

THE  
BALKAN  
PIVOT:  
GOSLAVIA

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CHARLES A. BEARD  
AND  
GEORGE RADIN

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A STUDY IN  
GOVERNMENT AND  
ADMINISTRATION

# The Balkan Pivot YUGOSLAVIA

A STUDY IN GOVERNMENT  
AND ADMINISTRATION

By CHARLES A. BEARD

*Former Director of the New York  
Bureau of Municipal Re-  
search, and*

GEORGE RADIN  
*of the New York Bar*

It was at Sarajevo, in Bosnia, that the Austrian Archduke fell in 1914. It was with Belgrade, in Serbia that Austria began the negotiations which culminated in the crisis that plunged half the world into war and destruction. Now both of these cities are in the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes—a kingdom whose location in the heart of the troubled Balkans and whose heterogeneous racial and economic components make it still a likely source of complications.

The most important phases of the Yugoslavia of to-day are examined here by two men whose competence as observers and analysts cannot be questioned. Their findings as to the country's natural resources, political organization, economic situation and foreign relations are clearly set forth in this very readable book.

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## **THE BALKAN PIVOT: YUGOSLAVIA**



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## PREFACE

THIS study was undertaken at the request of the America-Yugoslav Society of New York and carried out under the auspices of the National Institute of Public Administration.

For many reasons the Society was inclined to the view that such a volume might be of interest to people in the United States and Yugoslavia. It is not forgotten in either country that President Wilson gave inspiration and support to the movement which finally led to the establishment of the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes at the close of the World War. When the President's name was mentioned by one of the authors in an address before the municipal authorities of Belgrade in February, 1928, a hearty cheer indicated a deep-seated appreciation of that statesman's services in the creation of the Yugoslav nation. It must be remembered also that there are in the United States more than half a million Yugoslavs who, even if they have transferred their allegiance to this country, watch with concern the progress of their own race beyond the sea.

Although Belgrade is rather remote from New York, there are many analogies between the conditions in which the Yugoslavs found themselves at the close of the World War and those prevailing in the United

States when our great experiment was begun at the end of the American Revolution. Both nations were launched at the close of a long and devastating war which spread ruin throughout a large part of their territories. Both of them were predominantly agricultural and set up as their ideal the freehold system of agrarian economy. Their public finances were in disorder. They staggered under a great burden of indebtedness. They had long been engaged in a struggle against the authority imposed upon them from above and were suddenly thrown upon their own responsibilities. They were divided into distinct sections, with marked diversity of economic interest, and yet were compelled, for self-defence and the promotion of general welfare, to form national unions. At the outset of their careers, the newly established governments found themselves in possession of immense natural resources—timber, minerals, land, and water power. In both countries, the people were called upon to choose whether they would attempt to administer their heritage in the interests of agriculture or would adopt a policy which in the long run would insure the predominance of industry in their economy.

There are other grounds for thinking that this study may appeal to citizens of the United States. The importance of Yugoslavia in the affairs of Europe is a matter of continual comment in the daily press. It is the pivotal state in the Balkans. Not even the stoutest optimist believes that stability has yet been obtained in this historic peninsula; and the Balkans are a part of the European system of politics. It was in Sarajevo that the shot was fired which was literally heard around

the world, dislocating an avalanche that swept even the United States into the general European War. Perhaps it is not too much to say that, for the peace of the world, wise and competent government in Belgrade is as necessary as in London, Berlin, or Paris. If the people of the United States care nothing about the political experiment in Yugoslavia as such, they nevertheless should study that country in relation to the ever-trembling balance of power in Europe.

The researches upon which this volume is based were made on the ground in Yugoslavia. In the process the authors laid themselves under a deep obligation to public officials and private citizens in all parts of the Kingdom. They refrain, however, from making personal acknowledgment lest their errors and criticisms might be laid at the door of innocent parties. They should add that the National Institute of Public Administration and the America-Yugoslav Society, having given them a free hand, are not to be held responsible for their conclusions.

On the morning of January 7, 1929, when the proofs of this book were being returned to the printer, the New York newspapers carried dispatches announcing that King Alexander had dissolved Parliament, assumed sovereign powers, and formed a non-partisan cabinet. This action, the outcome of methods, conditions, and events described below (pages 75-78, 171-178), had long been expected; indeed it had been urged upon the King by the late Stephen Raditch, leader of the Croatian Peasant party. But, while the parliamentary system is thus suspended, temporarily at least, the economic and political heritage of the Kingdom described in these pages, yet remains and forms the

*PREFACE*

substance with which the statesmen of the future must deal, whatever may be the superstructure of the government.

C. A. B.

G. R.

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