

LETTERS

TO THE EDITOR:

In the past I have never responded to a review of one of my books, but Ivo Banac's review of my *The First Yugoslavia: Search for a Viable Political System* in the Spring 1984 issue (43, no. 1: 144–45) is so unfair that I must do so. Space does not permit a refutation of many of his charges, which are either wrong or misconstrue what I had to say. I reject the charge that I "simultaneously would like to be a nonpartisan advocate of fair play and the counsel for Pašić, King Alexander, and Stojadinović." I hold no brief for any of the Yugoslav political actors. In seeking to understand and to portray their actions, however, I believe the historian is obligated to give some picture of the problems they faced and the options open to them, instead of brushing them off with a slogan or a caustic phrase, as some would-be historians of Yugoslavia have often done in the past. I also reject the charge that I use sources "as mere decorations" for my "preconceived thesis."

I wonder how carefully Banac read my book, otherwise how could he have made the statement about Bogdan Prica and Bičanić? Anyone who reads pp. 135ff. will see that I have not made the error which Banac alleges. I do regret two factual errors: misspelling a name in a citation and not pointing out that Pernar recovered after being shot.

Banac says that "Dragnich knows the facts," but it is evident that he does not like my interpretations. I attempted to do an objective study, and all I can do is urge interested readers to read the book and judge for themselves. I believe that history will vindicate what I regarded as perhaps my most important conclusion, i.e. that the "conclusions of most scholars about the so-called Serbian hegemony in the First Yugoslavia are in need of serious revision." There are some indications that this may already be happening in Communist Yugoslavia, which certainly has not been friendly toward the regimes of the interwar years.

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PROFESSOR BANAC REPLIES:

It is not clear who is prohibiting Alex Dragnich from using all the space he needs to show how I am wicked and wrong. Until this phantom prohibition is lifted I shall stick to my review, which is as unfair as Mr. Dragnich's book is reliable.

TO THE EDITOR:

I am writing in connection with James L. Rice's review of *Out from Under Gogol's Overcoat*, which appeared in vol. 43, no. 1 of *Slavic Review*.

Professor Rice is disappointed that I have not written a work of "old-fashioned textology and biography." He also wishes I had written a survey of "Russian reader response along lines suggested by Bruno Bettelheim and by I. A. Richards." Finally, he complains about a lack of "meticulous attention to subtexts."

The problem is this. Rice is so concerned about what I supposedly did not do that he says very little about what *is* in the book. It turns out that I wrote a different book than Rice had in mind, and I think the reader of *Slavic Review* deserves to know what is in the book. I therefore would like simply to list the chapter headings of the main text (excluding the introduction): (1) What Was a "Shinel'?" (2) Own vs. Alien, (3) The Demonic Petrovich, (4) The Anality of Gogol's Devil, (5) Reversals and Inversions, (6) Filthy Lucre: More on Petrovich's Anality, (7) Olfaction and the Devil's Snuff Box, (8) Centers, Circles, Ovals, and Holes, (9) What It Means to Be a Shoe, (10) *The Birth/*