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The Cambridge Concise History. Serbs and Serbia in a New and Complete History

Abstract: Dejan Djokić has written an important new book, a complete history of Serbs and Serbia from the initial Balkan migration to the present decades since the wars of Yugoslavia's dissolution. Although one of the new Concise Histories from Cambridge University Press, covering this long history requires a long book. Well written and well argued, it balances the core of Serb identity against discontinuities. They range from Tsar Dušan's over-expanded empire and Ottoman occupation to revolt and independence, followed by occupation in two world wars and inclusion in the two Yugoslavias.

Keywords: migration, empire, nation-state, independence, occupation

Dejan Djokić, *A Concise History of Serbia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023, 562 pp.

Dejan Djokić has written an important new book for Serbian and Western readers. The author has a good set of credentials for both groups. After arriving from Belgrade as a young Serbian historian 30 years ago, he became Professor of History and the founder of the Center for Balkan studies at Goldsmiths, the University of London. He is the author of three books and the co-editor of four more on modern Serbian history. His acknowledgements make clear the great number of contacts in Serbia and elsewhere that he has maintained and consulted for this volume. One in a new series of Concise Histories from Cambridge Uni-

versity Press, it may be the longest one at 562 pages. Unlike its counterpart for Hungary, it does not stop short after 1989 and boldly proceeds to 2022. His introduction tells us that he aims to write a complete history from the Serbs arrival forward to Serbia today, not concentrating on the past two centuries of diplomatic and political history as Western scholarship has largely done. He also aims to include the wider regional context and the neglected Serbian social and cultural history. He begins and ends a lengthy introduction with two questions: “Where is Serbia?” and “When is Serbia?” The question of including Kosovo clouds the first answer. Answering when confronts the frequent changes in and beyond Serbia’s borders to question its continuity in a history of less than 100 years of recognition as an independent state, 1878–1914 and since 2006. He disputes the currently popular Serbian practice of reading back victimization from the NATO bombing in 1999 to the unprovoked and far more deadly Nazi bombing of Belgrade in 1941. He reminds readers that the NATO campaign, largely directed against infrastructure but still open to criticism, did come in response to Kosovo Albanians’ having suffered “systematic violence and murder by Serbian forces” (p. 16).

Djokić proposes to write a complete history from the past forward, avoiding the forced continuity from backward linkages. He also dismisses the practice in some British media of tracing back Serbian abuses in Bosnia and Kosovo to a long non-Western history of pre-modern barbarism replete with ethnic violence, as villains not victims. Instead, his introduction sees Serb culture and society as a polycentric mixture of Central and East European, Mediterranean and Near Eastern influences flowing through the Serbs’ history (19). Turning to contemporary Belgrade, he finds a full set of European credentials in high and popular culture. The range of popular performers includes a number from the former Yugoslav republics, the first of his repeated references to a wider Yugoslav framework from the 19th century forward. The introduction concludes with an informed review of other, largely modern histories of Serbia and then of all eight chapters from “Migration” to “Ruin and Recovery”. Crisply and clearly written, the long chapters are usefully subdivided into aptly titled sections. I will note that the coverage omits a number of features which if included would have added too many pages for a “concise history”. The text is however accompanied by footnoted references to Serbian and Western scholarship. Ten maps and over forty pictures of leading figures help the reader unfamiliar with Serbian history to follow a lucid narrative. An English language bibliography proceeds from general works, culture and memoirs to citations in the same chronological order as the chapters. To follow the Serb core through the discontinuities of fifteen centuries, each chapter deserves separate attention, in other words, a long review of this ambitiously definitive history.

