

INTRODUCTION

In April 1929 a writer for the daily newspaper *Politika* (Politics) declared that Belgrade had undergone a fundamental transformation in the decade since the Great War. He argued that it had evolved from the capital of the small and homogenous Serbian state into the urban center of the large and diverse Yugoslavia. To support his claim, he offered up the multiplying population and developing industry as evidence of the city's newly acquired urban character.¹ But while Belgrade was, indeed, in the throes of change, it was not quite growing into the Yugoslav hub that this author had imagined. Earlier that year, King Aleksandar Karadjordjević I (1888–1934) had declared a dictatorship with the intent of speeding up the process of unification, but he ultimately succeeded only in replacing the state's strained democratic pluralism with a thinly veiled Serbian hegemony. In Yugoslavia's capital city, middle-class urbanites, most of them of Serbian heritage, often affirmed the dictatorship's nationalism. For instance, when the king ordered professional associations to do their part to bolster cultural unification, they obliged by rebranding a collection of Serbian folk inheritances as Yugoslav ones. But Belgrade's middle-class residents did not unanimously support all state initiatives. In their roles as political and social leaders, urban investors, and directors of cultural organizations, they worked in the interest of class far more frequently than that of the nation. This meant that

they implemented urban regulations to socially segregate Belgrade streets despite mandates to the contrary. It also meant that middle-class newspapers, proprietors, and patrons privileged foreign entertainers regardless of the state's top-down plans for the economic protectionism of Yugoslav workers. While they were committed to Serbian centralism, middle-class urbanites prioritized bourgeois values in their everyday life. They positioned Europe—rather than Yugoslavia—at the heart of their urban society and initiated the changes that remade Belgrade into a modern European capital.

In Yugoslavia's interwar history political narratives overshadow social, cultural, and urban ones. Scholars often rightly describe the period as a time of authoritarianism, ethnic conflict, and national tension.² The moment in 1929 when the king grew frustrated with the fragmentation of political groups and attempted to force national unity by declaring a dictatorship is an evocative example of Yugoslavia's interwar crisis. The king seized power by shuttering the parliament and eliminating political parties. He censored the media by banning public expressions of separatism. He also attempted to erase the existence of ethno-national "tribes" and, to that end, renamed the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes as the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. We know that Belgrade was a site of dictatorial displays as the state capital. For example, scholars have documented that the Sokol association, a gymnastic organization that pledged allegiance to Yugoslavism, elected to stage its statewide Jamboree in the capital in 1930.³ Yet the city also hosted many other events that have not been mentioned in political histories because they seemed to have very little to do with the king's nation-building project. Only months after the dictatorship went into effect, urbanites welcomed the internationally renowned African American performer Josephine Baker (1906–1975) for a weeklong stay in the capital. Around the same time, a group of hobbyists launched Radio Belgrade and began broadcasting records of foreign dance music and live feeds from nightclubs on the airwaves. Josephine Baker and Radio Belgrade have not had a place in Yugoslavia's interwar history, but they were a prominent part of the everyday lives of middle-class residents. Moreover, the fact that entertainment from abroad preoccupied the attention of interwar Belgraders suggests that the dictatorship was more complex than the narratives of absolute authoritarianism let on. Studying social, cultural, and urban histories alongside, rather than apart from, political ones allows us to see the tension between the state's national rhetoric and the city's transnational practice. It highlights the developing link between class, capital, and culture. Finally, it shows the evolving relationship of self-actualizing middle-class urban residents to national, transnational, and urban identities.

