

as agents of change, disrupting and shaking up the traditional economy, and thus preparing the way for a far more sophisticated and specialized, hence productive, economic order. Both logic and historical evidence are on his side. But while praising the forces of change and progress, some sympathy is due to those confused and hapless individuals left gasping in their path; the debt-ridden peasant, the artisan inundated by imported goods, the carter overcome by the railroad, the minor boyar whose financial ineptitude led him downward from mortgage to mortgage. These men turned on the Jewish entrepreneur as the source of their poverty, and naturally supported advocates of anti-Semitism. They were mistaken but their misery was real. By dismissing this unrest as essentially chauvinistic and irrational, Spulber demonstrates that aptitude as an economist does not necessarily entail the perceptiveness, sensitivity, and breadth of knowledge of the true *political* economist.

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Dragisa N. Ristić, *Yugoslavia's Revolution of 1941*. University Park, Pa.: The Pennsylvania State University Press for the Hoover Institution, 1966. Pp. 175.

The military *coup* of 27 March 1941 in Belgrade has stirred a heated debate which has raged for over twenty-five years. The Serbian leaders of the *coup* have justified their action as expressing the national (i. e., Serbian) will by upholding freedom and national honor against the "foreigner," Prince Paul, and the Nazi enemy. The subsequent Axis invasion could have been handled, they insist, had the army been properly equipped (a failure of Paul and his *camarilla*), and, above all, had the Croats remained loyal. Opponents of the *coup* see it in a different light. Yugoslavia's adherence to the Tripartite Pact was eminently justifiable, they contend: a German invasion would thereby have been prevented, the institutions and territorial integrity of the state safeguarded, and thus not only would Yugoslavia have avoided the horrible devastation it later suffered, but it would later have been capable of joining the Allies at a strategic moment, i. e., the Italian surrender in September 1943. These great advantages, it is argued, were foolishly thrown away by an irresponsible clique whose fascination with past glories blinded them to present reality. The Communists of course reject both inter-

pretations, but are ambivalent in providing one of their own. While they applaud the *coup* as a blow against Nazism, they condemn its "bourgeois" leaders, and insist that its success depended primarily on a Communist-led mobilization of the masses. And the humiliating German victory that followed bolsters the Communist argument that the *coup* was really the last achievement of a declining elite; the future belonged to new men and new ideas.

So much for the varying interpretations given the *coup*; what is added by this book? The author's credentials are interesting: as an aide-de-camp of long standing to the best-known leader of the *coup*. General Simović, he was a direct participant, and later received Simović's support in his research. Yet he is remarkably objective and dispassionate, and there is no hint here of rationalization, malice, or self-importance. Prince Paul, Cvetković, and other political opponents are treated with respect and even some sympathy, for Ristić fully appreciates the grave problems they faced. He is less generous regarding some of their supporters among the senior army officers, but his restraint is still impressive.

His judgment regarding what issues to stress is, however, another matter. Almost half of this short book is spent on an able but quite conventional description of Yugoslavia's foreign relations, primarily with the Axis, from the autumn of 1940 to the signing of the Tripartite Pact on 25 March 1941. Neither new evidence nor new interpretations are offered, while certain vital issues (most notably, the British attempt to bring Yugoslavia into a Balkan military coalition, the possibility of British complicity in the *coup*, and the extreme hostility of many Serbs to the *Sporazum* of 1939) are largely ignored. But new ground is broken in the fifty pages of detailed though selective narrative on the period 26 March-14 April 1941, i. e., from the first stages of the *coup* to the escape by air of King Peter and his entourage to Greece, a flight which Ristić accompanied and helped organize. Ristić presents new evidence here, relying on his diary, Simović's unpublished memoirs (written in 1942), and postwar conversations with Simović, Maček, and others.

