

## Great Theorists of Central European Integration in Serbia

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### ABSTRACT

This chapter presents the biographies of six important Serbian intellectuals who worked in Serbia and Vojvodina during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries: Ilija Garašanin, Svetozar Miletić, Vladimir Jovanović, Dimitrije Mitrinović, Slobodan Jovanović, and Borislav Pekić. Ilija Garašanin was a Serbian statesman who served as a Minister of the Police and Army in the Principality of Serbia. He strongly believed in establishing a modern bureaucracy and maintaining law and order and was the creator of the first written Serbian national programme. Svetozar Miletić was a temperamental and skilled orator. He was a liberal who played a very important role in the national awakening of the Serbs in Southern Hungary in 1848. He stressed the need to support citizens' individual liberties. Vladimir Jovanović was seen as the most educated intellectual in Serbia in his time. This liberal believed in the coexistence of ideas of national liberation and struggles for citizens' rights. Dimitrije Mitrinović was a Serbian avant-garde critic, theorist, philosopher, essayist, poet, and translator. He was one of the most unusual intellectuals in the Balkans at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He was alternately seen by his contemporaries as a charlatan and mystic but also as a visionary of a united Europe and the 'new man'. Slobodan Jovanović was a lawyer, historian, and politician known for his ideas about the reform of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia and the implied establishment of 'a fair border' between Serbs and Croats. Borislav Pekić was another famous Serbian writer, intellectual, and politician. As a writer, he fought for the democratisation and Europeanisation of Serbia. He reconciled national, democratic, and European concepts in the Serbian tradition and asserted that they are not in opposition but should instead be interwoven and integrated.

### KEYWORDS

Integration, intellectual, Yugoslav idea, Serbia, United Europe, Ilija Garašanin, Svetozar Miletić, Vladimir Jovanović, Dimitrije Mitrinović, Slobodan Jovanović, Borislav Pekić.

## Introduction

The Serbian state ascended in the 19<sup>th</sup> century at the crossroads of great empires. National unification, a modern idea that flooded the entire continent at the time, was also prevalent in the Balkans. As the century of nationalism, the 19<sup>th</sup> century led to the inevitable disintegration of multinational states. The idea of uniting all Serbs into

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one state was formed at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century as a programme of national integration and creation of a nation-state within maximum limits. It was gradually realised by manoeuvring between the great powers, but also through conflicts with them. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Serbian politics was most often correlated or in conflict with the interests of Austria, Russia, and Turkey. The first Serbian national programme in renewed Serbia was conceived in 1832 at the court of Prince Miloš in Kragujevac. This plan would later serve as the basis for ‘Načertanija’ by Ilija Garašanin.

During the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, France, Britain, and Germany exerted power over Yugoslavia, while in Socialist Yugoslavia during the Cold War, relations with the US, the USSR, and some non-aligned countries prevailed. In the post-communist era, the main problems in Serbia’s foreign policy were its relationships with the US and NATO and with the EU and Germany. Geostrategic interests and Serbia’s position meant that it was exposed to severe exclusions and numerous wars with both its neighbours and the great powers.

This chapter addresses several of the essential aspects of Serbia’s intellectual development in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Through the biographies of six well-known thinkers and activists, the authors have reconstructed not only the ideas about Serbia’s internal development and progress, but also about Serbia’s place in the Balkans and in Europe as a whole. The authors have especially stressed the intellectual concepts that focused on potential collaboration and mutual assistance.

## 1. Ilija Garašanin: a Statesman and a True Conservative (1812–1874)<sup>1</sup>

Ilija Garašanin was born in the days of the First Serbian Insurrection. He was part of the generation that was involved in the fight to increase the autonomy of the vasa Serbian principality. Serbia, which was still dotted with Ottoman garrisons, was striving for independent internal development and eventually for full sovereignty and free hands in foreign policy. On two occasions, Ilija Garašanin held some of the most influential positions in the Serbian government. In this way, he played a crucial role in several turbulent political developments in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Moreover, he was one of the essential