I

The first four chapters take half of the volume's 562 pages to cover Serb history before the appearance of a modern nation state. They move from the Serbs' arrival in Southeastern Europe to establishing their own empire, then facing subjugation and finally winning autonomy from the Ottoman Empire. Migration (up to 1150) is a short but essential chapter. We see Serbs and also Croats as Slavs migrating from the north in the sixth century. There is no mention of any non-Slav speculations about their origins, only the admission that their earlier location and even the origin of the name Serb is not found in the few available sources. Once the Avars had returned to their northern base, the Serbs did share these Byzantine borderlands with forerunners of Albanians and Vlachs, absorbing some of the latter but not the former. The conversion to Christianity began only in the ninth century. The still undivided religion was spread, as every Serbian school child knows, by the Greek missionaries Cyril and Methodius who used their familiarity with the local spoken Slav to create an alphabet and the basis for the Old Church Slavonic that became one cornerstone of Serbian identity. By 950, map 1.1 (71) shows a small area known as Baptized Serbia, west of Belgrade and north of Dubrovnik. Djokić then takes us through the less familiar series of local Serb leaders and polities surviving occupation by the First Bulgarian Empire and the coming to terms early in the 11th century with a revived Byzantine Empire. In the process, its territory had shifted south and became known as Duklja, then Zeta.

From the more familiar consolidation under the Nemanjić family from 1172, Chapter 2 follows the rise and fall of a multi-national Serb empire. Known first as Raška, its Serb core soon absorbed Zeta and reached the Adriatic coast and Dubrovnik. But as Djokić points out (67), its political leadership soon began to withdraw from the Adriatic into the interior. After a dynastic marriage linking him with the Byzantine Empire, its most famous member Stefan Nemanja merged from a family struggle for power with the title of Grand Župan. What became of this Serbian Kingdom before and after the legendary battle of Kosovo in 1389? The religious answer is familiar, the political track less so. A long section on The Kingdom and the Church follows Stefan forward to abdicating in 1199 in favor of his son to join the Studenica monastery as Simeon. It was his son Rastko, named Sava, expanded the number of monasteries, spread the use of Old Church Slavonic. Finally, in 1219, he declared its independence as an autocephalous church. Thus, begins the continuity of its revered, sacred role under St. Sava in Serbian identity.

Djokić spends the rest of this chapter, titled Empire, on the discontinuity of a multi-ethnic empire which expanded through Macedonia and most of modern Greece to include a non-Serb and non-Slav majority. Citing respected Serbian scholarship along the way, he traces the “Byzantine turn” to its imperial model.

It culminated in the reign of Dušan (1331–55). His seven boyhood years in exile in Constantinople had left him familiar with Byzantine practice and their version of Greek known as Katharevousa. In Skopje, the capital of his huge territory, he had himself crowned as Tsar (Emperor) of the Serbs and Greeks there in 1346 (112). Hence Djokić’s subhead which will startle some Serbian readers, “The Serb-Greek Empire” (109). We read that Greeks, Vlachs and other non-Serbs were important members of Dušan’s large court staff. “Romantic writers” in 19th century Serbia transformed them all into Serbs (112). The famous Code of Laws not only drew heavily on Byzantine precedents but also made no mention of assimilating non-Serbs or discriminating against them.

The legacy of Dušan’s legal regime helped it to survive under his successors, calling themselves Princes rather than Emperors. Their authority lasted until Smederevo fell permanently to the Ottomans in 1459. The legendary battle of Kosovo 70 years previously had obliged the Ottoman forces to retreat after Sultan Murad as well as the Serb leader Lazar had been killed. Djokić records Lazar’s sacrifice of his life to enter the heavenly kingdom as a later legend (129). He has already traced the notion of a largely Serb population as 19th century Serbian romanticism (112). Helping the large and increasingly subdivided Serbian Despotate, established following the Kosovo battle, to endure were the exports from silver mines worked by imported Saxon labor. But so was the growing strength of its independent Orthodox Church and its many monasteries, concentrated in Kosovo.

