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For my wife, Elizabeth

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FRED SINGLETON



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Preface

Any author who is either bold enough or foolhardy enough to attempt to write a short history of Yugoslavia must be aware from the outset that he or she is taking on an almost impossible task. First, there is the problem of the title. Yugoslavia did not exist until 1918, except as an idea in the minds of liberal-minded scholars and politicians amongst the South Slav peoples during the nineteenth century. However, although the term Yugoslav (or South Slav) peoples is the closest approximation to the subject matter of this book, linguists might point out that the Bulgarians also speak a South Slav language. What I have attempted to do is to trace the history of the South Slavs who came together at the end of the First World War to form a Yugoslav state, and who now live in the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

The long centuries of separation have produced cultural differences which make modern Yugoslavia a fascinating field of study for the scholar who is not directly involved in the life of the country, and provide an exciting and almost unmanageable challenge for those who attempt to govern it. The peoples of Yugoslavia cannot forget their own historical roots, and folk memories of their colourful past play an important part in shaping their attitudes to current problems. It is impossible to understand contemporary Yugoslavia without some knowledge of the historical experiences which are so deeply embedded in the consciousness of the people.

There is no such thing as objective history, and there is no consensus amongst Yugoslavs as to the interpretation of the events which have brought them to their present situation. This gives rise to the second problem which a student of Yugoslav history must face. Every sentence which one writes will be examined in fine detail, in order to discover whether the writer displays a bias towards one or other of the national groups which live within the state of Yugoslavia. In recounting the story of the medieval kingdoms which collapsed before the Turkish onslaught, or which were incorporated into the Habsburg empire, has due weight been

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Preface

given to the sensitivities of those who trace their ancestry back to the formative years of their national culture?

Looking at more recent times, the kingdom founded in 1918 was unable, during its brief and unhappy existence, to resolve either the national differences among its various peoples or the social and economic differences among the classes. The Kingdom collapsed when foreign invaders entered in 1941, but the task of the occupying forces was made easier by the internal dissensions which set Croat against Serb, Catholic against Orthodox Christian, class against class. The sufferings endured by the Yugoslavs during the Second World War are beyond the comprehension of those of us whose homelands were never occupied and who faced the enemy united in a common sense of national purpose. The physical and psychological torments which the Yugoslavs endured in their struggle for survival have left deep scars which will take generations to heal.

It is almost impossible for Yugoslav historians to forget their national origins and to lose their sense of identity with the group to which their loyalties are attached. The justification for a non-Yugoslav attempting to write about Yugoslavia is that he or she is not caught up in the inherited cultural and political differences which affect the judgement of the native-born, and may therefore look with a degree of detachment on issues which arouse fierce emotions amongst those who are steeped in the traditions of their people.

I must confess to a deep and abiding affection for Yugoslavia and an admiration for the people and their achievements, but I hope that the ensuing pages indicate that my affection is not uncritical and that the portrait I have painted bears some resemblance to reality.

In a book which covers so wide a compass, from Roman times to the death of Tito, there is bound to be much oversimplification, but I hope that what I have written will help the reader to understand better this fascinating country.

It has been said that Yugoslavia is the despair of tidy minds. I am sure that I have left many loose ends, and have omitted many aspects of Yugoslav life which some may think to be of vital importance. If I have offered an intelligible pattern which will provide a framework in which the interested reader may embark on further investigations, I shall be satisfied.

I must acknowledge my debt to many friends who have patiently read parts of the manuscript and have made their comments. These include my colleagues in the Postgraduate School of Yugoslav Studies in Bradford, Mr John Allcock and Mr Charles Bartlett. Dr Muriel Heppell of the School of Slavonic Studies, University of London, who collaborated with me on my

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first book on Yugoslavia, has kindly read the chapters on medieval history and made helpful suggestions. The late Sir Cecil Parrott, formerly of Lancaster University, who was tutor to the young King Peter, gave me the benefit of his knowledge of Yugoslavia during the regency of Prince Paul. The unfailing help of John J. Horton, Social Sciences Librarian in Bradford University Library, whose wide knowledge of Yugoslav sources was at my disposal at all times, is much appreciated. Mrs Elizabeth Wetton of Cambridge University Press has been a patient editor, and Mr M. Lear, cartographer at Bradford University, has drawn the excellent maps.

There are many more whose help should be acknowledged, but none more than my wife, Elizabeth, who has typed the manuscript, corrected various inelegancies of style, and kept me to the mark, in complete disregard for her own comfort and convenience.

None of the above bear any responsibility for any shortcomings or errors which I may have perpetrated.