<sup>1</sup> Ilija Garašanin, Serbian statesman, Lithograph of Ilija Garašanin by Anastas Jovanović, National Library of Serbia’s collection Zbirka grafika Anastasa Jovanovića. COBISS ID 123249164, source of the picture: [https://www.wikidata.org/wiki/Q1259535#/media/File:Ilija\\_Gara%C5%A1anin\\_table\\_crop.jpg](https://www.wikidata.org/wiki/Q1259535#/media/File:Ilija_Gara%C5%A1anin_table_crop.jpg).

figures in the creation of Serbia's modern bureaucracy as well as its police and army. He was known for his traditionalism but was also perceived as a realistic statesman. He worked on conceptualising ideas about Serbia's future development and became known as the creator of the first national programme centred on the unification of all Serbs. However, his plan had a wider dimension, encompassing intense collaboration with other South Slavs. The interpretations of his political programme varied over time, provoking much controversy. This was especially the case in relation to the Yugoslav wars of the 1990s.

### ***1.1. Birth and childhood, early education***

Ilija Garašanin was born in 1812 at the very end of the First Serbian Uprising (1804–1813). He was born in the village Garaši, near Kragujevac, close to the epicentre of the uprising. His family originated from Montenegro. However, Garašanin family was not only geographically close to the centre of important historical events of 1804. Milutin Garašanin, Ilija's father, was a cattle trader, but also a prominent participant in both Serbian revolts. His biography bore some similarities with that of the leader of the First Serbian Uprising, Karadjordje Petrović (1762–1817). Namely, they were both cattle traders but they both fought in the Austro-Turkish war (1788–1791) as volunteers within the Serbian Free Corps.

However, Milutin Garašanin truly distinguished himself in 1815, as he played a considerable role in preparations for the second Serbian Uprising. As Karadjordje Petrović was out of the country at the time, the rebellion was ignited by the Serbian Prince (knez) Miloš Obrenović (1780–1860). Due to this role, the Garašanin family became very close with the Prince Miloš Obrenović, the most powerful figure in post 1815 Serbia. Despite being an illiterate trader himself, Milutin Garašanin appreciated the value of education. As there were no schools in Serbia at the time, he brought teachers at his own expense, all in order to provide teaching for his children. The tutors were the Serbs from the Habsburg Monarchy.<sup>2</sup> Young Ilija Garašanin proved to be intelligent and diligent pupil. His father continued to invest into his education.

Ilija Garašanina was sent to the neighbouring Austrian town of Zemun. There he went to the Greek and later to the German school. After four years of schooling, Garašanin was fluent in two foreign languages and with good general education. However, he did not pursue university, but returned to his village of Garaši to participate in the family business, the cattle trade with the Austro-Hungary.

### ***1.2. The Autonomous Principality and its Political Clashes***

Still, this seemed to be just a pause in his father's plans to propel his son's career. When he was 21 his father wrote a letter to the all-powerful ruler of Serbia, Prince Miloš Obrenović. Milutin Garašanin recommended his son for an official position within the principality's service. This pledge was granted and Ilija Garašanin spent

| 2 Mekenzi, 1987, p. 23. |

the following four years as a customs officer at the border with the Habsburg Monarchy, near Belgrade.<sup>3</sup>

Serbia at the time was gradually acquiring an internationally recognised autonomous status within the Ottoman Empire under Prince Milos Obrenović. Namely, the Second Serbian Uprising was ended by the negotiations that led to the establishment of the Serbian Principality. The status between Serbia and the Ottoman Empire was further arranged by the series of Ottoman edicts issued between 1829 and 1833. This meant that Serbia was slowly acquiring elements of statehood as the core elements of the Ottoman rule now implied only to the annual tax and the presence of a few Ottoman garrisons in the country.<sup>4</sup> Daily life in Serbia was changing rapidly, as the Turks were leaving while the Serbs begun occupying more prominent positions. This situation is observable in the first census from 1834, in which the Principality of Serbia had around 700 000 Serbs and only 15 000 Turks.<sup>5</sup>

While the power of the Ottomans was disappearing the influence of the Prince Miloš Obrenović seemed unstoppable. He ruled Serbia without any constitutional nor legal limitations. He was the sole authority and often he acted as a true despot. This provoked internal revolts. There were as much as seven significant mutinies against him between 1815 and 1830. In one of these clashes, the Garašanin family lost much of their property as the angry rebels saw them as ardent supporters of the Princ Miloš Obrenović.