Chapter 3 is aptly titled “Borderland (1450–1800)”. From the completed Ottoman conquest, it tracks the long centuries with Habsburg and Venetian empires also close at hand. Throughout, Djokić calls the Orthodox Church the core of the Serb identity (143). He joins recent scholarship in finding the initial Ottoman land regime less repressive than it would become. He also points out that the only forced conversion to Islam outside of Bosnia was the *devshirme* seizure and conversion of young Serb boys. Among the number who then rose to high positions in the Sultan’s regime was Sokollu Mehmed Pasha. He restored the Peć Patriarchate to the Serbian Church in 1557. It succeeded in rebuilding some 50 of the hundreds of churches and monasteries initially closed in Kosovo. Its clergy began collecting Ottoman taxes across its huge territory (map 3.2). This “Serb-Turkish idyll”, as one Serbian historian called it, last-

ed until the end of the sixteenth century when an Albanian convert succeeded the last “Serb” vizier Sokolović (172–175).

For the next two centuries the author emphasizes the way in which a contested and changing border between the Ottoman and Habsburg Empires created hard conditions in Serbia that would lead to revolt. Before then, Habsburg fortifications on its Bosnian border had had attracted enough of the oppressed Bosnian Serbs to free land and long military service to launch its Military Border in 1538 (map 3.1, p. 149). Djokić does not mention the subsequent arrival of Croats fleeing serfdom and creating the unmixed population that would lead to so much violence from World War II to the recent past. He does emphasize the Great Migration of Serbs retreating to the Habsburg Vojvodina after an Austrian-led advance had pushed the Ottoman border back into Macedonia. Patriarch Arsenije led the renowned retreat in 1690, numbering 40–70,000 people in the still uncertain estimates. The widespread destruction and desertion of Serb settlements in Kosovo and Metohija is more certain, but again the number of the sizeable Albanian influx is not known (180–186). With the final fixing of the Ottoman-Habsburg border by the treaty of Karlović in 1699, the large Serb settlement in the Vojvodina proceeded through the next century. Djokić records an Orthodox revival in Serbia under the brief Austrian recapture from 1717 to 1739, with no mention of a proselytizing Jesuit presence. The Ottomans revoked tolerance for the Serb Orthodox hierarchy. By 1766 they had abolished even the Peć Patriarchate, prompting another round of Serb migration into the settled communities evolving north of the border.

Djokić concludes the chapter with the portentous arrival of the Enlightenment and its liberating principles among the Habsburg Serbs. The leading advocate of its ideas and idealism was Dositej Obradović. First an Orthodox priest, he left the Fruška gora monastery to travel around western Europe to learn and bring back its founding principles. Among them was the secular idea that a common language rather than a common confession defines a people (199). Djokić adds that progressive ideas were also coming from Orthodox clergy such as the cleric Josip Rajić, who wrote the first known history of Serbia.

The author begins Chapter 4 Revolution (1788–1858), with Fateful Encounters, namely the Ottoman-Habsburg war of 1788–91 and its consequences. Repulsing the Austrian effort to push into Serbia, the Ottoman regime created a new Sanjak of Smederevo. Their vizier first restored tax collection to local Serb clergy and *knezovi*. He also allowed some of the Serb livestock traders who had fought on the Austrian side to return. Their military training in the *Freikorps* would prove valuable in the First Serbian Uprising. It began in 1804 after a new vizier had allowed the Ottoman janissary troops to reclaim their

lost land holdings and taxation rights (211–212). The Serb response to the killing of local leaders became the first of what the author calls the three revolutions that created a Serbian state. Under the leadership of the livestock trader Karađorđe, the revolt survived until 1813. The author's familiar account adds two revolutionary aspects. First, Karađorđe and the Russian diplomatic representative intervened in 1806 to stop the looting and killing of Belgrade shopkeepers, some Jewish, by an invading local militia. Here began an official reputation for law and order often ignored in the Western media two centuries later. The next year, Dositej Obradović was named Serbia's first Minister of Education. By 1808, a European style gymnasium, *the Velika škola* opened in Belgrade.