Metropolitan Belgrade is a book about entertainment, most of it foreign, that was popular among middle-class Belgraders during the interwar years. In early modern Europe, entertainment was locally produced and popularly consumed.⁴ As powerful middle-class societies coalesced in Western Europe during the high time of imperialism and industrialization, they instituted new social hierarchies into all aspects of life. When it came to culture, the historian Derek Scott suggests, middle-class Europeans began to subordinate entertainment to the arts.⁵ By the late nineteenth century, they rejected entertainment on the premise that it had become a commercialized product of the capitalist economy and, thus, that it was no longer “authentic.” The real reason entertainment fell out of favor among the bourgeoisie was because it was cheap and mass-produced and, as a result, accessible to the lower-class citizens from whom they sought to distinguish themselves. In the early twentieth century new leisure venues such as cinemas, cabarets, and jazz clubs “seduced” middle-class Europeans with transnational entertainment and drove them to integrate it as a component of their cultural palate.⁶ The legacy of bourgeois cultural hierarchies, however, continued to marginalize entertainment from serious study well into the twentieth century.⁷ The historian Lawrence Levine argues that scholars long equated culture only with the “highbrow” arts such as opera, ballet, and literature.⁸ After the Second World War the Frankfurt School grouped entertainment under the rubric of mass culture and defined it an instrument of top-down social control. For Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer entertainment was inauthentic and passively consumed. Contemporary scholars have redefined mass culture as a tool of information dissemination and homogenization in industrialized societies, and they have studied how it has been used in national and imperial projects.⁹ I consider entertainment as neither “lowbrow” culture opposed to the arts nor mass culture controlled by the state. Instead, I define it as a diverse spectrum of commercial activities that were produced and consumed for leisure. In interwar Belgrade middle-class urbanites preferred foreign film stars, cabaret dancers, and jazz musicians, while they gradually rejected Yugoslav street performers, pub singers, and carnival performers. In *Metropolitan Belgrade* I consider both foreign and domestic entertainment. In contrast, this book does not focus its attention on the arts and folk culture, which have been the topics of other excellent studies.¹⁰ I refer to the arts and folk culture only in instances when they entered debates about leisure.

Metropolitan Belgrade is also a book about middle-class consumption of entertainment and its impact on urban life. Textual sources like newspapers and popular novels, visual ones like films and cabaret performances, and audial ones like

radio broadcasts and jazz concerts are my point of entry for understanding Belgrade's cultural world in the 1920s and 1930s. In the capital city of a nationalizing state, it was not self-evident that middle-class residents would so eagerly consume foreign entertainment. In the capital city of a self-actualizing bourgeois society, it was also not self-evident that they would so easily take to culture that challenged normative views on race, gender, and sexuality. I consider how and why these middle-class urbanites were willing to make room for foreign leisure in Belgrade. I explore the ways in which entertainment from abroad shaped their relationship to European metropolitan modernity, a concept I define as an imagined transnational and synchronous urban culture. As the literary scholar Zoran Milutinović reminds us, there was no hegemonic European culture even after the onset of early cultural globalization in the first years after the Great War.¹¹ "For all Europeans," he writes, "Europe was somewhere or someone else."¹² In his study of the Polish intelligentsia, the historian Jerzy Jedlicki found a similar outward gaze that, coupled with disillusionment with modernization at home, caused these elites to view their own country as a "poor and neglected suburb of Europe, a suburb that looked at the Metropolis with contradictory feelings of envy, admiration and distrust—and sometimes with sincere or feigned contempt for the West's corrupt values and false glitter."¹³ While many Yugoslavs also expressed skepticism toward European modernity, most middle-class Belgraders longed for membership in the cultural currents of cities like Paris, London, and Berlin. *Metropolitan Belgrade* explores how these urbanites understood their consumption of entertainment from abroad, how they invested it with European cultural value, and how they incorporated it into the city both socially and spatially.

I make three interconnected arguments in *Metropolitan Belgrade*. First, I suggest that foreign popular culture played a central role in the formation of European middle-class society in the capital of Yugoslavia. In the decades following the Great War, middle-class citizens grappled to define the parameters of unified national culture but, at the same time, consumed leisure from beyond Yugoslavia's borders. They accommodated entertainment like film, jazz, and cabaret into their cultural palate because they interpreted it as a symbol of European metropolitan modernity. The popularity of foreign entertainment in the capital city of a nationalizing state challenged Belgraders' explicit commitment to the Yugoslav project and their explicit vow to maintain a Serbian hegemony, but it affirmed their class identity and European belonging. Second, I argue that the avid consumption of foreign entertainment in Belgrade came at a cost to domestic performers, proprietors, and patrons and that it ultimately impeded the development of a Yugoslav entertainment