Pressure against Prince Miloš Obrenović mounted. Moreover, the role of the Great Powers became very important at this stage of Serbia's internal development. After 1835 all major world powers opened their consulates in Belgrade. Russia tried to control Prince Miloš by treating him as one of its own subjects. On the other hand, the Austria's presence in Serbia was unquestionable. Prince's Miloš harsh rule, on the one side, and the appearance of resolute opposition, on the other, intertwined with the interests of major European powers.

In 1838 Serbia was granted constitution by the Great Powers, though formally by the Ottoman empire. It was so called *Turkish constitution* that remained valid until 1869. This document was a compromise between the two groups. It meant the establishment of the Council of 17 men. They were to discuss all decisions with the prince. The Council membership was for life. Moreover, an Assembly was to meet regularly. The men who entered the Council were mostly opponents of the Prince Miloš Obrenović. Soon, these men from the Council acquired a new colloquial name: the Constitutionalists. Who were they? Some of them were popular commanders from the anti-Ottoman revolts, such as the case with Toma Vučić-Perišić (1787–1859). However, the majority of the Constitutionalists were the Serbs originating from the Habsburg Empire. Apart from the struggle with Prince Miloš

3 Ibid. p. 24.

4 For a more comprehensive history of the initial development within the Serbian Principality see: Ljušić, 2004a.

5 Mekenzi, 1987, p. 27.

Obrenović, yet another rift was now opened in the Serbian society: between the Serbs from Serbia and the ones who arrived from Austro-Hungary.

### ***1.3. Garašanin as an Irreplacable Political Figure***

During these critical developments the position of Ilija Garašanin changed considerably. After four years in the customs, he was appointed to be the commander of the newly established Serbian army, in 1837. He had no military education, but was given the rank of colonel. His discipline and loyalty to the prince evidently proved to be crucial criteria. At the same time, he became one of the 17 members of the above-mentioned state council, together with his father.

Prince Miloš Obrenović could not function in the system that imposed so many restrictions on his power. He decided to leave Serbia in 1839. The prince's position was to be kept however within his family. His son Milan inherited him. Still, he died only few months later, and the new prince was named. It was the second son of Miloš Obrenović, Mihailo Obrenović (1823–1868). As his father, he was unwilling to let go the power in favour of the Constitutionalists. The new Obrenović ruled autocratically with the assistance of Russia.

Soon, the full-scale clash was inevitable. Ilija Garašanin was involved into combinations for bringing the new dynasty in Serbia, the Karadjordjević family. Consequently, as other opponents, he was forced to flee for Constantinople. After pressure exerted by the Great Powers the political emigrants, mainly Constitutionals, were allowed to be back into the country.<sup>6</sup> A series of minor mutinies against the prince followed. Danger of the full-scale war and anarchy loomed. In one such event in 1842, the prince, as part of the reprisals, ordered that Milutin Garašanin, Ilija Garašanin's father, as well as his brother, were to be imprisoned and executed. This left a deep imprint on Ilija Garašanin.

Prince Mihailo Obrenović was soon forced to abdicate in 1842 and, fearing for his life, he left for Austria. The Assembly elected the son of Karadjordje Petrović, Aleksandar Karadjordjević (1806–1885), as the new ruler. Ilija Garašanin played a modest role in this shift as the main leader of the rebellion was Toma Vučić-Perišić, the Minister of Interior. Garašanin was however elected on a new powerful position, the assistant of the Ministry of Interior. He was again appointed to the Council as well.<sup>7</sup> The changes made in the constellation of power in Serbia were not welcomed by Russia and Toma Vučić-Perišić had to leave Serbia. This meant the rise of Garašanin, who became the Minister of Interior in 1844. This was the first time Garašanin was fully in power, which he retained until 1853.