After its brutal suppression in 1813, the Second Uprising in 1815 launched a second revolution under the leadership of Miloš Obrenović. After seeing his rival Karađorđe killed in 1817, he persevered with Ottoman negotiations to win the autonomy that the First Uprising had abandoned. He won control of the valuable livestock trade for his own profit but also launched the free distribution of janissary and other Muslims' land holdings to immigrating Serbs. Coming from Kosovo, Bosnia and the Vojvodina, they doubled Serbia's population between 1815 and 1840 (table 4, p. 141). In 1830, he capitalized on Ottoman weakness from its latest war with Russia, to win recognition as an autonomous principality. In 1833 he added the western districts first claimed in 1804. Prince Miloš joined the Serbian Orthodox hierarchy in opposing the spread of a single Serbian language, written in Latin as well as Cyrillic as would Yugoslavia's Serbo-Croatian. As pioneered by the linguist Vuk Karadžić, it was finally adopted in 1850 at a conference in Vienna. "Language of the Nation" (131–138) provides a detailed account of his training and interaction with the other Slav linguists from the 1820s forward.

Djokić's third revolution began after the deposition of Miloš and his personal administration in 1839. The rival Karađorđević succeeded him as Prince. He did not oppose the reformist leaders, some of them the educated *prečani* who had come across from the Vojvodina. Dubbed the Defenders of the Constitution passed in 1838, they sought to establish an independent civil service and judiciary under the set of ministries that had become standard European practice since Napoleon's time. Their success has long been celebrated in Serbian historiography. Djokić adds two qualifications. The newly created police force abused its authority, as did some of the growing ministerial bureaucracy. It was however the failure of the regime to work free of close relations with Ottoman authority, the presence of its troops and its oversight that allowed Miloš to return briefly in 1859. The accession of his son Mihailo marked the start of a successful drive for independence and a new era in Serbian history.

II

Serbia was an independent state at the start and at the end of Djokić's final four chapters. In between came the discontinuity of two wartime occupations, two Yugoslavias and one joint government with Montenegro in the 1990s. "Independence (1860–1914)" began with the young Prince Mihailo. He made it his priority on returning from exile in France in 1860 with encouragement from Louis Napoleon. We see a modernizing monarch dressed in European clothes but attracted to the "enlightened despotism" under which France seemed to be prospering (178). He used his authority to force the Ottoman regime to withdraw its last troops from several fortresses in 1867 but also used it to reject the demands of the Liberals led by Vladimir Jovanović. They wanted legislative authority for an elected parliament. He concentrated instead on plans for a large new army and an alliance with Greece and Romania to expel the Ottomans from the Balkans. With his Foreign Minister, Ilija Garašanin, he did consider the Minister's much discussed *Načertanije* drafted in the 1840s. It famously called for a Greater Serbia but also what Djokić calls the more promising prospect of the federation which the future Yugoslavia would become (287). Then Mihailo was assassinated in 1868, the year before the National Theatre, a hallmark of his plans for Europeanization, would open (291). The monarchy was left in less able and less ambitious hands for the rest of the century.

Djokić pays less attention to these last two Obrenović rulers, the feckless Milan (1869–1893) and the hapless Aleksandar (1894–1903). Both preserved an informal alliance with Austria-Hungary. The Dual Monarchy's purchase of Milan's gambling debts had forced him to accept not only a commercial treaty but unannounced leverage over Serbia's foreign policy. Signed in 1881, this arrangement fed internal political opposition despite the gains from the latest Russo-Ottoman war of 1877–78. Serbia had received international recognition and added territory in the Niš triangle. Not lingering over foreign policy as in several western volumes, Djokić relies on Serbian scholarship, especially the work of Vladimir Jovanović's son Slobodan, to concentrate on internal affairs. We see the elite, Belgrade based political parties of the 1870s challenged by peasant-based Radicals in the 1880s and then worker-based Socialists. Under the Swiss trained engineer Nikola Pašić, the Radicals overcame suppression to win an election and pass a new liberal constitution by 1888. The modernization of urban society and culture receives a separate section, as does the economy and an emerging national identity as a European nation state. The training and organization of a European style army replaced the local militias whose invasion of Bosnia in 1876 and Bulgaria in 1885 had been easily repulsed.