Guide to pronunciation

Serbo-Croat spelling is phonetic, that is each letter of the alphabet always represents the same sound. The following guide to pronunciation is based on the Croatian alphabet, which uses the Latin script. Diacritic marks are used with certain consonants to indicate sounds which have a separate sign in the Cyrillic alphabet, used in Serbia, Macedonia and Montenegro.

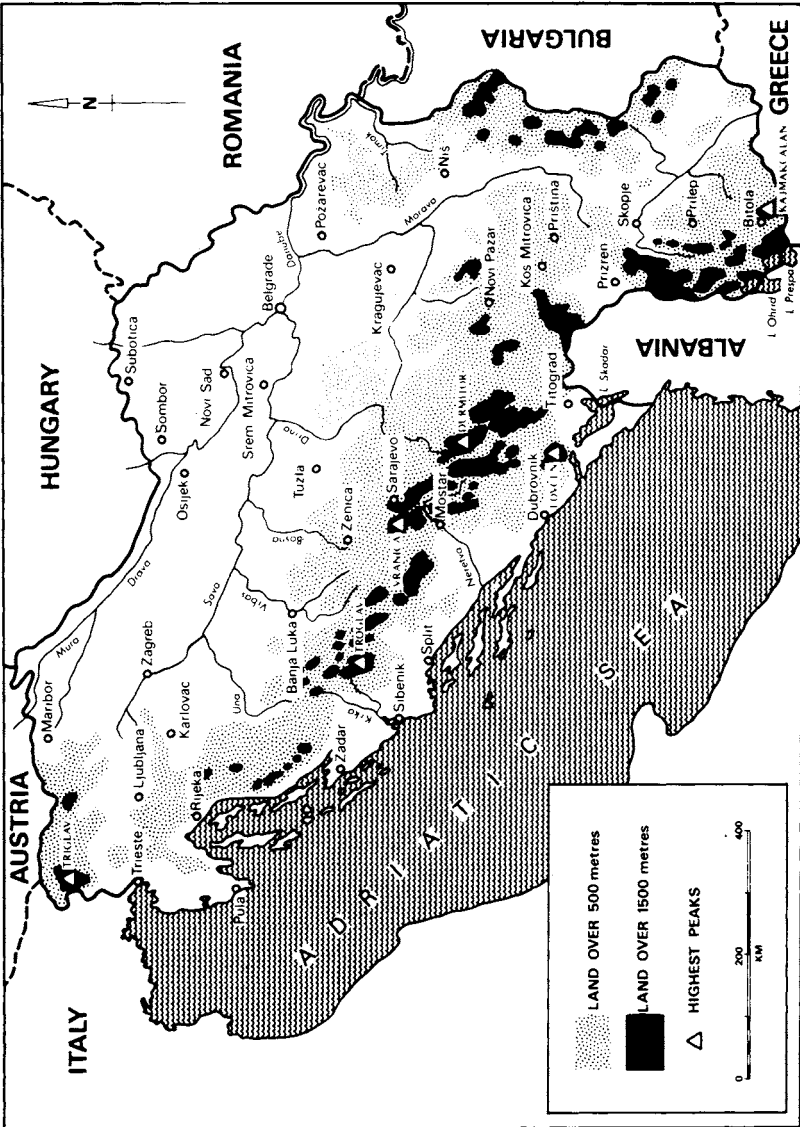
The spelling of personal names and place names has been anglicised in some cases where a commonly accepted form is in general use, although the Serbo-Croat version is given in parenthesis on its first appearance – Alexander (Aleksandar), Belgrade (Beograd) – but in most cases the original form is used.

A	as in English	a in <i>father</i>
B		b in <i>bed</i>
C		ts in <i>cats</i>
Č		ch in <i>reach</i>
Ć	a sound between	ch in <i>reach</i> and t in <i>tune</i>
D	as in English	d in <i>dog</i>
Dž		j in <i>John</i>
Đ (Dj)	a sound between	d in <i>duke</i> and dg in <i>bridge</i>
E	as in English	e in <i>let</i>
F		f in <i>full</i>
G		g in <i>good</i>
H	as in Scottish	ch in <i>loch</i>
I	as in English	i in <i>machine</i>
J		y in <i>yet</i>
K		k in <i>kite</i>
L		l in <i>look</i>
Lj		ll in <i>million</i>
M		m in <i>man</i>
N		n in <i>net</i>
Nj		n in <i>new</i>

Guide to pronunciation

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O	o in <i>not</i>
P	p in <i>pet</i>
R	r in <i>run</i> (slightly rolled)
S	ss in <i>glass</i>
Š	sh in <i>she</i>
T	t in <i>tap</i>
U	u in <i>rule</i>
V	v in <i>veil</i>
Z	z in <i>zebra</i>
Ž	s in <i>pleasure</i>



Map 1. Yugoslavia: physical geography.