

VASILJE DJ. KRESTIĆ, *SRBI U UGARSKOJ 1790–1918* [SERBS IN THE KINGDOM OF HUNGARY, 1790–1918]. NOVI SAD: MATICA SRPSKA, 2013, pp. 534

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Despite previous research into the history of Serbs in Hungary, a synthesis pertaining to this subject has been conspicuous by its absence, at least until the emergence of Academician Vasilje Krestić's book. Previously, historians could refer to a few comprehensive studies such as

published in 1939/40 which covered the period up to 1790 and Dušan Popović's work *Srbi u Vojvodini*, 1–3 the coverage of which extended to 1861; there were also

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certain collective projects such as *Istorija naroda Jugoslavije* and *Istorija srpskog naroda* which dealt with the history of Serbs in Hungary.

Resulting from several decades of scholarship and archival research carried out in Vienna, Budapest, Zagreb, Novi Sad, Sremski Karlovci and Belgrade, this book is no surprise. Emeritus Professor of the Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade, Director of the Archives of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts (SANU) and Secretary of the Department for Historical Sciences of SANU for many years, Krestić has dedicated his entire scholarly work to modern history of the Serbian people, particularly history of Serbs in Croatia and Slavonia and Serbo-Croat relations (*History of the Serbs in Croatia and Slavonia, 1848–1914*, Belgrade: BIGZ, 1997; *Gradja o Srbima u Hrvatskoj i Slavoniji 1848–1914, 1–2*, Belgrade: BIGZ, 1995; *Iz istorije Srba i srpsko-hrvatskih odnosa*, Belgrade: BIGZ, 1994). Also, Krestić has paid particular attention to Hungarian matters at the early stages of his academic career with his doctoral dissertation *Hrvatsko-ugarska nagodba 1868. godine* and then with his thorough monograph *Istorija srpske štampe u Ugarskoj, 1791–1914*. Encompassing his own research of several decades and the entire historiographical legacy concerning the Serbs in the Habsburg Monarchy, his work offers well-thought through answers to a series of questions relating to the political, social, economic and cultural history of Serbs in Hungary from the late eighteenth to the early twentieth century.

Covering the period from the Assembly of Timișoara of 1790 to the inclusion of the province in Serbia in 1918, the author has studied the long nineteenth century from the emergence of modern national feelings amongst the peoples of the Habsburg Monarchy at the end of the eighteenth century until the profound change in the map of Europe at

the end of the First World War. A chronological framework of this synthesis is divided into six large thematic parts and as many as 63 chapters: 1. From the Assembly of Timișoara to the 1848 Revolution; 2. The Revolution of 1848–1849; 3. Bach's Absolutism (1849–1860); 4. State Reorganisation of the Monarchy and the Serbs (1861–1867); 5. From the Austro-Hungarian Compromise to the Congress of Berlin (1867–1878) and 6. From the Congress of Berlin to the End of the First World War. The former part of the nineteenth century with special reference to the impact of the First Serbian Uprising of 1804 on the Serbs in Hungary and their later political and cultural development is something of an introduction. Relatively largest part of the book deals with the Revolution of 1848–1849 which is covered in detail. The last few decades of the nineteenth century saw the liveliest political organisation of Serbs in Hungary, the activities of the Serbian People's Liberal Party of Svetozar Miletić, the formulation of political programmes of the radicals, liberals, independents and others. The discussion of the First World War treats not just political situation, but also everyday life of the Serb population.

Spanning over such a long period of time, the author begins with the analysis of different state-legal frameworks in which the Serbian people lived under the Habsburg Monarchy from the end of the eighteenth century – these were reflections of the changes in the state organisation throughout the nineteenth century. Drawing on his immense knowledge of the history of the Habsburg Monarchy, Krestić endeavours to present the political development of Serbs in the light of the general political ideas of that time and the dynamics of the Monarchy's political life. At the same time, he does not lose sight of the fundamental political processes in international relations, particularly the development of the Eastern Question

and its influence on the fate of Serbs in the Monarchy.

Taking into account all the aspects of social stratification and economic development of the Serb populace in Hungary, as well as the processes and institutions of their cultural life, the author, however, mostly focuses on political development, ideas, movements and parties. Well-versed in archival records, Krestić has provided a nuanced picture of political events in Hungary. Preoccupied with the currents of the Serbian people's national integration in Hungary, the creation and preservation of its religious and national identity, Krestić considers this phenomenon in its interaction with other political factors embodied mostly in Vienna and Pest, but also in Belgrade and Zagreb. Analysing numerous changes and constants in these relations in the period of time longer than a century, the author underscores the fundamental connection of Serbs in Hungary with Serbia and her

political and social development. Moreover, he has seen the decades-long resistance to Magyarisation as a core thread of the struggle for political individuality of Serbian nation in Hungary which merged into the overall movement for national unification realised in 1918.

Particularly novel are the author's discussions about the Croatian component in the political life of Hungarian Serbs, new revelations about the politics of notables, the matters concerning the Military Border as well as the activities of the Serbian People's Liberal Party. The issues of Serb national-religious autonomy and nationality in Hungary are also examined and, along with the above-mentioned questions, contribute to the presentation of a well-rounded account of the complex period of history of the Serbs in this part of the Habsburg Monarchy. This book thus fulfils a considerable lacuna in Serbian historiography and provides a reliable point of departure for further research.