By 1903, the frustration with King Aleksandar over foreign policy and a controversial marriage led a small group from the new officer corps to assassinate him. Petar Karađorđević returned from an educated European exile to assume the throne, He quickly restored and expanded 1888 Constitution. Party politics and freedom of the press and publication created what has been called Serbia's golden decade. Djokić calls it a critical decade, but he ignores some of the criticism found in recent Serbian scholarship. The appearance of a second major party, the Independent Radicals is mentioned but not their subordination in a Radical coalition even before the Austrian annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1908. Optimistic attention is however paid to the survival of the Serbian Social-Democratic Party and the success of the Croat-Serb coalition's New Course in Croatian elections. Attention is called to the interest in pan-Yugoslav ideas from Croat and Slovene groups visiting Belgrade from the Dual Monarchy (323). The rise in nationalist sentiment from the press, public opinion and in the officer corps after the Bosnian annexation is subordinated to the restraint of the Pašić government in avoiding a declaration of war. Still more striking are the few sentences devoted to the two Balkan Wars in 1912–13. The military regime in Macedonia, denying rights under that Constitution as the Socialists were demanding, is omitted. The brutal army and militia cleansing of Albanian villages and villagers in Kosovo is also ignored in the standard Western histories of the Balkans. The conduct of the two wars is left to "atrocities on all sides" (331). This stark, single phrase would tragically apply to Kosovo in both world wars and the wars of Yugoslavia's dissolution.

The only omission at the start of Chapter 6, framing the First Yugoslavia between the two World War is any description of the hard Austrian occupation of Serbia from 1915 to 1918. Otherwise, the author's facility for regional and diplomatic history provides an instructive account. He begins with the pro-Yugoslav sentiments of one of the Young Bosnia leaders but moves quickly through the widely accepted account of the limited and unauthorized role in the Sarajevo assassination of the Black Hand and Serbian military intelligence. Djokić recalls the comment of the British historian A. J. P. Taylor that the visit on Vidovdan, June 28, would have been comparable to Edward VII's visiting Dublin on St. Patrick's Day (338). There follows a well referenced account of the Serbian government's concerted efforts to come to some diplomatic agreement with the Austrians. Neither its military or the Vienna press were willing, nor were some of the Belgrade press that defied the restraint ordered by the Serbian government (340).

The heroic Serbian army retreat to Corfu after a renewed Austrian and Bulgaria offensive in 1915 and damage done to Serbia's population and

industry by 1918 is duly covered. Readers will find less familiar but instructive the relations between Serbian leadership and the Yugoslav idea, culminating in the Corfu Declaration in 1917. We see the Independent Democrats and the Dalmatian Croats contending with the resistance of the Radical leadership. The balance of power under the Declaration's vague terms shifted to Pašić and King Aleksandar. In October 1918, the Serbian troops at the Salonika Front and their French-allies broke through the Bulgarian lines. The Serbian army advanced rapidly through Macedonia into Serbia and then on to Croatia and Slovenia to stem an Italian advance. Djokić takes us through the long struggle over a Constitution of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, not neglecting Croatian opposition from its Peasant Party. Djokić states that the 1921 Constitution did not provide for Serbian domination in the new Kingdom (366). He makes his case only by tracking the parliamentary struggles of Pašić and his successors after 1924 with Stjepan Radić and his Croatian Peasant Party delegates. The dismissal of the Kosovo Albanian and German parties is not mentioned, but the near total Serbian domination of the Yugoslav army's general officer corps is detailed (370). A brief section on economy and society notes the lack of previous economic interaction between the Serbia and the western territories. The spread of modern art is left to stand for Belgrade's rise as a center, with no mention of the surge of writers and artists from Dalmatia and elsewhere into the city in the 1920s.