industry. While the state pledged to economically protect all citizens, domestic performers fell between the cracks of its policy on culture because they exhibited neither patriotism nor professionalism. In the eyes of urban patrons, they came to represent lower-class leisure that could not compete with the allure of contemporary foreign entertainers. Finally, I show that class interests took precedence over national ones in Belgrade's urban society. Middle-class leaders foremost prioritized hierarchies of culture and space emblematic of European bourgeois values. They promoted foreign entertainment more than its domestic iteration, and they privileged the cultural pleasures of the well-heeled in the city center over those of the working classes. As an urban middle-class society laid claim to the city, it marked Belgrade as a socially segregated European capital.

BELGRADE AFTER THE GREAT WAR

After the Great War Belgrade was on a steady, though not necessarily linear, trajectory of modernization, urbanization, and Europeanization. Its population tripled during the interwar period, and its built environment grew to accommodate it. As a middle-class society seized the reins of both the city and the state, it aspired to step into dialogue with other European capitals. Belgrade's urban society not only struggled to reconcile its class interests with national ones but also to arbitrate its Serbian inheritances with the state's promise of unity. Urban culture was an expression of this negotiation, and it ultimately betrayed the middle-class commitment, above all else, to European metropolitan modernity.

Relative to the rate of population growth in unified Yugoslavia, Belgrade boomed during the interwar years. The 1921 census counted 12,017,323 Yugoslav citizens, and by 1931 that number had climbed to 13,934,083.¹⁴ While the state's population increased by one-sixth in the first interwar decade, Belgrade's almost tripled. The city had been home to 111,000 residents in 1919, and ten years later, in 1929, it housed 288,200 residents. By the time of the 1939 census there were 350,000 registered urbanites.¹⁵ The city's quick growth was mostly a product of internal migration. The scholar Tomislav Bogavac describes interwar Belgrade as "the city of the migrant" because its population comprised a higher proportion of newly arrived residents than Belgrade-born ones.¹⁶ The 1941 census, taken as the urban population dipped during the Second World War, recorded that only 55,749 residents had been born in the city and that the rest had come from the territories of the unified state.¹⁷ That same year the census also counted 22,254 foreign-born residents. Most

of them were émigrés who had fled the Russian Revolution two decades earlier, but there were also Austrians, Czechoslovaks, Hungarians, and Germans.¹⁸ Yugoslavia's other urban centers like Zagreb, Ljubljana, and Sarajevo similarly grew during the interwar years, but Belgrade outpaced them. Even in 1941 about a quarter of all Yugoslav urban dwellers called the capital home.¹⁹ Other urban centers in South-eastern Europe similarly thrived. Comparatively, Sofia was slightly more populous, Bucharest counted twice as many residents, and Athens was about three times as large. Further afield, Vienna and Budapest that had populations of more than a million around the same time.

Belgrade's interwar growth coincided with the development of its middle class. Unlike many European cities, including Zagreb and Ljubljana, the Yugoslav capital did not have a historic aristocracy or an established bourgeoisie before the Great War. Instead, as Yugoslavia's state administration, industry, and trade centralized in the capital, they attracted new residents to Belgrade. A self-actualizing middle class composed of government employees, educated professionals, investors, merchants, and proprietors began to take shape in the early 1920s. By the end of the decade 24 percent of the urban population was employed by the state, and 19 percent belonged to the commercial class.²⁰ In 1929 the city was home to 120 industrial firms and approximately 5,000 shops.²¹ The hundreds of active professional associations, societies, and unions were further evidence of the growing prominence of middle-class residents. In a generation's time Belgrade's urban society was semieducated and semiprofessional. In 1929, 86 percent of Belgraders were literate compared to 45 percent of the state population as a whole.²² Urban life was distinguished by wage-based stratification. In 1930, when the estimated minimum monthly income for a family of four in Belgrade was 1,500 dinars, an average salary for a civil servant was 2,100 dinars, and that for a state official was around 3,000 dinars. About a quarter of middle-class Belgraders who collected property rents probably had even higher monthly incomes. An average worker, by comparison, earned approximately 1,400 dinars per month, or less than the designated minimum living wage.²³

