

Dejan Djokic, *A concise history of Serbia*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2023, 562 p.

Historian and professor in National University of Ireland (Maynooth) and in Humboldt University of Berlin, Dejan Djokovic has already published representative titles in the field of Modern and Contemporary History (see: *Yugoslavism: Histories of a Failed Idea, 1918-1992*, (London: Hurst, 2003); *Elusive Compromise: A History of Interwar Yugoslavia*, (Columbia: Columbia University Press, 2007); *Pasic & Trumbic: The Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes*, (London: Haus Publishing, 2010). With *A concise history of Serbia*, published at Cambridge University Press in 2023, he provides a rich synthesis of the history of Serbia, based on a rich and well-used bibliography.

Segmented into eight big parts, the book presents Serbian history in a diachronically manner. In the introductory part (p. 1-49), the main methodological aspects are presented, bibliography is critically analysed and the main purposes of the research are brought into attention. Moreover, the author takes into account the main moments of the history of Serbian lands, and also the repetition of some of them is emphasized. He also manages to bring into discussion certain social mechanisms that can be encountered there:

„Serbia or Serb polities had fought against and had been subjugated by the Byzantine, Ottoman, Austro-Hungarian and Nazi empires. During the Cold War, the main threat to Yugoslavia came from the Soviet Union. As the book shows, the discourses of traditional friendships (Russia, Byzantium/Greece, France, Britain, USA) and traditional enmities (Ottoman Turkey, Austria, Germany, Croatia, Bulgaria, Albania), Popular in Serbia and frequently supported by some outside commentators, are too simplistic.” (p. 17).

Later, in the first chapter of the research (p. 50-82), the migration period up to the year 1150 is presented. Here, based on the bibliographical investigations, the author speaks about the way how the Serbs have arrived in the territory that they leave today and the way how they have settled there in order to build the future empire and country. The second part (p. 83-139) is dedicated to the Imperial period (1170-1459). Here, Dejan Djokic manages to discuss both the dynamics of the relationships with neighbours like the Byzantine Empire, Hungarian kingdom, or the Ottoman Empire, but also aspects like the internal crises and the way how the weakness of the dynasty contributed in certain situations to the arrival of the end of this form of statal organisation. The approach is then continued in the third chapter (p. 140-239) entitled „borderland”, which brings into attention the period between 1450 and 1800. Elements like the conversion to Islam of certain parts of the population (p. 154-162),

the involvement of the Serbs in the European Wars during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (p. 175-178), the great migration (p. 178-191), the role of the Habsburg Serb society in the development of future Serbia (p. 191-195), the new migrations and the abolition of the Patriarchate (p. 195-198), or the enlightenment (p. 198-203) are also presented in an attempt to see how the state after the First World War came to life. It is continued by the fourth one entitled „Revolution (1788-1858)” (p. 204-274), the one dedicated to the independence of the Serbs between 1860 and 1914 (p. 275-331), the period of the Great War and the interwar one (p. 332-411), the one of Federation and the fragmentation that followed (p. 412-463) and the contemporary period, marked both by aspects like ruin and recovery (p. 464-533).

Rich in information and bringing into attention an interesting topic that is presented in a complex manner with inter-disciplinary accents and on the bases of a deep bibliographic research, Dejan Djokic's *A concise history of Serbia*, published under Cambridge University Press constitutes an useful tool both in the understanding the European history, but also the Serbian one.

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