

THE PEASANT URBANITES: A STUDY OF RURAL-URBAN MOBILITY IN SERBIA. By *Andrei Simić*. Studies in Anthropology, no. 1. New York and London: Seminar Press, 1973. xviii, 180 pp. \$7.50.

This volume reveals a slice of Serbian life not often found in the literature: the reasons people move from villages and provincial towns to Belgrade, their problems of adjustment, and the vital importance of the rural-urban family networks which are maintained. Following the introduction there is a chapter summarizing in competent fashion the scholarly findings on industrialization and sociocultural change, with Yugoslavia treated as an intermediate society. In this chapter the writer explains why he considers the individual the locus of change and why he tries to see mobility from the standpoint of the person who makes the move. The next chapter, "The Setting: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives," provides the layman with important background on the South Slavs, their traditional forms of social organization, and a description of contemporary Belgrade.

In the chapter entitled "Rural-Urban Migration in Serbia: Motivation and Process" the author presents his findings based on interviews with 157 people. The choice of these informants was random in the sense that it was considered impossible to draw up a completely representative sample of migrants to Belgrade. Therefore, the author wisely does not attempt to deal with his data quantitatively, but rather uses the interviews to show the full range of reasons for moving. Since we have no frequency distributions, there is no way of knowing what reasons turned out to be more important than others; nor is it possible to predict which groups are likely to make such a move. The author is clearly not pursuing a demographic approach. The next chapter, "The New Urbanites: Establishing a Base in the City," also interprets the case studies in a reasoned, logical way, with special reference to housing and employment, but without a systematic test of the empirical work of those who have used statistical analysis in the study of other societies.

The chapters "Kinship and Rural-Urban Reciprocity" and "Acculturation to Urban Life" provide rich insights on contemporary Serbia. The final chapter offers conclusions—notably that urbanization is a series of events in the lives of individuals and families but does not usually result in total integration into a new social network or in the breaking of traditional ties with the migrant's place of origin.

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CONTEMPORARY YUGOSLAV LITERATURE: A SOCIOPOLITICAL APPROACH. By *Sveta Lukić*. Edited by *Gertrude Joch Robinson*. Translated by *Pola Triandis*. Urbana, Chicago, London: University of Illinois Press, 1972. xvi, 280 pp. \$11.95.

This book (originally published in Serbo-Croatian in Belgrade in 1968) presents in its main portion an account of literary, and related, happenings in Yugoslavia since the Second World War as seen, under the aspect of the relationship between literature and politics, by a perceptive and honest though excessively partial and somewhat erratic observer.

It is not, and it was not meant to be, a systematic survey of contemporary Yugoslav literature. But the author's own descriptions of the book's intent—"a sociocultural analysis," "a socioaesthetic treatise," "a theoretical study"—fit it even

less. Actually, it is a carelessly written and poorly organized narrative, filled with numerous arbitrarily selected illustrations and equally numerous blank statements of the author's own beliefs. Lukić's classifications and typologies—based on his understanding of the Belgrade literary scene, and then clumsily extended to the rest of Serbian literature, and to other Yugoslav literatures as well—are supported only by long uncommented lists of names. There is no proper analysis, and little developed argument, anywhere in the book.

Yet once the reader stops reading the book with the wish to see its proclaimed scholarly and theoretical aims materialize, he may find it a lively and highly informative account of literary quarrels and the events and ideas surrounding the literary scene in Yugoslavia after the Second World War. There are innumerable minor inaccuracies in the account, and some major deficiencies in its perspective, but on the whole, as deep as it goes, this is an acceptable account. Lukić's book may give a good feel of the atmosphere in which literature in Yugoslavia was being produced during the last decades, and it gives that more effectively than any other book I know.

Rather than a coherent point of view, or a well-defined scholarly objective, it is a mood that dominates Lukić's discussion: a nostalgia for the great controversies of the Yugoslav fifties, the polemic against socialist realism and the Belgrade realism-modernism (*Savremenik-Delo*) debate. Lukić entered the literary scene just in time to acquire strong affinities and a fighter's habit but a little too late to participate in these controversies in an important way. Now he looks back to the fifties less with the intention of understanding them in an historical retrospective than with the fervor of a participant (essentially a *Delo* man), eager to review the battlefield while keeping the original horizon of the fights intact. At the same time he is annoyed by the individualism of the writers of his own generation. He misses the existence, and the confrontations, of well-organized literary groups and camps in the more recent Yugoslav literature. It is with some malice that he produces (on the basis of a naive notion of "reality" and "contemporaneity" in literature) the idea of "socialist aestheticism," as a "stage in the development of the literatures of socialist countries when they liberate themselves from socialist realism." Though commended for "rejecting a utilitarian or propagandist role for art," "socialist aestheticism" is essentially a derogatory term: a description for a basically sterile literature which—in response to the negative, conformist requirements of a set-up of the components of literary life—"rejects current, relevant, and contemporary themes."

