CROATIA: PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE PERSPECTIVES. Edited by Matko Marušić. New York: Nova Science Publishers, 2020. 435 pp. Indices of Names and Terms. ISBN 978-1-53618-300-9.

Finding no parallel in the past for what he was witnessing in the present, Alexis de Tocqueville famously commented "as the past has ceased to throw its light upon the future, the mind of man wanders in obscurity." *Croatia: Past, Present and Future Perspectives* raises the question of what happens when the past casts shadows instead of light, when a nation's heritage is manufactured, distorted, and plagued by uncertainty?

A few sentences earlier, Alexis de Tocqueville observed that the "world which is rising into existence is still half encumbered by the remains of the world which is waning into decay," (*Democracy in America*, New York, 1847, p. 352) and it is this world of the past that *Croatia: Past, Present and Future Perspectives* attempts to restore. The first part of the book, which forms the bulk of the work, has the title "Croatian History Timeline" but it is more of a smorgasbord. These eight chapters provide a varied sample of historical articles relating to Croatia's past, beginning with a substantial overview and then a discussion of the Croatian language. The remaining articles have a modern emphasis, covering the Croatian state under the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the path to Croatian unification, Alojzije Cardinal Stepinac, the Croatian Catholic experience under Yugoslav Communism, the Croatian Spring, and the War of Independence. Part II, "Past in Present and Future," consists of three forward-looking chapters. They cover Croatian-Serbian relations, a review of the historical authenticity of the film *The Diary of Diana B. (Dnevnik Diane Budisavljević)*, and a SWOT analysis.

It would be misleading to call this book a "history of Croatia." However, it is certainly a fascinating collection of historical essays with a modern focus. In our current context, it could be viewed as insufficient, but only because there ought to be more books like this one. *Croatia: Past, Present and Future Perspectives* is attempting to remedy a dearth of reliable works on the history of Croatia. It attempts to correct various misconceptions, and provides a treasure trove of references at the end of each chapter indicative of the opening of archives in the post-Yugoslav era. Although it fails to capture the grand epic of Croatia's history, it is an important contribution to a hopefully burgeoning historiography. Unfortunately, it is somewhat deficient in rigorous editing and proofreading—for example, many of the translations can appear clumsy to a native English speaker—and like many academic works it undersells itself with boring and uninspiring titles. This work has the potential for much broader appeal, but it would benefit greatly from a more cogent and engaging approach.

Karmen Perković's overview of Croatian history, which forms the first chapter, is encyclopedic. There is no storytelling verve as in Marcus Tanner's history

of Croatia, and it lacks the nuanced academic prowess of Marko Attila Hoare's *History of Bosnia*. Perković has, however, taken on an ambitious task. The history of an entire country cannot be condensed into sixty pages, but she manages to convey an impressive amount of information; and she highlights milestones that have hitherto been ignored or understated, such as the first written mention of Croatia as a realm in 852. However, given that this first chapter provides the chronological structure and coverage for the whole book and sets its tone, it is disappointing.

Perković's writing is amateurish and her scholarship patchy. The three sentences devoted to the church councils of 925 and 928, for example, gloss over their importance and misrepresent their decisions. The first sentence merely states that two church councils were held during the reign of King Tomislav. The second declares that at the first council "Archbishop Ivan of Split was elected as the Archbishop of Croatia." This is simplistic and inaccurate at best. Ivan was elected metropolitan of Dalmatia, not Croatia, and it is important to note that this meant that the famous Grgur Ninski (Gregory, Bishop of Nin), became subordinate to Split at this time, especially given that the next sentence claims that "Glagolitic priests were allowed to hold Glagolitic masses which were a turning point for Croatian worship thanks to the leadership of Bishop Gregory of Nin" (p. 9).

What we do know about the Council of 928 is that it abolished the Bishopric of Nin and that Grgur Ninski was appointed to Skradin. This was a significant change from Frankish Aquileian influence in Croatian Dalmatia to that of the Archbishop of Split in Byzantine Dalmatia. So, after being subordinated in 925, Grgur's see was abolished entirely in 928, which can only be interpreted as a humiliating demotion and shift in the balance of power. Furthermore, Glagolitic is the anachronistic name of the script in which Old Church Slavonic was written and not an adjective to be applied to priests or the Mass. More importantly, though, Perković has missed the opportunity to sort fact from fiction and contribute solid academic research to an area dominated by the romantic figure of Grgur Ninski, who was (understandably) championed in the nineteenth-century struggle to save the Croatian language and culture from Magyarization.

Grgur Ninski may well have won a concession for the Slavonic liturgy, but if he did so it was three years earlier in 925, when (according to Nada Klaić's groundbreaking work on this topic) Article Ten of the council permitted secular priests and monks to use Slavonic in the Mass but barred them from advancement. Perković also ignores the benchmark work of two eminent historians, Francis Dvornik and John V.A. Fine—neither of whom is mentioned or referenced—regarding the battle for jurisdiction that dominated the 928 council. As noted by Fine (*The Early Medieval Balkans*, 1991, p. 271), *Historia Salonitana maior* "never touches on the issue of Slavonic, which suggests that the 928 council made no significant pronouncement on the language question." Instead of

providing a concise summary of one of the most notable proceedings in early Croatian history, Perković has muddied the waters, casting doubt over the entire book's reliability.

