

Pasic & Trumbic: The Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, Makers of the Modern World Series

Dejan Djokic

Haus Publishing

978-1-905791-78-1

At the 1919-1923 Peace Conference in Paris, tempers were running high. One diplomat complained, “Nobody knows anything because everything is happening behind the scenes.” Haus Publishing’s *Makers of the Modern World* series reveals the innermost workings of the Paris Peace Conferences via biographies of its members. In this work, *Pasic and Trumbic: The Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes* scholar Dejan Djokic focuses particularly on the diplomatic efforts of the delegates trying to secure Allied recognition of a Serb-Croat-Slovene nation. Hindsight is 20/20—there’s no doubt that delegates Pasic and Trumbic will succeed—but readers interested in Balkan history, the fallout of the Peace Conference, and the origins of Yugoslavia will be delighted by this meticulously compiled micro-history.

Djokic, a Senior Lecturer in History and Director of the Center for the Study of the Balkans at the University of London, approaches the Pasic and Trumbic story with ease. What could be a convoluted, nitpicky story is instead comprehensive and clear, interpreted by a master scholar. “Yugoslavism was a national ideology initially based on the premise that Croats and Serbs were ethnically one nation. Eventually the Slovenes would also be considered by proponents of this ideology as members of the Yugoslav nation...” Past and present are balanced, with Djokic keeping an eye on the historical ripples that originated at the Conference. Charts and an excellent chronology clarify the events further. The book’s academic style makes it an excellent resource that aims to educate, but not necessarily inspire the reader. *Pasic and Trumbic: The Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes* is comprehensive, even for the reader with no prior knowledge of Yugoslavia.

Although the history centers on delegates Nicolai Pasic and Ante Trumbic, very little is said about them as individuals. Djokic seems to use them mainly as focal points in the book, as though to keep the reader from getting lost. This device serves its purpose, but may also set up unfair expectations. *Pasic and Trumbic* is a history, almost a textbook—readers looking for nonfiction along the lines of *The Devil in the White City* or *The Professor and the Madman* will find plenty of information, but nothing biographical in the delegates’ struggles to realize their vision of a united Yugoslavia. The *Makers of the Modern World* claims to be a series of biographies, and this volume is indeed a biography—but of the Peace Conference, told through the lens of the delegation from Yugoslavia.

A well-balanced history of the origins of Yugoslavia and the emerging conflicts in the Balkan states, *Pasic and Trumbic: The Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes* nimbly interprets and explains the events of the Peace Conference of 1919. Dejan Djokic has written a history simple enough for a layman reader to enjoy—without losing the twists and turns that make the story fascinating.

CLAIRE RUDY FOSTER (September 4, 2010)

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