From Radić's assassination in 1928 and King Aleksandar's Royal Dictatorship in 1929, the author treats the rest of the interwar period as Serb-Croat Conflict and Compromise. We see only conflict until Aleksandar's assassination in 1934, despite opposition in Belgrade by Serbian intellectuals like the writer Miloš Crnjanski (380). The redivision of his new Kingdom of Yugoslavia into eight river-based *banovine* had provided a Serb plurality in four of them and separated the large Croatian one from Dalmatia. In a struggle for compromise afterwards, the Croatian Peasant Party grew under the new Leadership of Vladko Maček. Meanwhile, Milan Stojadinović and his new Yugoslav Radical Union gave Yugoslavia and especially Serbia experience what Djokić (386) calls a partial return to democracy. Both party leaders held power in several elections but failed to come to terms. The Prince Regent Paul opened the door by appointing a new government in 1939 under the mayor of Niš, Dragiša Cvetković, who resumed negotiations with Maček. They quickly agreed on an enlarged Croatian *banovina* including Dalmatia and western Herzegovina. In Belgrade, the Serbian Cultural Club of notables wanted an enlargement for Serbia, and in Zagreb, some of the exiled *Ustaša* extremists were allowed to return.

The stage was set for the conflicts to which the author returns in the chapter's coverage of the Second World War.

Djokić begins his brief account by dismissing the argument in some Western scholarship that British intelligence organized the military coup deposing the Prince Regent in March 1941. He cites only its failed efforts to persuade him to refuse to join the German Tripartite Pact (392). The German bombing and invasion on April 6 and the ruthless treatment of occupied Serbia are described in familiar detail. So is the killing and expulsion of Serbs from the Nazi satellite state of Croatia. A chilling separate section is devoted to the Holocaust in occupied Serbia, which killed three quarters of its Jews. Djokić shows no sympathy for the Nedić government installed in August 1941. He brands Nedić and the German collaborator Kosta Pećanac in Bosnia as quislings (405). Concluding with "The Serb Civil War", we see the conflict in Bosnia between the disciplined Communist-led Partisans and the fragmented forces of Draža Mihailović's Chetniks. Their Bosnian Serb factions are shown to be more responsible for killing Bosnian Muslims initially than collaborating later with the Germans while struggling to survive in Bosnia. Then by 1944, the still largely Serb Partisans of Tito were joined by Croats and Bosnian Muslims. Pushed back into Serbia, the isolated Mihailović belatedly rejected his Bosnian Serb adviser's proposal for a Greater Serbia. The Red Army brushed aside his last-minute offer to collaborate. Box 6.1 (410) records Yugoslavia's war deaths in World War II, half of whom were Serbs.

Chapter 7 is appropriately titled as "From Federation to Fragmentation (1945–1990)". Relatively shorter than other chapters, it concentrates on internal Communist politics. There is little attention to the economy and the Western relations that have preoccupied much Anglo-American scholarship, including my own. First comes the party's bargaining over the shape of the postwar federation. Tito's closest Serbian advisor Aleksandar Ranković led the refusal of other Serbs' proposal to include much of Bosnia in the new Serbian republic. Then comes the less well-known compromise on autonomy over Serbian demands for incorporating Vojvodina and Kosovo, creating the republic's unique status as a "federation in the federation" (420). Tito's defiance of Stalin in the 1948 split was supported by Serbian colleagues who compared Soviet demands to participate in trying anti-Stalin party members to the Austrian demands to take part in 1914 trials of the Archduke's assassins (417). The narrative moves quickly to the full details of the dissent and imprisonment of Milovan Đilas. After acknowledging the importance of US financial aid in the 1950s, foreign relations are treated for the last time in a review of Yugoslavia's participation in Non-Alignment forward from the Belgrade conference in 1961.

The section on Society and Culture starts with brief attention to the economy, appreciating the rising GDP especially in Vojvodina by the 1960s. More attention is given to the subsequent rise of a modern urban culture from the European-style housing construction in New Belgrade and a film industry with a European reputation.

