

centuries ago has largely succeeded in achieving its goals”—racial egalitarianism and free entry for immigrants of color. America “is now the hope for countless immigrants and a magnet for the world,” and New York City is “a glittering symbol of America.”

D’Souza makes astonishingly inaccurate and anachronistic assertions about the American past, all of them typical of a follower of Jaffa. The Framers were “not orthodox Christians—but Deists.” They “invented” a “new regime” (which turns out to be the current government). They were *secret* abolitionists who introduced camouflaged antislavery principles into the Constitution. D’Souza even substitutes the anachronistic “separation of religion and government” for the hallowed “separation of Church and state”! He also claims that the “founders solved two great problems—the problem of scarcity, and the problem of diversity,” thereby revealing his ignorance of economics to be as great as his ignorance of history. (Of course, the Framers never attempted to “solve” either “problem,” recognizing the first as a fact of life and rejecting the second as incompatible with republicanism.) And he betrays total ignorance of the two great political achievements of the Founding Fathers—a *written* Constitution and a *federal* republic.

D’Souza’s final chapter, curiously titled “America the Beautiful,” is simply a paean to the American empire. He exclaims that America “saved the world” on many occasions, that it enjoys “evident moral superiority,” that it is “an abstaining superpower” with “no interest in conquering and subjugating the rest of the world.” While the United States often “intervenes to overthrow a tyrannical regime or halt massive human rights abuses in another country,” “it never stays to rule that country.” In Bosnia, “the United States got in and then got out.” (Does he really not know that the U.S. military is *still* in Bosnia?) American foreign policy is usually “on the side of the angels.” We also learn that “America’s goal” today is “to turn fundamentalist Muslims into classical liberals.” D’Souza’s ridiculous views reveal his Wilsonian naiveté about the world, as well as his ignorance of classical liberalism.

D’Souza’s “conservatism” is—naturally—of the “national greatness,” “big government” variety. He does have certain credentials: domestic-policy analyst in the Reagan White House (1987-88); fellow at the American Enterprise Institute

and now at the Hoover Institution. Yet there is nothing in his thought that is derived from, or even slightly consistent with, the thought of the fathers of Anglo-American and Continental conservatism—Edmund Burke and Joseph de Maistre. What would Russell Kirk have thought of D’Souza’s claim that “America is a subversive idea; indeed it represents a new way to be human”? He would likely have considered it an example of Rousseau’s “idyllic imagination,” which he contrasted unfavorably with Burke’s “moral imagination.” (D’Souza, by the way, thinks rather highly of Rousseau. He also believes in “progress,” “ideology” over “nationality,” “the pursuit of happiness” as the highest end of life, and the United Nations’ Universal Declaration of Human Rights.)

Like most neocons, D’Souza is obsessed with affirming not only America’s diversity but its unity. Though he assures his readers that “Americans remain a united people with shared values,” his evidence for this statement is far from compelling—a marketing survey, a vague anecdote, and the national reaction to September 11, a catastrophe he hopes to exploit in the interest of further revolutionizing the country of “our” fathers and European ancestors.

H.A. Scott Trask, who has a Ph.D. in American history, is finishing a political study of antebellum political economist Condé Raguet of Philadelphia and is writing a book on the Northern antiwar movement during the War Between the States.

Homage to Montenegro

by Alex N. Dragich

Montenegro: The Divided Land

by Thomas Fleming
Rockford, IL: Chronicles Press;
172 pp., \$15.00



Not until I was well into this book did I realize how much it is needed. The son of illiterate Serbian immigrants from Montenegro, I knew almost no early Montenegrin history. Some of

that history is noble, some confused, and some characterized by treachery and double-dealing. There were plots and counterplots. Agreements were always of short duration, and reliability and trust were rare. Significantly,

there were no ancient peoples whose territory corresponded to modern Albania or Serbia, much less to Montenegro . . . it was only when Serbs from different regions were able to unite in opposition to Byzantium, under the Nemanjic dynasty, that they were able to create a successful Serbian state.

Thomas Fleming describes the rise of Zeta as a prelude to “The Serbian Golden Age”—when the Serbian state, for over 100 years, was the strongest empire in the Balkans. The period saw the building of the finest of the Serbian monasteries and the creation of Tsar Dusan’s legal code, one of two of Europe’s historic codes. Before his death in 1355, Dusan was on the verge of conquering what was left of the Byzantine Empire. But following his death came division and decline and, in 1389, the defeat by the Ottoman Turks at the Battle of Kosovo. In the centuries after Kosovo in all Serbian lands, and especially in Montenegro,

the national myth was nourished on the tales and songs of the Kosovo heroes. . . . throughout the cold dark years of misery and oppression, [the Montenegrins] warmed themselves by the fire lit in the Serbian imagination by the Kosovo story.

The chapter entitled “The Struggle for Liberation” is packed with facts, detailing Montenegro’s confrontations with Turkey, Venice, and other powers, to say nothing of domestic quarrels. What saved Montenegro from the internal disunity that afflicted Bosnia and Serbia was the institution of the *vladika* (bishop-prince), which gained Montenegro’s *de facto* independence 168 years before its formal international recognition at the Congress of Berlin. An interesting side issue was that of Scepan Mali, an impostor, who nevertheless managed what other rulers had not: He united the people and taught them respect for law and order, which helped them in the coming struggle with the invaders.

