

WHEN Yugoslavia was overrun by the Germans, thousands of her regular soldiers took to the hills. To-day they are a guerrilla army of unknown strength—perhaps a hundred thousand, perhaps more—whose Commander is already one of the great national leaders of history. How many of the stories told about him are true and how many legend it is impossible at present to say, but "Time" made an attempt recently to present something like an authentic portrait. Here is the substance of it:

## PORTRAIT OF A PATRIOT



### DRAJA MIHAILOVICH, of Yugoslavia: HISTORY'S GREATEST GUERRILLA?

EVER since Adolf Hitler vainly gloriously announced a year ago that he had conquered Yugoslavia, Draja Mihailovich and his 150,000 guerrillas in the mountains south-west of Belgrade have flung the lie in Hitler's teeth. It has been probably the greatest guerrilla operation in history:

- Last autumn Mihailovich kept as many as seven Nazi divisions chasing him through his Sumadija mountains.
- Mihailovich's swarming raiders have preserved an "Island of Freedom" which for a time was 20,000 square miles in area with a population of 4,000,000.
- Mihailovich's annihilation of Axis detachments, bombing of roads and bridges, breaking of communications, and stealing of ammunition have been so widespread that the Nazis had to declare a new state of war in their "conquered" territory.
- Last October the Nazis even asked for peace. When Mihailovich refused, they priced his head at 1,000,000 dollars.
- When the Nazis desperately needed troops in Russia, they tried to leave Mihailovich to the forces of their Axis partners and stooges. But Italian, Bulgarian and Rumanian soldiers could not deal with them, and the Nazis went back. In May the Russians announced that a Nazi division had arrived at Kharkov fresh from Yugoslavia—where it had certainly not been stationed for a rest.
- Mihailovich's example has kept all Yugoslavia in a wild anti-Axis ferment. The Axis has resorted to executing untold thousands, but the revolt continues. Last month the Nazis said they had seized Mihailovich's wife, two sons, and daughter, threatened to execute all relatives of Mihailovich's army and 16,000 hostages if the General did not surrender within five days. He did not.

#### A Symbol of Revolt

It is a misfortune that conquered Europe cannot learn detail by detail the effective methods used by this gaunt,

hard bronzed fighter. But Draja Mihailovich is completely cut off from the democracies' press, hemmed in by the Axis forces in Yugoslavia, Rumania, Bulgaria, Albania and Greece. His only direct contact with the world beyond has been through smugglers and a mobile radio transmitter which he concealed somewhere in his mountain fastnesses.

Even so, he has already become the great symbol of the unknown thousands of supposedly conquered Europeans who still resist Adolf Hitler. As he watches from his mountain walls, he stands for every European saboteur who awaits the moment to jam the machine, plant the bomb, or pry up the railroad rail. He has directly inspired others, like the Rumanian patriot, Ion Minulescu, who harries the Axis from the Carpathians, and Albanian and Montenegrin guerrillas who worry at Italian flanks on the Adriatic coast.

As a legend, Draja Mihailovich will unquestionably live as long as World War II. is remembered. How long Draja Mihailovich himself will live is highly problematical. Like the heroes of Bataan, the guerrillas of Sumadija cannot be expected to fight forever without reinforcements at least of ammunition and food. Yet the only way these can be furnished at present is by parachute. Both the Russians and British are said to have dropped small amounts. In recent months Mihailovich has begged

over the radio for all he can get. Two months ago, London reported that 24 Axis divisions (Germans, Hungarians, and Bulgarians) had been sent into the Sumadija mountains to deliver the coup de grace.

#### Some History

The once-obscure Balkan officer who has thus far successfully challenged the modern world's greatest conqueror was born 47 years ago in Chachak, Serbia, in the craggy lands which he now clasps. His parents died when he was a child, and he was raised by an uncle, a musical Serbian colonel. Draja Mihailovich plays the mandolin excellently. He entered Belgrade's Serbian Military Academy at 15. He has been a lifelong soldier, an officer who got his training under fire. He is also profoundly a Serb. For those who know the Serbs, that fact alone would account for his great-hearted defiance.

The blood bath of oppression which for centuries has laved the minarets and green poplars of the Balkans has also watered a glowing military spirit in little Serbia—an unconquerable will toward freedom.

In 1389, a date of horror in Serbian minds, the Turks defeated the Serbs on the plain of Kosovo and slaughtered the cream of Serbian manhood. For the next four centuries Turkey bore down on Serbia as hard as Adolf Hitler has

done, with such devices as impaling, mutilation, and the roasting of living Serbs on spits.

#### Rival Dynasties

Yet Serbia continued to resist, helped by Austria or Russia who valued the Balkans as a buffer against the Turk, or betrayed by them if it suited their purposes. Early in the 19th Century the great Serbian King Kara George fought Turkey with Russian aid and got a limited autonomy with Turkish garrisons still in Serbia. But Napoleon's advance on Moscow drew away Russian support, and the Turks pressed Serbia hard again. This time Serbia's Milos Obrenovich made a deal with Turkey for recognition. The deal included the assassination of Kara George and thus started an Obrenovich-Kara George dynastic rivalry that was to continue for decades.

Serbia's rulers were often personally weak and depraved, but the Serbs in general grew hard and defiant in the schools of Turkish tyranny and European *Realpolitik*. They never suffered from the flabbiness that comes with ease. In the First Balkan War (1912), Serbia and her Balkan allies finally ousted Turkey. In World War I, a supposedly exhausted Serbia hurled back two Austrian attacks, was ravaged by typhus, and gave way before a third, then fought back again from Salonika. Only a year ago a revolution in Yugoslavia, where the dream of Balkan federation was becoming an actual as well as a political fact, deposed the pro-Nazi regent Prince Paul, and the Serbian General Dusan Simovich courageously challenged the juggernaut of Adolf Hitler. In Draja Mihailovich's mountains the challenge persists to-day.

#### Military Preparation

In 1912, at 19, Mihailovich left the Serbian Military Academy to fight the Turks. Wounded the next year, he returned to school as a sub-lieutenant wearing the Obilich medal for "personal courage." In 1914 the Austrian attack again broke up school, and Mihailovich was again wounded, and received the Order of the White Eagle. On the eve of the Salonika offensive he rejoined his company and finally returned to Serbia wearing its highest decoration, the Kara George Star with crossed swords.

After these two laboratory periods in the field, he studied military theory, held various Yugoslavian commands, and was active in political bodies for the preservation of Balkan unity. He was sent as military attaché to Sofia (1934) and Prague (1936), and is rumoured to have been connected with underground movements working against Nazi influences in both Bulgaria and Czechoslovakia.

#### A Balkan De Gaulle

In 1939, as chief of Yugoslavia's fortifications, he revealed himself as a Balkan De Gaulle, holding that a nation of such limited financial means should not try to build Maginot Lines, but should concentrate on mobile and offensive possibilities. His superiors opposed him and he was transferred to the military inspection service.

Presently he submitted a memorandum giving warning that a pro-Nazi Fifth Column threatened Yugoslavians

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