

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.

Alex Dragnich is professor emeritus of political science at Vanderbilt University and author of Serbs and Croats.

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-

memoration in 1886, noting how Jefferson Davis addressed the audience “with rage and occasional outbursts of savage beauty . . . and with sudden exclamations of invincible hatred, like a toothless and enfeebled mastiff who bares his gums at his enemy.” (As a senator, Davis advocated the acquisition of Cuba and visited Havana before and after the War Between the States.)

Martí remained preoccupied with Cuba during his American years, serving as interim president of the New York-based Cuban Revolutionary Committee and cofounder of the Cuban Revolutionary Party in Key West in 1892. When Martí perceived ambitions of *caudillismo* in fellow revolutionary General Máximo Gómez, he broke with him in 1884. Martí made clear in a letter to Gómez his

determination not to contribute by one iota, out of blind love for the idea that is consuming my life, to bringing a regime of personal despotism to my land, a regime that would be even more shameful and calamitous than the political despotism it now endures, and more serious and difficult to eradicate, because it would be excused by certain virtues, and established upon an idea which it embodied, and legitimized by triumph.

And so Martí prefigures Cuba since 1959; *Fidelismo* has been the sanguinary fulfillment of his worst apprehensions. In duration and severity, Castro dwarfs the *caudillos* Martí fled. Castro, of course, claims to act in defense of national independence, the Sovietization he inflicted upon Cuba notwithstanding.

Martí was a crusader after perils. He wrote his mother at 16 that imprisonment “has given me plenty of lessons for my life, which I foresee will be very short”; in 1895, he wrote to her of “my growing and necessary agony” and “a life that loves sacrifice.” Martí returned to Cuba that year to participate in the war for independence he had organized. On May 19, in the eastern province of Oriente, he fatally rode into Spanish troops. Martí had been in Cuba a little over a month.

Frederick Douglass observed in 1862 that “Men have strange notions nowadays as to the manner of showing their respect for the heroes of the past.” Cuba’s present master class shares such strange notions. On one side, there is the man

who advocated republicanism and the rights of man; on the other, an autocrat of 43 years who systematically violates those rights. Fidel Castro has said that José Martí is the “intellectual author” of his regime. No; but he will be the intellectual author of Cuba’s emancipation from Castro.

Myles Kantor is the editor of FreeEmigration.com and a columnist for Front Page Magazine.

Eat, Drink, and Be Merry

by Jeremy Lott

Nicotine Theological Journal

edited by John R. Muether and D.G. Hart

Oviedo, FL: Press; 8 pp., \$3.00 per issue, \$7.00 for an annual subscription

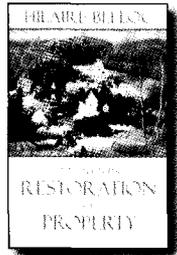


The inaugural editorial of the *Nicotine Theological Journal* (January 1997) took a few fun swipes at teetotalers and scolds (including Al Gore), who admittedly, in the words of Garrison Keillor, “live longer, but they live dumber.” “The sun,” the editors quoted C.S. Lewis as saying, “looks down on nothing half so

good as a household laughing together over a meal, or two friends talking over a pint of beer, or a man alone reading a book that interests him.” They appropriated this sentiment as “Reformed wisdom” about the “simplicity and depth of creature comforts” (Hear, hear!) and announced that they would consider joining the likes of the Christian Coalition only *after* that body began proposing laws to protect such comforts.

Alas, coeditors John R. Muether and D.G. Hart—librarians at the Reformed Theological and Westminster Theological seminaries, respectively—also cautioned that their eight-page quarterly “is not a Reformed version of *Cigar Aficionado*.” They would not devote pages to “cultivating yuppie trappings,” though each and every issue does feature a brief “Second Hand Smoke” reflection on the “virtues and delights” of consuming tobacco and alcohol, reprinted from such authors as John Updike and Michael Kelly.

Rather, the NTJ promised to be a theological journal in a very unusual sense. Sponsored by the Old Life Theological Society, it would concern itself not so much with exegetical and theological minutiae but with “the God ordained means of grace as well as the habits and sensibilities that articulate, cultivate and reinforce orthodoxy.” This was to be primarily a journal of theology as it works itself out in the everyday lives of old-school Reformed Christians (“old lifers”), from the liturgical calendar to the relatively



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