

Joel M. Halpern and Barbara Kerewsky Halpern, *A Serbian Village in Historical Perspective*, New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1972, pp. vi + 152, [Case Studies in Cultural Anthropology: General Editors, George and Louise Spindler].

Joel M. Halpern and Barbara K. Halpern of the University of Massachusetts in this anthropological, sociological and historical study give a human and scientific portrait of Orašac, a village located in the cradle of Serbia's legendary and heroic region, Šumadija well known from the times of Serb national uprisings against the Turks.

This is not the first time that professor Halpern looks at Orašac. In the late fifties he gave a good sample of the poignant human vision in the transformation of a Balkan village in the grip of industrialization and modernization after the Communist seizure of power. «A Serbian Village» then was a report of Mr. Halpern's study of the social and economic transformation of Orašac, a pertinent study in human change, the history of its living human process.

This new study is even more impressive. For in the last decades of Yugoslavia's industrial expansion and its social and economic exchanges with the free world, Orašac, like the majority of the old peasant communities in Yugoslavia, has changed so completely as to lose its archaic and primitive cultural aspects. In the process of modernization, Orašac is no longer what it used to be either under the Turks or under the pre-war Serbian rule, as has been impressively described by Vuk Karadžić. The authors were thoughtful to include in their narrative Vuk's profound observations, so vital in their effort to grasp the meaning of the change in historical perspective. In presenting Orašac with its *zadrugas*, the known socio-economic cooperatives of the pre-communist times, predominant in Vuk's times, and in comparing them with today's ideological situation, one realizes the significant transformation that took place at Orašac as in so many other villages. From primitive villages they have turned into modern townships with their super-markets, symbols of that consumer economy that have transformed a peasant community into a society of consumerism where socialism succumbs to capitalism, notwithstanding the imperatives of the dogmas imposed by the Party.

This modernization that inevitably evokes an «Americanization» through the large scale use of autocars, ice boxes, televisions and the building of «vikenditsas», the summer places, that the authors mention, faces right now a strong condemnation by an ever tireless «reformer», Tito, who tries to rush back to the Stalinist puritanism. Together with that description the authors rightly anticipate the further development of peasant-worker migration to the free world that more than anything else contributes to the further westernization of the most backward areas. This process, however, leads the authors to offer a remarkable observation. Through this give-and-take with the West, «the traditional peasant subculture is in the process of disappearing but not being forgotten». In other words, the peasant, very soon becoming an industrial worker who left Orašac for the city or went abroad to France or to Western Germany to work, while on the surface has changed or has become urbanized, in his own conscience he is still a peasant. However, if he has not lost faith in those traditional values to which he was attached through the centuries, he has definitely lost faith in communism, which he sees as the major impediment to his wellbeing. In its historical perspective the village in Serbia is no longer what it used to be in the beginning of the century, but it is on the way to becoming a village as the villages are in Austria or in Denmark. Some Slovenian or Croatian villages have in fact already reached that position.

One is inclined to agree with the authors' bold assertion that «The Revolution in Yugoslavia has become successful in destroying the folk society as a future-oriented model of development». However, one disagrees with the assumptions that the peasant movements in Ser-

bia but particularly in Croatia, led by the Brothers Radić, would not have transformed the peasant society into a more humane community than the present one. The process would have been slower but happier. It would have given to the peasantry a greater feeling of what the modern life should be, and it would have prevented the ever increasing migration that has transformed entire villages particularly in Croatia to desolate desert. It would have definitely prevented the dehumanization of the peasant world.

Among other minor points of inaccurate statements one cannot agree when the authors define the Chetniks as the «Serbian nationalist group» and in the same vein the Ustashi as the «Croatian fascists linked with the German and Italian occupiers». The truth is that some of the Chetniks as well as some of the Ustashi were fascists and some among their chieftains worked closely together with Germans and Italians. Some of Tito's partisans did the same. Abundant documentation proves similar collaborations and similar affinities.

The book is beautifully illustrated with pictures that depict the changes in social relations. It contains a very useful and significant glossary with a nearly complete bibliography of foreign and Serbian and Croatian sources and studies.

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BOGDAN RADITSA

Ivo Omrčanin, *Diplomatic and Political History of Croatia*, Philadelphia, Dorrance & Company, 1972.

Ivo Omrčanin, a native Croatian possessing numerous academic degrees from such institutions as the Gregorian University, University of Trieste and Catholic University (Paris) and currently professor at Indiana University, has written a well-documented encyclopaedic account of Croatian history from antiquity to the present. The early chapters deal with the migration of «aryan» Croats from present-day Iran into Europe, their settlement among Slavic tribes and then their eventual «Slavicization». In reiterating ancient Croatian history, Professor Omrčanin stresses and validates the existence of the Croats as a people with their own state organization. We are told that as early as 626 the Croats entered into an international treaty of assistance with the Byzantine Emperor Heraclius to help the Emperor defeat the Avars. As a consequence of this treaty the Croats were introduced into Christendom.

Professor Omrčanin's account is well-footnoted from many sources in which the author is well-versed and competent and which assumes a background knowledge of the reader. Without this knowledge the author's work can tend to be confusing and difficult to follow as there is limited in -depth exposition of the many events in Croatian history. The writer devotes most of his account to the development of the concept of Croatian state sovereignty.

The author validates the nation's concept of state by drawing from Church history. We are informed that the Holy See negotiated a treaty with the Croats in 680 whereby the Croats promised to live in peace and wage only defensive wars. The existence of this treaty is used by the author as proof of papal recognition for the existence of a powerful Croatia. It is also pointed out that over 1.000 years ago the Croats were accorded the privileged use of their national language in Church rites while others were forced to accept Latin. These facts cannot be denied but it certainly cannot be doubted that many Croatian foreign involvements, including those with the Church, were due to its unique geo-political position between the East and the West

Professor Omrčanin documents the development of the native Croatian dynasty and the