

Dejan Djokić, ed. *Yugoslavism: Histories of a Failed Idea, 1918–1992*. London: Hurst & Co., 2003. 356 pp., \$24.95 (paper). ISBN: 1-85065-663-0.

This volume brings together a wide array of authors from the former Yugoslavia, North America, and the United Kingdom to discuss the failure of the “Yugoslav idea” in the twentieth century. Dejan Djokić, the editor, has given the authors a wide berth. Rather than propounding one explanation for the demise of Yugoslavia and Yugoslavism, the authors propose a host of different hypotheses. Some maintain academic or even clinical poises, writing like coroners reporting on a suspicious and particularly unfortunate death. Others present eulogies pervaded by emotion and pathetic counterfactuals. As Djokić admits in his introduction, “not all contributors managed to distance themselves equally from their own prejudices.” The result is a rich but contradictory and uneven volume that rewards the reader by posing many more questions than it answers.

Djokić, a lecturer in Contemporary History at Birkbeck College at the University of London, has divided this compendium into five parts. The first part, “Context,” provides the historical background of Yugoslavism. Three authors—Dennison Rusinow, Kosta St. Pavlowitch, and Andrej Mitrović—offer overlapping and largely uncontroversial accounts. Readers with more than a basic knowledge of Yugoslav history will not find it necessary to read these chapters.

The second part of the book is entitled “Nations.” Stevan K. Pavlowitch, Tihomir Cipek, Mitja Velikonja, Xavier Bougarel, and Hugh Poulton provide brief portraits of various nations that have figured in Yugoslavia’s history. It should be noted, though, that the Hungarians and Germans, two nations that played important roles in interwar Yugoslav history, do not receive treatment here. As in the first section of the volume, all of the portraits are general and provide useful information. Xavier Bougarel’s chapter on the “Bosnian Muslims and the Yugoslav Idea” stands above the rest, not least because this topic has received relatively sparse attention in general histories of Yugoslavia. Hugh Poulton focuses precisely on the key points of tension between Yugoslav ideology and the Albanian and Macedonian nations.

“Leaders and Institutions” is the focus of the third section of the book. This includes Dejan Djokić on King Aleksandar and interwar Yugoslavism, Dejan Jović on Yugoslavism and Yugoslav communism, John R. Lampe on the economic aspect of Yugoslavism, Radmila Radić on religion and Yugoslavism, and Mile Bjelajac on the military and Yugoslav unity. Dejan Jović’s chapter is perhaps the most thought-

provoking and original article in the collection. Jović illustrates how the failure of interwar Yugoslavism during King Aleksandar's dictatorship left a distinct impact on the politics of Tito and the Yugoslav communists during the postwar period. Jović also notes that the relatively dramatic rise in the number of persons identifying themselves as Yugoslavs was seen as a threat rather than a positive development by the country's ruling elite. Jović's subtle discussion of Kardelj's concept of Yugoslavism, and in particular of Kardelj's book, *The Development of the Slovene National Question*, should prove especially interesting to students of Slovene studies.

In the same section of the book, Mile Bjelajac tries but does not fully succeed in portraying the interwar Yugoslav army and the communist-era Yugoslav People's Army as sponsors of Yugoslav unity. Particularly dubious in Bjelajac's chapter is the virtual rehabilitation of the royalist (Chetnik) forces of Dragoljub (Draža Mihailović), especially when seen in the light of Bjelajac's marginalization of the Yugoslav Partisans. In his discussion of Mihailović, Bjelajac relies overwhelmingly on a recent hagiographic monograph. Radmila Radić's article provides at once too much and too little information for the general reader. For example, she does not provide an adequate explanation of the Concordat crisis in the 1930s. And in explaining the racist and genocidal policies of the Independent State of Croatia during World War II, Radić unfortunately chooses to rely on the probably apocryphal formula for "solving the Serb question." While no serious historian can dispute the genocidal character of the Ustaša state's policies towards the Serbs, Jews, and Roma, the formula of "expelling one-third, killing one-third, and converting one-third" has been quoted by countless scholars without a proper source.

The fourth section of the book looks at the role of intellectuals in the history of the Yugoslav idea. Ljubinka Trgovčević, Andrew B. Wachtel, Aleksandar Pavković, and Jasna Dragović-Soso contribute articles. The latter's treatment of the demise of the Yugoslav Writer's Union adds a new and useful dimension to the history of the demise of Yugoslavism.

At the end of the volume, in the fifth and final section, four authors offer a combination of counterfactuals and emotional epitaphs for Yugoslavism. Desimir Tošić and Branko Horvat write first-hand accounts of the Democratic Alternative and the Association for the Yugoslav Democratic Initiative. While interesting, many readers are bound to find their views to be utopian. Ramadan Marmullaku offers a singing criticism of the role of Albanians in Yugoslavia, and of Serbo-

Albanian relations as a whole. Finally, Aleksa Djilas serves up an unpalatable and meandering “imaginary dialogue with Western friends.” Those who have followed Djilas’s public statements and writings during the past fifteen years will be left wondering why Djilas feels it necessary to have such an imaginary dialogue with “friends” who come across as caricatures and stereotypes.

Dejan Djokić and his contributors have produced a wide-ranging and provocative volume. The admirable heterogeneity of the views expressed in the volume bears emphasizing once again. Overall, however, it must be noted that a large number of the articles suffer from a lack of stylistic and grammatical editing. This is particularly noticeable in the case of those articles contributed by scholars from the former Yugoslavia. The poor grammar in these articles would have benefited from closer editing. As it stands, the language of these articles often distracts the reader from proper consideration of their thought-provoking arguments.

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Note: The views expressed herein are those of the author alone and do not necessarily reflect the views of the International Tribunal or of the United Nations in general.