The rest of the chapter is devoted to the political failure of the Yugoslav and Serbian federations to survive the 1980s. Ignoring the rising economic problems of the previous years, Djokić turns to the Serbian National Question. It reemerged from rising Albanian authority in Kosovo that prompted more Serbs to leave. Their share of the population of the province fell under 20 percent. The famed Memorandum from the Serbian Academy of Sciences lamented the situation. Its distribution opened the door for Slobodan Milošević to replace the more accommodating Serbian party leadership of Ivan Stambolić by 1988. Djokić cites his initial appeal as “a modern, energetic politician” (458). His Anti-Bureaucratic Revolution won workers support against the more prosperous other republics and Vojvodina as well as public support against the Albanian police and party leaders in Kosovo. The economic background to the subsequent political crisis in the Yugoslav federation is not provided. A party conference in 1983 tried but failed to impose market principles on self-managed enterprises and their workers councils, subdivided into Basic organizations in 1976 and supported by foreign bank loans no longer available. Accelerating inflation aside, Djokić guides us through the growing disfunction of a federation divided in republics, each with autonomous party leaderships. His chapter had already identified the problem that Serb minorities in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina would face from majority leaderships under the 1974 Constitution (440). The non-Serb majorities in the other republics would not be able to accept the imposition of harsh minority Serb rule in Kosovo. Both the Serbian and the Yugoslav federation were politically doomed. But more detail would be needed to support the author’s own judgement that Yugoslavia’s survival also depended on “the survival of socialism” (462).

A final chapter, Ruin and Recovery, takes on the further discontinuities in Serbian history from 1990 to 2022. Sections on Serbia in Transition and Serbs in the Disintegration of Yugoslavia lead into separate sections on the four wars of the 1990s. Passing over the breakup of the last party conference in January 1990 that ended the League of Communists, Djokić reviews the separate republic elections that followed in Serbia as well as the other republics. The more accommodating opposition parties were unable to unite or overcome Milošević’s renamed Socialist Party. It benefited from an unmentioned set of pay raises funded by a forced note issue from the Bank of Yugoslavia. Run-

ning for President, he won even more votes than his party. Djokić judges that in this commanding position through the 1990s, he functioned not as a dictator or a charismatic leader but as an autocrat (474). A divided opposition and limited press freedom survived. He states bluntly that the wars that followed brought ruin to Serbia and death to some 35,000 Serbs, a loss surpassed only by the Bosnian Muslims (478).

Serbia itself was little involved in the brief Slovenian war and saw only the start of a flow of Serb refugees. The Bosnian war from 1992 to 1995 swelled the number from the Croatian war to 800,000. He confirms the flow of Serbian militias and aid to the Bosnian Serbs that first tied Belgrade to the abuse of civilians that killed half of the 63,000 Bosnian Muslims who died. The notorious execution of at least 7,000 men and boys at Srebrenica in 1993 is however described as a massacre (498), not the genocide since advanced in Sarajevo and internationally accepted. I would go no further than a war crime. Milošević's represented the Bosnian Serbs in the 1995 negotiations and committed Serbia to the Dayton Agreement that created a divided but peaceful Bosnia Herzegovina. His reputation and his regime in Serbia were already burdened with the catastrophic inflations of 1993 and the continuing UN economic sanctions. He barely survived a challenge in 1996 from a briefly united opposition (501). By 1998, his regime was cracking down hard on opposition leaders, while his young Information Minister from the nationalist Radical Party Aleksandar Vučić restricted press freedom. Djokić reminds us that the start of the NATO bombing campaign prompted some Yugoslav Army units and Serbian police in Kosovo to burn and loot Albanian villages, killing civilians, and further encouraging a rising Albanian resistance movement, the KLA (514–517). He acknowledges the unintended consequences and limited civilian deaths from the controversial NATO bombing. It was supposed to last only a few days, instead of 78. And he notes that the loss of Russian save been decisive in the Serbian decision to evacuate Kosovo. Rather than recording the official US celebration and subsequent US ambiguity, Djokić concentrates on the consequences for Serbia. First came the fall of Milošević and his regime. Huge demonstrations in Belgrade and a new election put the conservative Vojislav Koštunica and the rising Democratic Party leader Zoran Đinđić in power as President and Prime Minister. Đinđić's liberal democratic reforms threatened the security and militia forces whose abuses had blackened Serbia's international reputation. Then his assassination in June 2003 by a surviving and criminally connected militia in the army marked the turn from hope to disillusionment in the author's final section.