Things were not yet settled in relation to the new dynasty. More precisely, the change on the Serbian throne had to be validated by the new Assembly – this was the condition imposed by Russia. Garašanin played here an immensely important role in controlling the deputies and directing their political views. Ultimately, the

6 Ibid. p. 33.

7 Ibid. p. 38.

confirmation of the Aleksandar Karadjordjević as the new Serbian prince went smoothly. It is important to underline the role of international Polish emigration for this process. The group of influential Poles, operating from Paris and working for the restoration of Poland, established close collaboration with the Constitution-  
alists' regime. The emigrants were led by former Russian minister of foreign affairs  
count Adam Czartoryski (1770–1861).

Ilija Garašanin spent the entire decade as a Minister of interior. His focus was on creating functional bureaucracy and keeping law and order. He especially stressed the importance of disciplined bureaucracy and efficient police.<sup>8</sup> During this time he constantly worried about the potential collapse of social order due to continuous unrest of various opposition groups, specifically the ones led by the sympathisers of the Obrenović dynasty. Security concerns grew as the Constitutionalists became bitterly between themselves.

As the Serbian government was only at the very beginning of its developed and systematisation, Garašanin's duties were very diverse. He was not only responsible for the police and the army. He was dealing also with traffic and education. Ilija Garašanin played crucial role in established Serbia's post service as well as in founding the first agricultural school. His role as modernising the country continued with his work on establishing the Artillery school (the Military academy) in 1850 and the first weapon factory in Serbia in 1853, the first one in the Balkans.<sup>9</sup>

Despite investing great deal of his energy into everyday problems related to security and administration, Ilija Garašanin had decided to create a document that conceptualised thinking about future strategic path of the Serbian state.

#### **1.4. The Draft (*Načertanije*)**

One of the essential components in the biography of Ilija Garašanin is his role in the creation of the first Serbian national programme. It was the document entitled *The Draft* (*Načertanije*), written at the end of 1844.<sup>10</sup> This document was composed of several concept available at the time to any Serbian statesman. These included, Serbian medieval traditions, contemporary European revolutionary spirit but also the legacy of the two Serbian uprisings against the Ottoman Turks.<sup>11</sup>

However, in order to fully grasp the genesis of this document, it is important to underline the role of the above-mentioned Polish emigrants, grouped around Adam Czartoryski. Namely, these men closely observed the development of Serbia since the days of the First Uprising against the Ottomans. They believed Serbia should pursue an independent path avoiding Austria and Russia, thus escaping the danger of being partitioned in similar manner as it happened to Poland. They also stressed the idea that the Slaves of the European Turkey must unite. The Ottoman Empire

8 Ibid. p. 39.

9 Pavlović, 2004, p. 41.

10 Over time *Načertanije* provoked a number of authors to analyse it, see: Stranjaković, 1939; Ljušić, 2004b; Bataković, 2014; Dragović-Soso, 2004, pp. 170–184.

11 Bataković, 1994, pp. 157–183.

was seen as a necessary ally at this moment but a doomed empire on the long run. The Poles also widened the perspective of the Constitutionalist by turning their attention to the role of the prominent Croats, the ones who were part of the Illyrian movement. It should be noted that French and British influences were visible as well in the Draft. More recently, the cooperation of the British diplomats stationed in Constantinople and the Polish emigrants became known in more detail.<sup>12</sup>

These Polish views were elaborated in two documents that were presented to the Constitutionalist. Firstly, in January 1843 count Adam Czartoryski wrote: *Advice on how Serbia should behave*. Here he underlined that Serbia should have the leading role in extracting the Balkan people outside of Russian sphere of influence.<sup>13</sup> The second document that influenced the creation of the Serbian national programme was the *Plan for Serbia's Slavic Policy*. It was written by the new Polish representative in Belgrade, František (Franjo) Zach (1807–1892). Later on, František Zach, became an example of a very successful adaptation of an emigrant in Serbia. He played essential role in the creation of Serbia's Artillery school. Moreover, in 1876 he came at the head of the newly established Serbian General Staff, in 1876.