Belgrade's middle class was not only privileged in interwar Yugoslavia because of its social status but also because it was predominantly Serbian in composition and, as such, favorably positioned as the political majority. In Yugoslavia 43 percent of the population identified as Serbs, followed by Croats at 23 percent, Slovenes at 8.5 percent, Macedonians at 5 percent, and several other minority groups. Serbs typically belonged to Christian Orthodoxy, the largest religious domination in the state that constituted 49 percent of the Yugoslav population. Roman Catholicism,

common among those who identified as Croats, accounted for 38 percent and Islam, common in the former Ottoman territories, for 11 percent of citizens.²⁴ As the largest ethno-national contingent, Serbs had the advantage of numbers. As heirs to the only independent prewar state aside from the Kingdom of Montenegro, they also had an advantage in terms of historical legacy. At unification Yugoslavia inherited Serbia's royal family, legal code, and, indeed, the capital. Belgrade, however, had not been the obvious capital of Yugoslavia after unification. Zagreb, for instance, had an established aristocratic class, modernized urban amenities, and a developed network of transnational connections. The historian Sarah Kent suggests that the former Habsburg city was "an aspiring national capital on the periphery of a hegemonic state."²⁵ Even though Zagreb had been a viable contender for the capital of Yugoslavia, Kent correctly points out that the odds were stacked against it in the unified state, where Serbs counted as the largest contingent. According to the historian Eve Blau, this left Zagreb as "a capital without a country."²⁶ In contrast, Belgrade's predominantly Serbian middle-class society found itself in an advantageous position to exert political, social, and cultural power over the entire unified state.

One manifestation of this power was the preeminence of a Serbian hegemony in the production of Yugoslav national culture. While Yugoslavism had originated as an intellectual project in late nineteenth-century Croatia, its interwar manifestation bore little resemblance to the earlier utopian idea of South Slavic unity. Instead, as the historian Alex Dragnich suggests, nation building became "a middle-class movement."²⁷ This was true elsewhere in Europe, but in Belgrade it was also an ethno-nationalist movement, because Serbian middle-class society often defined the parameters of multinational Yugoslavia with little acknowledgment of other constituent communities. When Serbian leaders identified folk culture as a form of Yugoslav culture, they disproportionately streamlined Serbian inheritances. As state representatives, they declared folk dance an "old and real" tradition and happily funded dance studios that offered classes in Yugoslav—that is, Serbian—folk styles.²⁸ Middle-class Belgraders embraced folk culture because it affirmed the paternalism preeminent in their bourgeois values, as well as because they saw other Europeans consuming it as nostalgia for the "harmonious, rural, [and] preindustrial" past.²⁹ In Belgrade, moreover, the Serbianization of Yugoslav folk culture signaled nostalgia for Serbia's prewar ethno-national homogeneity. Belgrade's educated middle-class leaders also supported the arts as a type of Yugoslav national culture; state agents almost always elected to extend financial aid to professionally trained artists, musicians, and authors, and they encouraged self-

actualizing middle-class urbanites to engage with them. However, they invariably privileged cultural workers of Serbian descent. As early as 1920 elite Belgraders debated who precisely should be awarded the patronage of middle-class residents. In an article published in *Politika*, one writer suggested that it was not enough for a performer to be of Serbian heritage: he or she had to remain overtly committed to upholding the Serbian backbone of Yugoslav culture. He criticized the composer Pero Stojanović for collaborating with the Viennese Carltheater but celebrated his contemporary Zlatko Balokojević for promoting Serbian inheritances at home and abroad.³⁰ This writer reflected the consensus among most middle-class Belgraders: unified Yugoslav national culture was sometimes an ideal and sometimes a state-building mandate, but it was almost always a synonym for Serbian culture.

