As a political proposition, or argument, the thesis is, of course, an established component of the ideology of the “Piłsudski camp”, an intrinsic ingredient of Marshal Piłsudski’s heritage to his followers. But Dziewanowski’s attempt to “work it out” in a diplomatic history based on an impressive amount of “digging” in archival sources and memoir literature is, I believe, original. His research has been tireless and apparently exhaustive. But there are some difficulties resulting from the analytical strategy imposed by the general thesis. Since Dziewanowski’s purpose is to expound Piłsudski’s intentions, the argument proceeds overwhelmingly from Piłsudski’s point of view and those of his advisers. This perspective then colors Dziewanowski’s analysis of the different responses of various Lithuanian, Ukrainian, Russian, etc. political personalities to the roles assigned them in Piłsudski’s grand plans. Those of them who were suspicious of, and resisted, his federal schemes tend to be portrayed as stubborn, shallow, and without vision or goodwill while those who cooperated with Piłsudski are implicitly accepted as representing the best, most enlightened, most far-sighted elements in their respective nations. But from another perspective, these latter can, of course, be regarded as just so many quislings, as betrayers of their people’s interests to a Polish hegemonial craving cleverly masquerading as Piłsudskist federalism.

Now, I happen to lean toward Dziewanowski’s interpretation but I am distressed by his underplaying these ideological difficulties. To a Pole (and perhaps to many contemporary Americans) it seems clear that a Polish-led federation of the nations along Russia’s western belt is preferable to a Russian-led Soviet Union. But the other nationalities (a) might not as readily agree and (b) might not accept the assumption that these two options exhaust all their alternatives. Furthermore, part of the politically-conscious Polish generation which survives from the interwar era may also repudiate this book since Piłsudski remains a negative memory for those more integrally nationalistic and parochial Poles who regard his federalistic intentions toward the other peoples of the area as sentimental nonsense, less “realistic” than outright Polish annexation and assimilation. In other words, the non-Poles’ suspicions of Piłsudski’s federalism as disguised Polish imperialism was matched by many Poles’ repudiation of it as excessively fastidious toward the “pretensions” of these allegedly “unripe” eastern neighbors.

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King Alexander of Yugoslavia (1921-1934) remains one of the more enigmatic figures of interwar Yugoslav history. The recently published memoirs of his surviving older brother Djordje resolve none of the principal questions about Alexander’s personality and political program but they do provide a valuable glimpse into some aspects of his early life and behavior. King Peter of Serbia (1903-1918), Djordje’s and Alexander’s father, is also a major figure in this volume, especially during the years prior to 1909, when Djordje was still heir apparent. Djordje’s portrait of his father is as warm and sympathetic as his description of Alexander is hostile. This is understandable, in view of the fact that in 1925 Alexander arranged for Djordje’s commitment to solitary confinement in a mental sanitarium, an imprisonment continued by Alexander’s successor, Prince Regent Paul (1934-1941). Djordje was released by the Germans in the spring of 1941.
The first part of Djordje's account deals with his childhood, a childhood spent in exile in Cetinje, Montenegro and then in Geneva. Djordje and Alexander were sent to Russia in 1898 to be educated and this lasted until 1903, when they were recalled to Serbia, where their father had become King after the brutal extermination of the Obrenović dynasty. Djordje recalls that he and his brother were each assigned aides, who joined them in Vienna. Alexander's aide was Lieutenant Petar Živković, a man who was to remain very close to Alexander and in fact served as his Prime Minister in the first years of Alexander's royal dictatorship (1929-1932).

Djordje's account of the years between 1903 and 1909 is of particular interest to historians, as he writes not only of his father's conduct of affairs but of such events as the Bosnian annexation crisis of 1908. In the midst of this latter affair, Djordje paid an official visit to Russia in company with Nikola Pašić, the great Serbian political leader, but a man whom Djordje disliked intensely. Together with his descriptions of these events, however, Djordje frequently writes of the growing estrangement between himself and Alexander. Djordje argues that Alexander was being courted by a number of military officers and politicians, including Pašić and the infamous Colonel Apis, and that intrigues against the heir apparent designed to make him renounce his right to the throne in favor of his younger brother were endemic. The height of this activity, according to Djordje, came in 1907, when a mysterious explosion demolished his Belgrade residence.

It was an event of a different kind, however, which eventually prompted Djordje's abdication of his right to the Serbian throne. Acting in a fit of anger in early 1909, Djordje struck his valet and thus aggravated a pre-existing condition in the hapless servant which led to his death several days later. Although not held criminally liable, Djordje felt compelled to give up his position as the heir apparent. Henceforth, Djordje did not play a significant role in Serbian political life although he remained in a position to observe his father and Alexander at close hand. Devoting much of his time to service as a relatively junior officer in the Serbian army, Djordje fought in the Balkan wars and in World War One. Wounded in the first part of the World War, Djordje never received an important command from his brother Alexander, who had already taken over most of the day to day conduct of affairs from the aged King Peter.

After the creation of the new Yugoslav state in 1918, and especially after the death of King Peter in the summer of 1921, the relations between Djordje and Alexander degenerated into a state of mutual hatred. Alexander first refused his brother access to the court and then, in 1925, had him imprisoned.

In all of this, of course, we have only Djordje's side of the story. These are the reminiscences of an embittered man who blames Alexander and the persons around him for his misfortunes. The tone of the book indicates that Djordje must in many ways have been an erratic and unpleasant person. Nonetheless Djordje's story is an indispensable source for students of modern Serbian and interwar Yugoslav history. His description of King Peter, Alexander, Pašić, and Živković, of court life in Cetinje, of the kind of education Djordje and Alexander received in Russia, of the relationship between Alexander and Živković, even the allusions to the ties between Alexander and Colonel Apis, all of these and a number of others are of more than passing interest. And beyond these immediate instances — intriguing as they are to the professional historian — Djordje's memoirs give the reader some insight into what it was like to be a member of the Serbian ruling family in King Peter's time, into some of the flavor and