar sociology, which presented obvious avant-garde characteristics in European social sciences, especially through its interdisciplinary dimension.

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Paul H. Stahl graduated in 1948 from the Faculty of Philosophy in Bucharest, obtaining his bachelor's degree in sociology the very year when the Romanian communist authorities banned sociology as a science. After working under extreme conditions in several research institutions in Romania, in 1969, Paul H. Stahl chose to continue his career in France. From 1969, he taught at the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales in Paris and, from 1970, at the University of Paris-Descartes, when he also became a member of the Laboratory of Social Anthropology, then headed by Claude Lévi-Strauss. After the fall of communism in Romania, he was elected an honorary member of the Romanian Academy (1993) and served as the director of the Institute of South-Eastern European Studies from 1999 to 2007.

The opus of Paul H. Stahl is vast, original and innovative, straddling several disciplines – sociology, ethnology, history – which, from the 1930s on, have been in the process of juxtaposing and synchronizing their methods and results to give birth to new academic disciplines whose names and boundaries have varied in the second half of the 20th century: historical sociology or social anthropology. Unfortunately, a large part of this extremely rich and diverse body of work remains scattered across collective volumes and periodicals, including the two journals that Paul H. Stahl edited in Paris: *Études et documents balkaniques et méditerranéens* (32 volumes, 1979–2009) and *Sociétés européennes* (38 volumes, 1986–2008), the latter including the series *Études roumaines et aroumaines* (10 volumes, 1990–2006).

The present collection of studies, edited by Irina Stahl, Stelu Șerban and Andrei Timotin, *Structures sociales en Europe*

du Sud-Est ("Social structures in South-Eastern Europe"), is meant to bring together several of his most important papers in one book. The volume is the result of a careful selection guided by the general topic of the structures that organize the life of traditional societies in South-Eastern Europe. The 22 selected texts are grouped around several interdependent sub-themes, in five main sections: *Pays de montagne, pays de vallée* ("Land of the mountains, land of the valley"), *Communautés villageoises* ("Village communities"), *Maisons et églises* ("Houses and churches"), *Parenté biologique, parenté symbolique* ("Biological kinship, symbolic kinship"), *Noms personnels, noms fictifs* ("Personal names, fictional names"). With the exception of one text in English, all others are in French. The articles reproduced in this volume required a number of editorial changes to align them with the standards of the series. The bibliographic reference system, in particular, was modified: the abbreviated references in the body of the text (author and year of publication) were replaced by footnotes with full references (author, title, place and date of publication, pagination) taken from the final bibliographies of the articles. These references were supplemented or corrected where necessary.

The volume opens with a programmatic text, *L'Europe du Sud-Est. Aires culturelles et facteurs structurants (XIX^e et XX^e siècles)* ("South-Eastern Europe. Cultural areas and structuring factors (19th and 20th centuries)"), which highlights the cultural character and unity of the South-Eastern European space, based on a common history and social life under the empires that succeeded one another (Roman, Byzantine, Ottoman, Austrian). The text analyzes the factors that structure the

unity and continuity of traditional social structures, as revealed in research carried out in the 19th and 20th centuries: kinship, extended domestic groups, with their corresponding types of houses, community property, and the institution of "old men".

The first section of the volume, *Pays de montagne, pays de vallée*, examines different forms of political organization and pre-state social formations in Romania, Albania, Montenegro and other European regions, emphasizing the conservative character of the rural communities of the Balkan Peninsula, which perpetuated archaic social structures until the beginning of the 20th century. The form of political organization of these communities was based on the presence of "old men", who are at the same time judges, witnesses and administrators, while the fundamental social units are the village and the household.

The second section, *Communautés villageoises*, through the five texts it comprises, sheds light on the historical evolution of village communities in South-Eastern Europe, the rules governing life in ancient European village communities and the magical organization of the Romanian village territory. The last text in this section focuses on three villages of *Rudari* from Romania.

The third section of the volume, *Maisons et églises*, sheds light on the relationships between the constructed framework (house, church, village) and the social group. The articles in this section study the beliefs and rites associated with the organization of the territory and habitat, the forest and water sources, the construction of the house and the church, and the organization of the cemetery. The importance of perennial trees – the fir in

Romania, the cypress in Greece – is particularly emphasized.

Parenté biologique, parenté symbolique, the fourth section, is devoted to biological and symbolic forms of kinship in relation to the notion of *consanguinity*, which is particularly rewarding from a social point of view. Paul H. Stahl explores the notion of *blood*, which is present in most areas of social life, zooming in on its impact on the organization and transmission of property and on how a real biological element takes on a fictional character over time to resolve specific legal problems.

Finally, the last part of the volume, *Noms personnels, noms fictifs*, is devoted to the social dimension of the name – the names of princes and peasants – and to the symbolic and religious reasons underlying the choice or change of name, in the wider Balkan area.

The present volume is an important landmark in salvaging the work of the Romanian ethnosociologist and its inclusion in the scientific circuit. It has the merit to restore, in a coherent and significant whole, part of the research devoted by Paul H. Stahl to the traditional societies of South-Eastern Europe. This collection of studies transcends boundaries between disciplines and will be of interest to anthropologists, ethnologists, sociologists, historians and philologists interested in the life of South-Eastern European societies of the past.

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