An equally important chapter, “The

Road to Statehood,” highlights the critical contributions of Bishop Petar II Njegos, particularly his devotion to the Serbs, which found its highest expression in his literary masterpiece, *Gorski vijenac* (*The Mountain Wreath*). Njegos also sought to improve the economy, and he built schools and roads. His contributions should not minimize the work of his predecessors or that of his nephew, Prince Danilo Petrovic, who ruled briefly after Njegos died in October 1851.

“The Long Reign of Montenegro’s Only King” describes the rule of Prince Nikola, who proclaimed himself king in 1910, on the 50th anniversary of his reign. The most dramatic events of his tenure were the Balkan wars and World War I. Although Montenegro’s independence was widely recognized, there were many dangers that accompanied it—in particular, Austria-Hungary’s sowing of discord between the Montenegrin capital of Cetinje and Belgrade. Russia was of little help. Nikola’s rule was autocratic. (He considered it “benevolent despotism.”) In the Balkan wars, he “displayed both the courage and the pan-Serbian patriotism that were the best justification of his authoritarian regime.” In World War I, Montenegro was quickly occupied by Austria, which marked the end of the country’s independence, and the First Yugoslavia was formed in 1918. The Large Montenegrin Skupstina in November 1918 voted overwhelmingly to join Serbia in the new state.

The last two chapters (some 50 pages) deal with Montenegro in the First and the Second (and Third) Yugoslavia. In the First Yugoslavia, Montenegrins favored the common state, but many felt that Belgrade devoted too little time to Montenegrin difficulties. The Yugoslav rulers had little choice but to concentrate on the problems of Croatia, whose demands escalated.

The First Yugoslavia dovetailed with the Second Yugoslavia by virtue of the Communist victory in the civil war, often described as the conflict between the Chetniks (loyal to the Yugoslav government-in-exile) and the Communist-led Partisans. As Fleming points out, the civil war was nowhere more brutal than in Montenegro, and the Communists killed about 100,000 people in Yugoslavia after the war. The Communists made Montenegro a separate republic under Tito’s “federation,” patterned after the fictitious “federalism” of the Soviet Union. The creation of a separate republic, designed

mainly to weaken Serb power and influence, meant that Montenegrins were badly divided during the whole communist period. Even after the break with the Soviet Union in 1948, Montenegrins made up 20 percent of those arrested as “Cominformists,” although Montenegrins constituted only 2.5 percent of the Yugoslav population.

As we know, the Titoist framework was a failure. Fleming maintains that Tito’s principal lieutenants did not display “the slightest talent for rebuilding a nation, managing an economy, or writing a constitution.” In the 1990’s, Fleming asserts, certain American leaders “plotted the dismemberment of a country and the destruction of a people.” Finally, he devotes some space to the future of Serbia and Montenegro in the years following the overthrow of Slobodan Milosevic.

Anyone interested in Montenegro and Serbia, as well as in the Balkans generally, should welcome Fleming’s brief but excellent book.

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A Hero’s Dreams

by Myles Kantor

José Martí: Selected Writings

edited by Esther Allen

New York: Penguin Classics;

462 pp., \$15.00



José Martí is an icon in communist Cuba. Visitors disembark at José Martí International Airport in Havana, where the Plaza de la Revolución contains a prominent statue of Martí. In 2000, Fidel Castro had a José Martí Anti-Imperialist Tribunal built in front of the U.S. Interests Section. Not surprisingly, Castro and his functionaries assert harmony between their totalitarianism and Martí’s thought.

Born in 1853, Martí precociously opposed Spain’s occupation of Cuba. He founded an anti-imperialist newspaper, *La Patria Libre*, at 16 and was arrested for treason in 1869. After he was condemned to six years’ hard labor, Spain commuted his sentence and deported

him in 1871. In his new residence (Spain), Martí wrote an account of his trauma and an indictment of the hegemon that inflicted it. The blend of reportage and rumination in *Political Prison in Cuba* became standard in Martí’s writings. At one point, he describes the sufferings of a 12-year old prisoner ravaged by smallpox and efforts to resuscitate cholera victims; later, he observes that “No idea can ever justify an orgy of blood.” (It is difficult to read *Political Prison in Cuba* without thinking of counterparts in modern Cuba: Ana Rodríguez’s *Diary of a Survivor*, Jorge Valls’ *Twenty Years and Forty Days*, and too many more.)

“Life wants permanent roots,” Martí wrote in 1880. Deracination was his reward for abhorring tyranny. Martí moved to Mexico in 1875 and fled after Porfirio Díaz’s ascendancy in 1876; taught in Guatemala and fled in 1878 after the repressive Justo Rufino Barrios dismissed a colleague; returned to Cuba and was deported in 1879 for anti-imperial activities; and spent less than a year in Venezuela owing to another *caudillo*, Antonio Guzmán Blanco. In America, Martí found a place where “One can breathe freely” and “every one looks like his own master.” He settled in New York in 1881 and remained in America until 1895.

Martí immersed himself in America and wrote copiously about “this mighty republic.” He did not withhold praise from what struck him as beautiful, like Emerson’s “palace of truths” and Whitman’s “disjointed, lacerating, fragmented, drifting words.” Neither did Martí withhold denunciation when he saw vileness—for instance, in the lynching of 11 Italians by a New Orleans mob in March 1891. Here is how he described the murder of one of the victims:

They throw a noose of fresh rope around his cold, dead neck and leave him hanging from the branch of a tree. Then they saw off the other branches: the women wear the leaves in their hats as an emblem, the men in their button-holes. One of them takes out his watch: “Forty-eight minutes: we worked fast.” From the rooftops and balconies people are watching through opera glasses.

Serene events also intrigued Martí. “Never has there been a more beautiful thing,” he wrote of a Confederate com-