

Phillis Auty, *Yugoslavia*. New York: Walker and Company, 1965. Pp. 251.

The best part of this general survey of Yugoslavia, past and present, is the brief history of the country's national units, although excessive telescoping has resulted in some errors and distortions. In this, as in most studies of Yugoslavia, Croatia's orientation toward the West is exaggerated. And it is erroneous to suggest that neither the Karageorgević nor the Obrenović dynasties produced an outstanding political personality: Mihailo Obrenović, a benevolent despot who contributed greatly to Serbian modernization, and Peter Karageorgević, a constitutional monarch in the best tradition, were surely outstanding. And many would regard Milan Obrenović and Peter's son, Alexander, as strong personalities, for all their faults and failures. Furthermore, the sweeping generalization that democracy was not present in Serbia in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, and that the monarch's powers "were exercised by a dangerously chauvinistic military clique" goes much too far, ignoring (to cite one instance) the sharp differences between Serbian government in the period 1889-92 and the period 1892-1903.

The remainder of the book is no less disappointing. Its major theme is Tito's rise to power and the nature of his regime; this has been described much more competently by other authors, of whose work Miss Auty often seems unaware. The chapter on Yugoslavia between the wars is rather perfunctory and contains various contradictions or misleading conclusions. For example, it is stated (p. 72) that no significant concessions were made to the Croats before the Axis attack, but elsewhere (p. 79) the not inconsiderable concessions made in the *Sporazum* of 1939 are discussed. It is difficult to understand the basis of the characterization of King Alexander: allegations that he disbelieved in parliamentary government and was intensely Serbian in his outlook require more substantiation than a repetition of some half-truths. In this reviewer's opinion, it can be argued that he tried to make parliamentary government work and that he endeavored to preserve Yugoslavia. A King who gave Serbian, Croatian, and Slovenian first names to his three sons should be credited with greater vision and understanding than he receives in this book.

The treatment of Yugoslavia's entrance into World War II and the Chetnik-Partisan struggle also is replete with distortions and inaccuracies. Who overthrows the regency on March 27, 1941? Not Serbian military officers, but a grammatical passive voice! The Partisans are

credited with all the fighting against the Axis, and it is asserted that Mihailović was more interested in winning the civil war than in defeating Hitler. So was Tito, as even his official biographer (Dedijer) frankly recognizes when he admits that the Partisans found the issues of Yugoslavia's revolution more important than the fight against the Axis. No real picture is given of the massacre of the Serbs in Nazi-satellite Croatia. And the half-truth is asserted that the Partisans won power "without direct Soviet assistance," although in reality Soviet armies helped to liberate Belgrade and turn it over to Tito. The treatment of the Tito-Šubašić agreement is equally unbalanced. Why not say that Tito at the Fifth Party Congress publicly admitted that the Communists never intended to live up to the agreement? And why not recognize that Churchill forced King Peter to go along, instead of blandly stating that Peter reluctantly agreed, with no indication as to what overcame his reluctance?

Similarly, the account of the revolution and after contains numerous miss-statements and contradictions. The popularity of Tito's movement is affirmed (p. 105), side-by-side with a report of his belief that a true democratic constitution would mean the liquidation of Communism. In connection with the Tito-Stalin break, moreover, the statement (p. 115) that aid from the West did not come before 1951 is hardly correct. Yugoslav gold holdings in the West were unfrozen very shortly after the break and World Bank loans were facilitated by the United States long before 1951. Equally fallacious is the view (p. 117) that the Chamber of Producers is "unique and not derived from any known constitution elsewhere;" the author's memory apparently does not extend to Mussolini's Chamber of Fasces and Corporations. In addition, her assertion that the Yugoslav Communist regime is somehow different from other Communist governments (p. 124) in that non-Communists participate in the government, raises doubts, regarding the author's knowledge of other Communist nations. And what, in this context, is the purpose of the historically questionable statement that the Yugoslavs have never experienced parliamentary democracy? Is this to suggest that not much should be expected from them?

The chapters on the economy and on agriculture are flawed both by errors and obsolete data. Yugoslav citizens will be astounded to read that "they make no contribution to social insurance... they pay no income tax, and wages are all 'take-home' pay" (p. 153). The treatment of agriculture is no less bewildering. No convincing documentation is provided to back up the tacit assumption that the peasant was much worse

off in the pre-Communist period. And no yardstick is established to measure the argument that agricultural production was rising very slowly in 1945-47. The author insists (pp. 173-74) that the policy of enforced collectivization was rejected, but subsequently (p. 180) admits that "peasants had been coerced into cooperatives." With respect to more recent Yugoslav agricultural policies, no clear picture is presented of the peasant's relationship to the General Cooperative, nor is the problem of attracting peasants from the city back to the land touched on, although this has been a major concern to the regime in recent times.

In a final chapter on "The Country in Transition," some of the same errors of the earlier chapters are repeated. The wage and rent figures are completely out-of-date. Statements on the standard of living are unsupported by evidence. The division of federal funds for economic development is barely discussed as a source of national rivalry. It is announced (p. 196) that churchgoing has declined greatly since pre-War days, but there are later references (p. 200) to crowded churches and mosques. The author denies (p. 215) that Yugoslavia is a police state, but Tito and a number of his colleagues complained bitterly about this very issue at the Central Committee meeting in the summer of 1966. Moreover, the excesses of the Tito regime are clearly minimized. It is amusing to read (p. 216) that no evidence exists that Tito "has become addicted to luxury." Apparently the author is unaware of the dozen or so luxurious villas at Tito's disposal, in addition to his palatial surroundings at Brioni, aside from other trappings of luxury.

One wonders, too, how anyone could state that nearly all of the men chosen by Tito when he reorganized the Party before the War "are still his closest supporters today" (p. 85). Djilas is mentioned as one in disfavor, but others should not be forgotten: Arsa Jovanović, Sretan Žujević, Andrija Hebrang. Blagoje Nešković, and subsequent to the writing of the book, Alexander Ranković, to mention only the most important. The book is also plagued with various minor errors: e.g., the city of Kraljevo (p. 26) had its earlier name restored several years before this book was written; the Serbo-Croatian word for committee is *Odbor*, not *Savet*; and Ivo Andrić is a Serb, not a Bosnian.

This reviewer wishes that he could have dispensed praise rather than criticism, particularly when much writing about present-day Yugoslavia falls short of being first-rate. At a time when research in Yugoslavia is much easier than it once was, it seems reasonable to expect a much better product than we have in this book.

Vanderbilt University

ALEX N. DRAGNICH