While his account will not prompt many basic reassessments, he does wrestle with several open questions. For example, Ristić counters the criticism of Yugoslavia's military unpreparedness by asserting that an earlier partial mobilization appreciably hampered a full mobilization immediately following the *coup*. Such action, moreover, might have provoked a German attack. He also contends that the Yugoslav defense

plan did not envisage an unimaginative defense of the frontiers (as has often been argued), but rather a fighting withdrawal to link up with the Greeks and British in Macedonia and in Albania, from which the Italians would be evicted; it was assumed that mountains and poor roads would slow the German armor. Unlike J. B. Hoptner (*Yugoslavia in Crisis, 1934-1941* [1962]), Ristić regards Simović as the real leader of the *coup*, and treats air force general Mircović as merely an executor of orders. This question remains unsettled, however. The responsibilities Mirković assumed (including some last-minute recruiting of troop commanders) went beyond those normally assigned to a subordinate. Moreover, Simović had compromised himself with intemperate talk of a military *coup* and therefore was to be summarily retired on 27 March. But the contention of Hoptner and others that the conspirators achieved success quite easily is contradicted in Ristić's detailed, almost hour-by-hour account. Although Cvetković, Cincar-Marković, and their cabinet were readily rounded up, Prince Paul was not, being absent from Belgrade. His orders (assuming that he intended to fight back; apparently he was too demoralized to do so) would not be heard, since the conspirators controlled the communications system. But Kosić, the army Chief of Staff, and Stajić, the commander of the palace guard, showed real initiative in trying to rally troops against the uprising. They failed, for the conspirators' tanks had an intimidating effect, no prestigious military or political leader was present to argue with the wavering younger officers, and, above all, because the senior officers of a nearby division, though loyal to Prince Paul, were absent from their units for several crucial hours.

These issues are of course worth investigation, and it is well that Ristić has conducted it. It is interesting that he disputes the widely accepted argument that the fighting in Yugoslavia and Greece required postponing the German invasion of Russia by several vital weeks, thus "saving" Moscow and bringing on a winter campaign. He thinks that the strategic differences between Hitler and his generals, especially the halfhearted (and only partially obeyed) decisions in late July and August to press toward Leningrad and the Ukraine, were far more important.

But what is really needed in this book is less emphasis on events and more on the attitudes, assumptions and calculations that motivated the conspirators. Professor Hoptner has already provided such an evaluation, a very sympathetic one at that, for Prince Paul and his fol-

lowers; Ristić has unfortunately not followed this example. While Paul regarded as distinctly possible either a German victory or a negotiated peace that would place Eastern Europe under German domination (witness the Western policy at Munich), the conspirators calculated on Britain being joined by the Soviet Union and the United States (Roosevelt's electoral victory, plus passage of the Lend-Lease Bill on 9 March 1941, were rightly regarded as virtually a declaration of war on Germany) in a long but triumphant war. And, the conspirators argued, Yugoslavia's very existence required it to back the British and Americans from the outset; if not, they might well decide at the peace conference to settle the Croat-Serb rivalry, with the international tensions it had engendered, by simply dissolving the Yugoslav state. Moreover, the military picture was by no means entirely black: German airpower had been repulsed over Britain, while Italy had already suffered major defeats in Albania since mid-November, in Libya since December, and at sea in the British air attack on Taranto in November. A Yugoslav blow in Albania that might help knock Italy out of the war would insure Yugoslavia's standing in Western eyes for decades; was the gain not worth the risk? And, if worst came to worst, a retreat to Thessaloniki or even overseas was always possible. Honor would thus be saved and the Yugoslav state with it. As to those suffering in Axis-occupied Yugoslavia, four centuries of Ottoman rule had taught the ordinary citizen how to survive. So reasoned Simović and his associates.

To the pessimistic pragmatism of Prince Paul, a cultivated and worldly man whose memories were more of British art galleries and country houses than of the devastating wars from which Yugoslavia had emerged, they opposed a ruthless yet romantic nationalism which demanded of each Serb that he let no opportunity pass to die for the Yugoslav state which his elders had helped create and whose domination he enjoyed. The *coup* thus represented a basic clash between opposing political concepts; any account which overlooks this factor can only convey an incomplete, an inadequate, a lopsided picture of historical reality.

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Robert Flacelière, *A Literary History of Greece*, trans. Douglas Garman. Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company, 1964. Pp. 395.

This translation is a welcome addition to the bibliography on the