At the same time that Belgrade's leaders made a point of endorsing Serbian folk culture and the arts as the benchmarks of Yugoslav national culture, middle-class urban residents eagerly consumed foreign entertainment. Even before the Great War Belgraders had been favorably disposed to leisure from abroad. Miloš Ćosić, a member of the parliament in the Kingdom of Serbia, had complained that "anyone who has come to Serbia to encounter its culture will not find it in Belgrade. In Belgrade one can find only foreign culture because Belgrade readily accepts foreign culture."³¹ Ćosić's comment was overly dramatic. Although prewar Belgrade did indeed host traveling circuses, street performers, and small theaters from abroad, its cultural landscape remained overwhelmingly local. The city might have given off a more transnational air because, as the historian Dubravka Stojanović points out, prewar pubs commonly took their names from faraway places, such as Paris, Solun (Thessaloniki), and Petrograd (St. Petersburg). These proprietors flew in the face of Serbian imperialism, which had inspired urban administrators to name streets and squares after territories they hoped to incorporate, such as Bosnia and Macedonia.³² After the Great War cinemas, cabarets, and jazz clubs replaced pubs as the center of Belgrade's entertainment and brought with them a deluge of foreign popular culture. These venues did not court guests with names of distant cities, but rather with the names of venues like those that could have been found abroad: the Kasina (Casino) Theater, the Ritz Bar, and the Palas (Palace) Theater. They suggested that interwar Belgraders no longer had to imagine what it might be like to visit Paris because they could now visit local establishments that resembled Parisian ones. This was not necessarily a form of false advertising. Already by the early 1920s technological advancements had sped up the movement of people, goods, and ideas across Europe. Not only that, but as a growing urban center Belgrade

was a desirable market for foreign entrepreneurs and a regular stopover for foreign singers, dancers, and other performers. Middle-class venue proprietors, newspaper publishers, and urban patrons gradually incorporated foreign entertainment into the bourgeois cultural hierarchy alongside folk inheritances and the arts. This, in turn, allowed middle-class residents to consume it as an affirmation of both their class identity and their European belonging.

The avid middle-class consumption of entertainment from abroad, however, contradicted the radicalizing interwar shift toward nationalism. In the first decade after the First World War most European democracies teetered on the edge of viability. Once the Great Depression set off a global economic crisis, many descended into social and political disarray. In Yugoslavia King Aleksandar's dictatorship centralized the state and reinforced the Serbian hegemony behind a veneer of national unity. Belgrade's middle-class residents were tasked with serving as the guardians of the state's Serbian inheritance at the same time as they were vested with legitimizing the existence of a unified Yugoslavia. But their gaze toward European metropolitan modernity placed into question their commitment to the Yugoslav state and the Serbian nation.

Residents in Warsaw, Bucharest, and Sofia had similarly grappled to find equilibrium between their national and European identities throughout the twentieth century. The historian Nathaniel Wood argues that becoming national coexisted with an aspiration to European urbanity. "For citizens of middling but modernizing cities like Cracow," he writes, "discovering and enacting metropolitan identities reinforced their break from a provincial past while affirming their belonging to modern urban civilization."³³ Wood identifies two overlapping myths of modernity—the myth of the nation and the myth of Europe—that shaped the development of East European cities around the turn of the century.³⁴ In Belgrade these myths were confounded by the fact that middle-class urbanites positioned themselves in Europe while they simultaneously negotiated the parameters of the Serbian nation within the unified Yugoslav state. At times Belgraders seemed to succeed in their accommodation of European metropolitan modernity. But at other moments—for instance, in 1929, when nationalists in Zagreb insisted that Josephine Baker's performances posed a threat to society, or in 1941, when Nazi Germany flooded occupied Belgrade with anti-Western propaganda—European metropolitan modernity appeared to be entirely incompatible with both the nation and the state. On the eve of the Second World War, after two decades of gazing at transnational cultural currents, middle-class Belgraders yielded to the rising tide of nationalism and cast their gaze inward, on domestic entertainment.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO HISTORY

