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David MacKenzie. *Serbs and Russians.* New York: Columbia University Press, 1996. xvii + 435 pp. $56.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-88033-356-6.

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Serbs and Russians

David MacKenzie has compiled some interesting articles in his book *Serbs and Russians.* In my experience, Dr. MacKenzie's work has been quite useful and a welcome addition to the historiography on the Balkans. His special area of interest has been the Serbs and their history. Given the author's expertise, this volume is a bit of a disappointment, not because of what it is but what it is not. *Serbs and Russians* is a collection of mostly previously published articles or presentations, along with parts of the author's dissertation.

In the Introduction MacKenzie states, "At a time when the relations between Serbs and Russians have once again come into focus during another severe Balkan crisis, it seemed appropriate to draw together in one volume articles and papers composed since the 1960s" (p. xi). The present work is essentially the result of that "drawing together." There is little analysis of the modern period; what is presented is a summation that stops at an undefined date in 1993. It is simple to recommend the whole as a reference work for specialists, who may be interested in delving into some minutiae of modern Serbian history. However, those who do not specialize in Balkan history will have a difficult time of it. Only the first part, "General Articles," contains some readily accessible information about Serbian historical antecedents.

The first article is titled "The Serbian-Russian Relationship in History"; it surveys the course of that relationship from 1804 to 1993 and has not been previously published. In an attempt to review the progress of the Serbian-Russian relationship, the author makes problematic assertions. For example, according to the article, the following was the situation after the First Balkan War. I paraphrase: Serbia urged mediation by Russia while the Bulgarians sought a military solution to the unfavorable boundary settlement regarding the Macedonian territories, and ultimately started the Second Balkan War. From the text it appears as though Serbia suffered aggression without justifiable provocation or cause. In fact MacKenzie states: "As the victim of Bulgarian aggression, Serbia won unqualified Russian support" (p. 17). The interest of the Serbs and Greeks to divide the disputed territory and essentially renege on their prewar agreements with the Bulgarians is not mentioned. The implication, in this instance and elsewhere, is that Serbia had been victimized repeatedly by her neighbors and the great powers. Another example of this is that, according to the author, Serbia was treated unjustly at San Stefano. According to the text, at the peace negotiations the Russians were "backing up the often unjustified Bulgarian territorial claims (pp. 13-14). There is no allowance made by the author that this apparent favoritism was not so much a case of finding a new fair-haired child as one of a great power seeking to develop what it perceived as vital national interest. Up to 1877/78, the territories of Serbia were as far south as Russian strategic influence could hope to spread. After that date newly liberated Bulgarian territories were much closer to the Straits. This made the Bulgarian Principality valuable and attractive to an Imperial Russia still in search of a warm water port, ideally with free access to the Mediterranean Sea.

The article ends its survey of the Serbian and Russian relationship with a brief recounting of the most recent acts in this Balkan drama. MacKenzie cites some public declarations from both Serbian and Russian intellectuals and religious figures, for example when in 1992-1993 the Serbs tried to evoke a supportive response from their "Slav brothers," the Russians, during the international boycott of Yugoslavia. These declarations hearken back to a time when in the nineteenth century "long suffering but eternally devoted" Serbs actively sought help from their more powerful Slav brethren, the Russians. The exchanges he quotes are telling but inconclusive. They do underscore the fact that historic ties are still being evoked by small nations when they need a great power patron. Whether the great power will respond in any substantive way remains to be seen.

The historic relationship between Russians and Serbs has been and continues to be a feeling of slavish love and blind devotion on the part of the Serbs, when it suits them, and protective, big-brother like attitudes on the part of the Russians when it suits them in turn. At times, for the Russians, this attitude may be observed in the form of a domestic groundswell of pro-Serb, read Slavic, nationalist sentiment, which crests in public displays of support without a clear-cut political, foreign policy agenda. This type of sentiment is well illustrated, albeit briefly, in MacKenzie's book (pp. 19-21).

The next article, "Serbia as Piedmont and the Yugoslav Idea, 1804-1914," is one already published in the *East European Quarterly*. It gives a good overview of this formative period of the Serbian national idea, and the endnotes are quite useful. The article titled "Historical Roots of the Bosnian Crisis" provides a nice, concise overview of the historical evolution of the South Slavs in the Balkans that should help clarify the overlapping territorial and leadership claims for a beginning class of students. While reviewing the migration and settlement of the Balkan territories during the medieval period and especially under Ottoman rule, the author presents the background for the conversions that led to the political and cultural divisions among Yugoslavs. The article ends with the dissolution of Yugoslavia. One anomaly of this article is that, instead of endnotes, it has a list of suggested readings.

The rest of the articles concentrate on a recounting of the activities, goals and consequences of the Black Hand, Colonel Apis, and the 1903 regicide. Eight of them deal with him directly. Who was Apis, what motivated him, how he was perceived by Serbs during his life and in death: these are some of the questions addressed. In addition, the author discusses the international ramifications of 1903 and the activities of the conspiratorial societies like the Black Hand. Serbian political giants like Ilija Garasanin and Nikola Pasic take a back seat to Apis. In considering this volume on how Serbs view themselves, in the context of international relations, it is clear why the Black Hand looms large. The assassination of the Archduke was that instance in time when the few commanded the many, and is thus critical to our understanding of subsequent events.

There are four articles grouped under the heading of Russian relations with Serbia. Three of these focus on the period immediately before, during and after the Russo-Turkish war of 1877/78. They are "Panslavism in Practice: M.G. Cherniaev in Serbia (1876)," "Cherniaev on the Serbo-Turkish War," and "Russia's Balkan Policies and the South Slavs, 1878." The fourth looks at the Russian reaction to the Salonika trial, where Apis and his "co-conspirators" were tried.

The author has indeed been "investigating and writing about different aspects of the history of Serbia and Russia" (p. xi) for his entire career. This volume will disappoint those searching for a current link to this relationship. The author states that "this series of articles seeks to throw a useful light on Serbian-Russian relations and the Serbian national movement" (p. xvii). But the caveat, for the specialist, is that this is an effort framed only in a traditional, historical perspective, for the most part without any attempt to cover the contemporary situation. The appendix contains a useful bibliography of the author's other publications as well as a section called "Impressions of Serbia, 1995" which, although interesting, is simply a narrative of the author's impressions, based on a brief visit, linked to participation in a conference.

East European Monographs has come to be associated with a certain neglect in scholarly publications. Unfortunately, in this volume the tradition continues. The text suffers from typographical errors, inconsistency in place names (Durres, Durrazo, Drac), confusion about whether dates are old style or new, and other mechanical flaws. Nonetheless, the endnotes are useful and point out important works. Dr. MacKenzie is a specialist on Serbian history, and his *Serbs and Russians* gathers together important research on the Serbian national movement. It can provide a convenient reference work for the specialist interested in the evolution of that movement.

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