Lukić's approach of being really interested in only those questions, and only in those forms of all questions, which are or may become the object for a contention between literary camps, contributes some liveliness, and some dramatic tension, to his narration, but also imposes on it very definite limitations. Too often his account of a literary debate stops at an estimation of the way people are taking sides in the controversy in which he finds them or makes them participate. Consequently some important, elaborate critical thinking is presented in this book as just the act of casting a ballot; some other, equally important, does not enter its field of vision at all.

Despite its shortcomings, taken for what it is, and read accordingly, Lukić's book could be of value to a foreigner interested in postwar Yugoslavia (perhaps more so to the one interested in its political scene than to the one wishing to learn about its literature). It is therefore a pity that the English version of the book is such a complete failure.

One should possibly sympathize with the evident desire of the authors of the English version to curb Lukić's journalese, restrain his verbosity, and check some of his bombast. In a number of instances their alterations are probably improvements on the original text. But the feeling of the original text's imperfections seems to have developed, with the authors of the English version, into a more thorough mistrust in it, and has produced a translation which treats the original with little respect and an almost absolute freedom. When this is combined with the authors' incompetence and recklessness, the result is a thoroughly confusing book, containing major mistranslations on almost every page, and at least some change of tone or shift of emphasis in most of its sentences.

Although Lukić is not much of a thinker or a scholar, his sentences are hardly ever directly foolish or obviously illogical, and his statements hardly ever clearly untrue or plainly contradictory to their immediate context. When sentences and statements of the described nature do appear in the English version, they can rather safely be attributed to mistranslation. Lukić unfortunately does write sentences like this one: "In the years after 1950, literary life became stronger, richer and more freely flowing" (p. 14); maybe they sound a little more awkward in English than they do in Serbo-Croatian. But Lukić never writes sentences of this sort: "I consider Yugoslav literature as the literature of the Yugoslav people" (p. 28); "Among the trends . . . are themes . . ." (p. 83); "in the official statements it was rumored" (p. 132). Lukić refers to Russian formalists as having understood "zakone smenjivanja formi i stilova" (the laws of the succession of forms and styles); it is the English version which makes them understand the "interrelationship between form and style" (p. 5). One may question the validity of Lukić's statement, "Posle loma i preloma do kojeg je francuski nadrealizam doveo Harkovski skup pisaca 1930 . . ." (After the breakdown and the division into which French surrealism was brought by the Kharkov Writers' Congress of 1930 . . .), but one is really puzzled only by the English translation: "After the demise of the Cracow writers' group in 1930, which was provoked by French surrealism . . ." (p. 59). Lukić even clearly distinguishes between Kant's concepts of art and beauty, and between definitions and determinations; he quotes, perhaps redundantly in his context but correctly, the four determinations of beauty ("četiri odredbe kojima se uokviruje pojam lepote"), but the English version turns it into "four definitions of art" (p. 35). Many non-Yugoslav names and titles are mangled; for example, "Petr Kogan" is rendered as "Pierre Cohen." Sometimes Lukić is made to say the opposite of the original text; his challenge of M. Ristić's idea that certain Yugoslav poets are really dead is changed (pp. 57, 90) into a eulogy of Ristić's essay, in which Ristić himself is included among the poets he describes as dead, and his very essay is presented as a major influence on the poets described in it as dead.

Poor understanding of the subject, lack of a broader literary culture, and an inadequate knowledge of Serbo-Croatian are thus among the major causes of incorrect translation and other errors in the book.

Another frequent source of mistranslation seems to be serious misunderstanding of Lukić's tone and intention, expressed in the editor's idea of "Lukić's sometimes Aesopian . . . style," which then makes it occasionally necessary "to read between the lines" (p. xiii). Lukić's style is certainly anything but Aesopian. One may be free to guess whether there are topics Lukić wouldn't discuss openly, but definitely no topics dealt with in this book are treated in a veiled and diluted form. Lukić has little taste for the language of suggestions, hints, allusions, and euphemisms. He belongs to the other school. He insists on speaking frankly; he likes

making candid comments and sometimes even outrageous statements, intended to shock the reader; he enjoys finding out what he thinks are people's hidden intentions, and then talking loudly about them; his style is clearly one of exaggeration, overstatement; he is often rude, or tactless, or unjust, but never shy. The authors of the English version of his book may still feel that Lukić's account is not "outspoken" enough; but that is their problem. They can solve it by writing another book, but they can have no right to try solving it by a free introduction of words and phrases like "banned," "ideological suppression," and "censorship" into contexts in which they are not found in the original text; by making slight changes of wording which produce major changes of meaning (as by rendering "oslobadjanje od socijalističkog realizma" as "the liberation from socialism," p. 72); by simply substituting one topic for another (*Pečat* surrealists might have been "politically suspect" in the thirties, p. 60, but a statement to this effect cannot figure as the translation of Lukić's sentence saying that the attitude of all *Pečat* writers in the polemic was defensive); and so on.