Metropolitan Belgrade contributes to the history of Yugoslavia by approaching the first two decades of state unity from the perspective of urban life and cultural consumption. Since the Yugoslav Wars, scholars have studied the unified state through the prism of its failure. Some have offered historical arguments explaining Yugoslavia's political,³⁵ social,³⁶ economic,³⁷ and cultural collapse.³⁸ Others have wrestled to make sense of the 1990s civil wars themselves.³⁹ The interwar years are relatively understudied compared to the postwar and the post-1990s periods, but scholars have approached them with similar questions about unification and its problems.⁴⁰ *Metropolitan Belgrade* challenges our understanding of the unified state's history, including its politics, by showing that middle-class Belgraders, many of whom had an active role in the Yugoslav leadership, mediated their commitment to Serbian hegemony with their aspirations toward European metropolitan modernity. Their negotiation of national and transnational signifiers suggests that the contours of Yugoslavia were up for grabs during the interwar years. Unification was certainly marred by ethnic tension, political discord, and Serbian centralism, as many scholars have argued, but *Metropolitan Belgrade* suggests that class interests often took precedence over national ones in the capital city. The mere fact, for instance, that Josephine Baker's visit and Radio Belgrade's launch coincided with the king's declaration of a dictatorship indicates that state authoritarianism was far less absolute than it has been depicted in the historiography. Moreover, through its focus on urban culture during the interwar years, *Metropolitan Belgrade* explores the relationship of the transnational Jazz Age era—Europeanization as well as Americanization—to the concurrent development of “nationalizing states” in Eastern Europe.⁴¹

Metropolitan Belgrade contributes to European history by situating Yugoslavia's capital within the continent's broad narratives. Scholars have published useful work on Belgrade during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.⁴² They have meticulously reconstructed streets and squares, hotels and cafés, and architectural trends that adorned its boulevards.⁴³ *Metropolitan Belgrade* is also indebted to scholars whose work has laid the groundwork for thinking about Belgrade's relationship to national and transnational history. Dubravka Stojanović and John Lampe have examined its nineteenth century.⁴⁴ Tanja Damljanović Conley and Predrag Marković have studied it during the interwar years.⁴⁵ Brigitte Le Normand and Vladimir Kulić have focused on the postwar period.⁴⁶ Eric Gordy and Srdjan Jovanović Weiss have tackled the more recent past.⁴⁷ *Metropolitan Belgrade* is equally inspired by excellent

urban histories that have positioned East European cities beyond their local frameworks.⁴⁸ Belgrade is an interesting site because it did not modernize by the end of the nineteenth century like many West European capitals. After the unification of Yugoslavia, however, its industry boomed, its bourgeois society strengthened, and its built environment diversified. The city followed a different path to economic, social, and urban development but, as my book shows, middle-class Belgraders were nevertheless active participants in European culture. By the first part of the twentieth century they came to exert a middle-class hegemony in the city as well as a Serbian national one in the state. *Metropolitan Belgrade* insists that history cannot be reduced to politics, just as European narratives cannot be reduced to West European narratives. Eastern Europe, or the Balkans, is not a European “other.”⁴⁹ Instead, East European stories are at the core of European history.

Finally, *Metropolitan Belgrade* contributes to urban history by examining the pattern of urban development in a relatively small European city. In a recent volume Benjamin Ofori-Amoah points out that “mainstream urban studies have overwhelmingly focused on the upper end of the system, which consists of cities of national or global, and in a few instances, regional or provincial importance. Such cities are very large in terms of population, and are economically, socially, and politically domineering.”⁵⁰ The rich literature on cities like Paris, London, and Berlin has been formative for my own work.⁵¹ Smaller cities like Belgrade are sites of different urban experiences, dynamics, and meanings, but they have not yet been extensively studied. *Metropolitan Belgrade* relies on a theoretical approach similar to the one used by James Hodos in a comparative project on Manchester and Philadelphia. Hodos considers these urban centers to be “second” cities and suggests that they had historically distinct roles in relation to more eminent ones.⁵² Unlike the French, British, and German capitals after the Great War, Belgrade stood at the head of a state that had not yet centralized and lacked an established bourgeois society. However, this did not mean that the city was not in dialogue with larger urban centers. *Metropolitan Belgrade* tells the story of an alternative development of urbanization and a contradictory practice of nationalization. Where scholars have commonly drawn on the popular press to access urban narratives, *Metropolitan Belgrade* utilizes a rich breadth of cultural sources such as cabaret programs, films, association files, and police records. In doing so, it shows how a middle-class urban society strengthened in a relatively small East European city and how it appropriated West European patterns of bourgeois social and spatial segregation. It explores how Belgraders negotiated Serbian and Yugoslav signifiers in the urban landscape and how class interests often derailed national ones. Finally, as Belgrade grew into

its role as the capital city of a unified state, *Metropolitan Belgrade* studies how its relationship to other cities changed.