Unfortunately, this facile approach is not limited to Croatia's medieval history. Miroslav Krleža and Ivan Meštrović are given short shrift, merely listed as notable among many. In the section on World War II, Perković writes: "Hitler did not support the new government. With no prior warning, he attacked the Kingdom of Yugoslavia by bombing Belgrade" (p. 50). Massive understatement aside, German embassy staff were recalled four days earlier, signaling that Yugoslavia was to be attacked; and the invasion by three Axis countries consisted of much more than the bombing of Belgrade. Oddly enough, Perković does not even mention that Croatia was invaded. Further on, discussing the War of Independence, Perković is demonstrably confused about the UNPROFOR mandate, mixing up UNPAs and "pink zones" (p. 62) and totally ignoring the significance of the latter, betraying a fundamental lack of understanding of the Homeland War. The same might be said regarding her description of the Balkan Wars as "foreplay" (p.44).

It would be unfair, however, to let this be the last word on *Croatia: Past, Present and Future Perspectives*, as the chapters that follow very much redeem the book. Most notable is Esther Gitman's profile of Blessed Alojzije Cardinal Stepinac. Other chapters in the book also shed light on the complex nature of Croatian-Serbian relations, but it is Gitman's well-researched refutation of the propaganda arising from Stepinac's Communist show trial that has the clout to end the decades-long defamation of a man whose canonization has been stymied by political concerns. Gitman's research stands alone, but it is worth noting that Gitman's background grants her an impartiality beyond her qualifications and honors, which include Fulbright and USHMM (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum) fellowships. Gitman is a Sarajevo-born Jew who survived the Holocaust in the Independent State of Croatia (NDH), and she credits Cardinal Stepinac with her rescue, along with her mother and thousands of others.

As Sir Martin Gilbert wrote in his preface to *The Righteous* (2002), "'islands of exceptions' and the 'moral backbone' of the rescuers are central to the story of a Nazi-dominated Europe within which righteous acts testified to the survival of humane values, and to the courage of those who save human life rather than allow it to be destroyed" (p.15). Gitman leaves us with no doubt that Cardinal Stepinac was one such man, but she also impeaches prominent scholars in the process. Gitman cites innumerable and varied contemporary accounts—including a *BBC* broadcast of excerpts from Stepinac's sermons and a *New York Times* report of his "attack" on the Germans (p. 206)—which are so contradictory of later accusations that the five supposedly reputable critics she cites appear totally out of their depth.

Nonetheless, Gitman could strengthen her case. She risks chasing a red herring by claiming that Stepinac and Pavelić "met only once" (p. 183), for example. Whether they met once or a dozen times, they were not on good terms and did so as dignitaries, not as friends. Stepinac meeting Pavelić no more made Stepinac a fascist than the Pope meeting Donald Trump made him a Trump supporter. The vast gulf between the two men's creeds is amply demonstrated, but Gitman's immediate response to the absurd accusation by Efraim Zuroff that Stepinac was Pavelić's spiritual advisor fails to highlight the personal animosity that Pavelić held for Stepinac. As Gitman shows, Stepinac did indeed denounce Pavelić's policies, but the point to be made is that Pavelić did not care what Stepinac thought and did not look to Stepinac for direction, spiritual or otherwise. It is twenty pages later that we are told Pavelić liked to call Stepinac a "balavac" (slobberer) meaning he thought him callow (p. 205). It would also have been apt to mention that Pavelić was not an observant or "practicing" Catholic and that the photograph that so many cite as proof of an alliance between them is actually evidence of disdain and discord. Pavelić gravely insulted Stepinac and his authority as a high-ranking prelate by refusing to kneel and kiss his episcopal ring as was customary (one need only do an image search for Éamonn De Valera and Archbishop McQuaid to see how a Catholic head of state is supposed to greet his archbishop in this era).

It also is noteworthy that the King of Denmark is widely believed to have encouraged his subjects to wear a yellow star in defiance of Nazi race laws. However, Danish Jews were never required to identify themselves in this way and it is a case of wishful thinking; but this makes it all the more puzzling that a similar but true story is so little known. When Croatian Jews were required to mark themselves as such, Stepinac instructed members of his clergy to wear the yellow badge with the Star of David and Ž for Židov (Jew) even though they were exempt. Gitman quotes two remarkable sources, the Viennese-born Count Henry O'Brien of Thomond, who had been expelled from Germany for journalistic activity contrary to National Socialism and then imprisoned by them in Austria after the *Anschluss*, and the eminent writer Evelyn Waugh, who served on the Special Operations Executive-led mission to Yugoslavia under Randolph Churchill. As Waugh put it, it was a way of ridiculing "Pavelić's attempt to mark Jews in the Nazi manner" (p. 197).