But more than incompetence and reading "between the lines," it is primarily a totally reckless reading of the lines of the original text that makes the English version of Lukić's book a hardly usable publication. At first glance one would think that the authors of the English version are treating Lukić's text the way a strict schoolmaster treats a boy's homework. Sentences are almost on principle either shortened or lengthened, parts of them are dropped, and new phrases, and even whole sentences, are added; long sentences are sometimes broken up, wording is frequently changed, paragraphing is freely rearranged, and so on. But soon one discovers that it is not primarily the zeal of a strict teacher, but the indifference of one utterly bored by his job, that dominates this revision. A good many sentences in the book appear to be the result of a process which starts by the discovery of the dictionary meaning of the main words in the Serbo-Croatian sentence and continues by constructing any English sentence in which these words can somehow be joined, disregarding the context and sometimes even the possibility that the new sentence itself may make no sense at all. It is probably by this procedure that we get a sentence like this one: "Such comments are often presented to the reader without any serious preparation in the press" (p. 155), meant to be a translation of Lukić's sentence saying that translations of foreign literary works are not seriously reviewed in the press, and are most frequently offered to the reader in editions that contain no good prefaces.

The book contains two major appendixes: "Biographical Notes on Contemporary Yugoslav Writers" and "A Chronology of Literary Events in Yugoslavia, 1945–1965." They would make a valuable reference aid if they were free of the faults observed in the main portion of the book. As it is, an originally careless compilation has been turned, by numerous typographical and other errors, into a deadly trap for the uninformed reader.

It is surely a pity that the chance has been missed of making available a tolerable account of Yugoslav literary life in a good English translation. There are few books in English on modern Yugoslav literature, and even fewer—some annotated anthologies only—meet any scholarly standards. This particular book is no worse than many that are appearing outside Yugoslavia. However, this reviewer believes that American Slavic scholarship has by now reached sufficient maturity to extend basic scholarly requirements to those minor Slavic literatures which, like the Yugoslav ones, have hitherto remained at the periphery of its interests. Perhaps the

main thing needed is a change of heart, an understanding that in this field, too, one is supposed to work seriously.

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THE GREEK STRUGGLE FOR INDEPENDENCE, 1821–1833. By *Douglas Dakin*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1973. viii, 344 pp. \$13.00.

Douglas Dakin, a distinguished British historian well known for his work in modern Greek history, offers English-language readers a narrative and interpretive account of the Greek revolt for independence during 1821–33. Drawing on an extensive but still incomplete literature, Dakin assembles many parts of a complicated story in an effort to produce a comprehensive history—an objective that has eluded generations of writers in and out of Greece.

The book, rich with information not readily available to Balkanists, could have served as a useful synthesis of current scholarship, but without footnotes its value diminishes even to specialists. The primitive state of the field, evidenced by inadequate bibliographic aids, makes source citation indispensable for anything but the most general introduction. Treated separately and in great detail, the diplomatic, military, political, and social dimensions of the revolt—in Greece and abroad—fail to coalesce into a coherent account. Pages of unconnected facts swamp and bewilder the reader; the outfitting of a Greek fleet and an ill-fated venture to secure steamships take up several pages, while the disposal of “national” property, an affair of great consequence, is buried in a long explanatory note. Still, Dakin relates several crucial episodes masterfully—for example, Byron and the philhellenes.

Many readers will be surprised by Dakin’s thoughts on Greek “character”: the Greek enlightenment spread rapidly because the “lowliest Greek is usually nimble-witted and curious, ready to believe anything that smacks of news and novelty”; resistance to central authority was intense, “because of the national character—the excessive subtlety of mind, the love of intrigue, the tendency to emotional extremes, the desire of everyone to lead and the reluctance to be led.” These are notions discredited and discarded by serious writers generations ago.

Dakin’s appreciation of the intricate play of international and native forces survives the narrative, and some of his interpretations square with the best recent work. He properly emphasizes the important struggle between modernizers seeking to impose a central authority, and local oligarchs intent on extending their traditional prerogatives. Furthermore, he never loses sight of the dominant role of Europe’s great powers, deeply enmeshed in checking each other’s ambitions in Southeastern Europe.

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THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE, THE GREAT POWERS, AND THE STRAITS QUESTION, 1870–1887. By *Barbara Jelavich*. Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, 1973. xi, 209 pp. \$6.95.

The continued control of the Turkish government over the maritime passage from the Aegean to the Black Sea has been periodically challenged by one or another