The narrative arc of *Metropolitan Belgrade* unfolds over six chapters. The first chapter, “Entertainment and the Politics of Culture,” provides an overview of the prewar and interwar cultural landscape in Belgrade and shows that domestic entertainment predominated in the former and foreign in the latter. Although educated Belgraders initially contested the rising popularity of foreign film, cabaret, and jazz in the city, business-minded urbanites gradually integrated them into the bourgeois cultural palate. Proprietors and publishers profited from foreign entertainment, and they used the language of the arts to “ennoble” it in the eyes of Belgrade’s wealthiest patrons. The shifting sociocultural hierarchy, however, pigeonholed Yugoslav entertainment as a form of lower-class leisure. The second chapter, “Radio Belgrade and the Modern Urban Listener,” focuses on the standardization of middle-class culture on the air. Radio Belgrade broadcast a selection of the arts such as operas and chamber music, folk music, and entertainment. The recorded dance music, in-studio jazz, and live feeds from variety theaters constituted the last category and served to domesticate foreign forms of leisure for the urban listening audience. All the while, Yugoslav entertainment was conspicuously absent from the station’s airwaves. The chapter that follows, “Yugoslav Performers and Working-Class Entertainment,” outlines the tactics middle-class Belgraders used to marginalize domestic performers from urban life. Despite the fact that the state pledged economic protectionism for all citizens, Yugoslav entertainers fell between the cracks of its cultural policy because it ultimately privileged the arts and folk culture. At the same time, Belgrade’s middle-class administration disproportionately enforced laws about urban vice at working-class venues where most Yugoslav entertainers worked. In doing so, the administration marginalized domestic performers and established a premise for banning them from professional associations as well as from Belgrade’s cultural landscape. The fourth chapter, “Belgrade’s Downtown Leisure District,” suggests that middle-class society transformed the central neighborhood of Terazije into a bourgeois leisure zone during the interwar years. Urbanites rhetorically laid claim to the neighborhood in the early 1920s, and by the end of the decade they had embarked on a redesign project that socially segregated downtown streets, parks, and businesses. Eliminating working-class leisure from the city center opened up more space for ritzy theaters, clubs, and bars that attracted middle-class patrons and affirmed the primacy of bourgeois values in Belgrade. The next chapter, “Accommodating Josephine Baker in Belgrade,” delves into the 1929 visit of the African American performer to Yugoslavia. By then Baker was

a star in interwar Europe, and middle-class Belgraders were eager to show that they, too, participated in contemporary entertainment trends. Their quick accommodation of the challenges that Baker's race, gender, and sexuality posed to bourgeois values confirmed that Belgrade's middle-class society had awarded foreign entertainment a privileged position in urban life. Days later, when Baker visited Zagreb, however, protesters mocked the eagerness with which the capital's residents had consumed leisure from abroad. It was only on the eve of the Second World War, as the final chapter "The Strongman Dragoljub Aleksić and the Occupied City" shows, that Belgraders reconsidered their relationship to foreign entertainment. Dragoljub Aleksić (1910–1985) was a stuntman who incorporated both state-sponsored gymnastics and the athleticism of spectator sport into his shows, but, like most Yugoslav performers, he struggled to achieve recognition during the interwar years. When he presented residents of Nazi-occupied Belgrade with his final feat—a patriotic film—he hit upon a zeitgeist that finally earned him a moment of fame. The sudden interest in domestic entertainment among urbanites who had long aspired to European currents was in itself a transnational trend. It proved that Belgrade had become a European capital during the interwar years.