

Vane Ivanovic, *LX: Memoirs of a Yugoslav*, New York. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1977, pp. 435.

Of literary forms autobiography is probably the most suspect as it represents an individual's self-evaluation of an assumed importance. It is the medium which allows defeated generals to grasp with the pen what they failed to achieve with the sword and offers victorious warriors an opportunity for magnanimity towards the fallen foe and Phillipic concerning former allies. It is also a means whereby those rare individuals whose lives have placed them at historical crossroads can share experiences and impressions of considerable worth with those of us whose interest is great but whose involvement is miniscule. Surely the memoirs of a Churchill, a Venizelos, a Stambulov, demand attention from partisan and critic alike but there are others who, while not having risen to the pinnacle of power, still shared time and space with events of such significance as to give their reminiscences importance. *LX*, proudly subtitled, *Memoirs of a Yugoslav*, is the record of such a life. Having turned sixty, Vane Ivanovic, sportsman, athlete, shipowner, urbane raconteur, and, above all else, Yugoslav, surrendered to the suggestions of his friend and publisher, William Jovanovich, and produced this interesting, if flawed, book. It is flawed in that having described the important aspects of an interesting life, Ivanovic allowed himself the luxury of some one hundred pages of anecdotal opinions ranging from the glory of Spanish bull fights to the poor quality of post-Castro Cuban cigars. He seems aware of this problem, however, for he provides an early disclaimer, "So far as I am concerned, and excepting only the War sections, the book may be opened and read from any page" (p. x). Stylistically this may be true as many sections can stand on their own but the reader who approaches in such a random manner will miss much that is to be gained from the traditional manner of reading from beginning to end. The early sections of the book provide brief comeoes of life in the last days of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and of the environment that produced modern Yugoslavia. Through the lives of his relatives and his own youthful experiences a sense of the shortlived Yugoslav monarchy is created and the reader is prepared to deal with Yugoslavia at war.

Contrary to the expectations engendered by the author's background, one finds no blanket apology for Mihailovic nor total condemnation of Tito. Instead there is an attempt to suggest the positive and negative to be found on both sides and no time is wasted blaming others. Charles Thayer in his book *Guerrilla* identified five criteria as being essential for successful insurgence. These five, objectives, leadership, popular support, sanctuary, and Allied support are applied by Ivanovic to the Yugoslav example. He concludes that both Chetniks and Partisans had clear objectives, that the Partisans had effective leadership while the Chetniks did not, that Mihailovic had little support other than that offered by the Serbs near his bases and that the mobile Partisans won broad and increasing backing. Furthermore, while Mihailovic held to his sancturaries too long the Partisans did not adopt this pattern until sure of Allied support and, as is well known, Tito and his forces eventually won the backing of the Allies. Ivanovic also takes Colonel F.W.D. Deakin to task for the description of events presented in *The Embattled Mountain*. Rather than as suggested by Deakin, British policy early in 1943 was already shifting towards support of Tito and recognition of the Partisans as an Allied fighting force. This recognition doomed Mihailovic and his followers. One might expect bitter recrimination directed toward London, Washington, and Moscow but instead we are told, "The Partisan victory was not inevitable. It was made possible less by Allied support than by the division among the population. We destroyed ourselves or achieved a great triumph. As you like it" (p. 275). It seems almost too easy to ignore the

impact of the Red Army and the strategic decisions of the Western Powers but in the final analysis Ivanovic falls back on the traditional *samo sloga Srbina spasava* replacing only *Srbina* with Yugoslavs. And these Yugoslavs can survive and prosper as a link between East and West if they recognize the ethnic diversity of each of their four national communities; Serbs, Slovenes, Croatians, and Macedonians. Where once there were three we now have four and this increased diversity is to be the base for greater unity. One wonders about this conclusion yet cannot help but wish the author well.

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