Gitman's chapter is a dense presentation with an overwhelming amount of evidence that restores the truth about Cardinal Stepinac and gives a taste of the rise of anti-Semitism in Yugoslavia before the German invasion and installation of the Ustaša régime. As such, it represents the general tone of the book, as it attempts to walk the fine line of rescuing Croatian history from the Yugoslav Communist party line without falling into the trap of negationism. To her credit, Gitman echoes Stepinac, who despised "all forms of totalitarian government, be

they of the Left or of the Right" (p. 182). She readily admits that "the brutality and savagery of the Ustaše surpassed even that of Nazi Germany" (p. 185), but she is also careful to note that the roughly 30,000 Jews who died in the NDH during the war did not all perish at the hands of the Ustaša. Her aim is "to provide an accurate portrayal based on documents and oral histories" (p. 186).

The remaining chapters in *Croatia: Past, Present and Future Perspectives* likewise follow this theme of revising Croatian history after more than four decades of Communist indoctrination.

Sanda Ham's analysis of the Croatian language is highly professional, accessible, and enlightening. Željko Holjevac discusses the Croatian reform impetus and the respective attractions of federalism and trialism at the onset of the twentieth century. Darko Richter's exploration of Croatian unification sheds light on the "continuum of the struggle on the western Croatian borders" (p. 167) and draws interesting parallels between Field Marshal Svetozar Boroević and Marshal Tito.

Communism dominates chapters six and seven. Marino Erceg paints a poignant portrait of journalist Smiljana Rendić and tears apart the myth that Yugoslav Communism had a more "human face" than its Eastern Bloc counterparts. Similarly, Josip Mihaljević exposes how the repression of Croatian nationalism in the Croatian Spring led the Croatian people to "give up" on the idea of the Yugoslav federation.

Part I concludes with a refutation of the "ethnic hatred" thesis, so commonly applied to the War of Independence, by Andrijana Perković Paloš. One could argue that Paloš overplays the distinction between nationalist aggression and ethnic hatred, but on the whole, this is a succinct overview of the causes of the war.

Part II opens with a lengthy chapter by Mihovil Biočić on the fraught topic of Croatian-Serbian relations in the last two centuries. It covers hallmark topics such as Bleiburg and Jasenovac, and raises more questions than it provides answers. Biočić draws the reasonable conclusion that "a thorough, systematic, and objective research and dialogue at all levels of society" is still required (p. 348), but it is doubtful that such research and dialogue can ever fully answer these questions given the lack (or destruction) of evidence. Whether this research and dialogue is even feasible is another matter, one that gives this chapter a sense of old wounds being scratched open.

Igor Vukić's essay on "Understanding History in Croatia Today: A Missed Opportunity in the film *Diary of Diana Budisavljević*" suffers from the same malady. Revealing inaccuracies in historical portrayals is essential, but if it becomes the focus of scholarship it may do so to the detriment of new enquiry. Vukić highlights a disturbing amount of selectivity and misrepresentation in the film, and I endorse his call for greater authenticity in depictions of this time period, but there is a second missed opportunity: It is not merely that "a more

accurate picture" has taken a back seat to "propaganda" (p. 370), there has been a missed opportunity to shift from a defensive attitude (which tends to be perceived by outsiders as negative) to a forward-looking positive one. Vukić hints at this in his conclusion, but it would have served the future perspective theme of this section of the book better had it been woven into his text throughout.

Croatia: Past, Present and Future Perspectives ends with an analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats that Croatia faces. Matko Marušić concludes that Croatia's fate is wound up with that of the rest of Europe and that a "tormented, new and small country cannot be safer than that" (p. 403). In terms of historiography, though, her fate is in the hands of a new generation of scholars who have no living memory of the totalitarianism of the twentieth century, and this book forms an important part of the post-Communist historical record on which they will build.

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FINDING NEMON: THE EXTRAORDINARY LIFE OF THE OUTSIDER WHO SCULPTED THE FAMOUS. By Aurelia Young. London & Chicago: Peter Owen Publishers, 2018. 224 pp. Index. Illustrations. ISBN 978-0-7206-2037-5; Epub ISBN978-07206-2083-2.

OSCAR NEMON: MEMOARI, ESEJI, OSVRTI I ZAPISI [Oscar Nemon: memoirs, essays, reviews and notes]. Edited by Daniel Zec. Osijek: Muzej likovnih umjetnosti, 2016. 320 pp. Index. Illustrations. ISBN 978-953-6695-97-3

The above two complementary volumes, published two years apart, tell the little-known story of the life and career of the Osijek-born Oscar Nemon, who made a name for himself as the sculptor of famous post World War II British, European and a few American personalities. Daniel Zec teaches art history at the University of Osijek and is the leading authority on Nemon in Croatia. He published several studies on Nemon, including "Mladost i početci – Oscar Nemon (1906. – 1985.)," a kind of precursor to the present book, as chapter three in his *Osječki kipari prve polovice 20. stoljeća* [Sculptors of Osijek in the first half of the 20th century – Osijek, 2014], focusing on Nemon's beginnings and life-long ties to Osijek in advance of his later international career and accomplishments (the other prominent Osijek sculptors discussed by Zec are Josip Leović, Mihajlo Živić, and Rudolf-Švagel Lešić). Lady Aurelia Young is the eldest of Nemon's three