We see how his successor Boris Tadić struggled with a variety of problems, from the failure to privatize successfully the large public enterprises left from self-management and the reconstruction of infrastructures destroyed in the NATO bombing. KLA provocations persisted in southern Serbia and destroyed more Serbian monasteries in Kosovo. The Radical Party gained support for its hard nationalist line and for the rehabilitation of General Mihailović. Despite a coalition with a revived Socialist Party, Tadić's Democrats suffered a narrow defeat in the 2012 elections. A breakaway faction of less extreme Radicals led the formation of a new party called the Progressives, recalling a pre-1914 party. The former Radical Aleksandar Vučić has led them to a succession of electoral victories. He has consolidated power in the judiciary and the media as well. Djokić compares his autocratic regime to Milošević's but traces its longer tenure to the decline of ideology in Europe in general (521). A post-socialist rise of populism that worried Belgrade analysts in the 1990 has proceeded in Serbia on the strength of victimized resentment against the Western democracies, especially the US because of the bombing. I myself must note that Serbia's dispute with a now independent Kosovo over a common border, to which both sides must agree if either is to enter the EU, helps to keep the Vučić regime in power. In his concluding words (533) Djokić balances uncertainty about Serbia's future against its "integral place in European history" and a hope that the democratic potential from early in the present century can be recaptured. So, it seems that Serbian history is not yet complete.

Summary

Dejan Djokić, a Serbian scholar long tenured at Goldsmiths College, the University of London, has written an impressive new history of Serbs and Serbia for the Cambridge University Press series of country histories. Longer than the other Concise Histories, the volume's introduction and eight chapters move from the initial Serb migration into the Balkans to the two decades since the wars of Yugoslavia's dissolution. The chapters address social and cultural history as well as politics and regional relations. Frequent footnotes cite relevant Serbian and foreign scholarship. An English language bibliography is appended. The author pays special attention to the discontinuities that have confronted the core Serbian settlement from its own over-expanded empire and long Ottoman occupation to migration, revolt and independence, followed by foreign occupation in two world wars and inclusion in two Yugoslavias.

Резиме

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КЕМБРИЦОВА САЖЕТА ИСТОРИЈА: СРБИ И СРБИЈА У НОВОЈ И ЦЕЛОВИТОЈ ИСТОРИЈИ

Апстракт: Дејан Ђокић је написао нову важну књигу, свеобухватну историју Срба и Србије од почетних балканских миграција, па до деценија након ратова деведесетих и распада Југославије. Иако припада серији нових сажетих историја *Кембриџ Јуниверсити Преса*, за покривање овако дуге историје била је потребна обимнија књига. Добро написана и аргументована, књига успоставља баланс између суштине српског идентитета и дисконтинуитета. Они се крећу од проширене империје цара Душана и османлијске окупације, до побуна и стицања независности, праћених окупацијом током два светска рата и укључивањем у две Југославије.

Кључне речи: миграција, царство, национална држава, независност, окупација

Дејан Ђокић, српски научник са дугогодишњим стажом на Голдсмитс колеџу Универзитета у Лондону, написао је импресивну историју Срба и Србије за нову серију *Кембриџ Јуниверсити Преса* посвећену историји држава. Дужи од осталих сажетих историја из ове едиције, увод и осам поглавља Ђокићеве књиге захватају период од досељавања Срба на Балкан, па до деценија иза ратова у којима се распала Југославија. Поглавља се баве друштвеном и културном историјом, као и политиком и регионалним односима. У честим фуснотама наводи се релевантна српска и инострана научна литература, а приложена је и библиографија на енглеском језику. Аутор посебну пажњу посвећује дисконтинуитетима који су суочили језгро српске територије, од времена сопственог прешироког царства и дуге османлијске окупације, са сеобама, побунама и стицањем независности, праћених страном окупацијом у два светска рата и укључивањем Србије у две Југославије.