Many of the Czartoryski's and Zach's ideas were visible in the Garašanin's Draft. However, he disregarded many of the strong points from the *Polish* documents. Garašan's text was much more Serbian oriented as he hardly mentioned Croats and was not generally not that interested in pan-Slavism. Actually, Garašanin changed the word 'Yugoslav' in every place in the document with the word 'Serbian'. Garašanin neither accepted Zach's argument that Serbia should lead a Yugoslav policy in its own interest. Garašanin was more focused on reinstating the Serbian Medieval state as this idea was popular among the Serbian elite at the time.<sup>14</sup> One of the interpretations of the changes Garašanin made in respect to the the *Polish advices*, was that he acted as a rational politician, that he actually adapted the programme to Serbia's modest military and economical capacities and to the existing public perceptions within Serbia.<sup>15</sup>

He was also more moderate about the potential role of Russia in Serbian liberation and unification. Russia's help was welcome if it did not come at the too high price. Garašanin believed that Serbia and Russia were close by faith and language and other features but he was no sentimental in this respect. In the essence, Serbia should act freely and independently in foreign policy and not being under the influence of foreign powers. Other Serbs should liberate themselves and join Serbia as soon as possible. For Garašanin, it was Austria who was the main and true enemy of Serbia's independent development.

However, the Draft bore the seeds of Serbia's territorial enlargement beyond the regions that were populated by the Serbs. For example, Garašan mentioned the

12 Ibid.

13 Mekenzi, 1987, p. 67.

14 Ibid. p. 78.

15 Ibid. p. 79.

possibility of linking Serbia with the Albanian tribes, enabling this way control over Medova, the port at the Adriatic Sea.<sup>16</sup>

What did he do in implementing this program? As Garašanin was at the head of the secret board in Belgrade he could invest great amount of energy into creating a wide network of agents in the neighbouring Ottoman and Habsburg empires. His work focused on Bosnia and Herzegovina. It is worth noting that Garašanin multiplied his contacts with the Croats who were part of the Ilirian movement, especially with Ljudevit Gaj (1809–1872). Serbian activities, especially propaganda, in Bosnia came to a halt due to the eruption of the conflict in Southern Hungary, in Vojvodina. Garašanin was trying to pursue a cautious policy as he feared that more direct and massive Serbian support to Serbs in Hungary might cause an international condemnation. After initial hesitation, assistance from Serbia came in volunteers, equipment, and experienced officers.<sup>17</sup>

The revolutionary events of 1848 presented danger for Serbia as well. Fear grew that prince Miloš Obrenović might use the opportunity and seize power in Serbia. Moreover, liberal opposition in Serbia was on the rise and cries for greater political freedoms were being heard. Garašanin was opposed to any idea of allowing the establishment of a powerful and independent Assembly. He asserted that if an Assembly was to meet, it could only happen in the controlled circumstances.<sup>18</sup> Garašanin was a true conservative in domestic policy.

Despite being Interior Minister, Garašanin played important international roles. He worked also established very cordial relations with the Montenegrin ruler, Petar II Njegoš (1813–1851). In 1848–1849, Garašanin also worked extensively on deepening his contacts in Bulgaria and tried to push for the unification of Serbia and Bulgaria.<sup>19</sup> In September 1852, Garašanin was appointed Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs. Due to his views about Russia and his links with Polish emigrant circles, Garašanin was forced to resign under direct Russian pressure after only six months in this post, in 1853. Despite being officially out of power, he continued to exercise strong influence on governmental decisions. He was the first Serbian statesman who advocated close and cordial relations with France.<sup>20</sup> Furthermore, he used his French contacts to attract the attention of British diplomats. All this taken together created an undisputable impression that Garašanin was trying to fully turn Serbia westward.

One of the problems for the Russian side was the Law of Public Order drafted by Garašanin. This law lasted from 1850 until 1941 in Serbia and established the strong authority of the police. The law was very severe; it was believed that it had initially been aimed at containing the pro-Russian opposition in Serbia. However, Garašanin

16 Ibid. p. 100; Košutić, 1998, pp. 325–345.

17 Mekenzi, 1987, p. 133.

18 Ibid. p. 111.

19 Ibid. p. 99.

20 Ibid. p. 151.



claimed that the law was essential in maintaining law and order in a country that could easily slip into anarchy.

Another important crisis took place with relation to the Crimean War (1853–1856). Garašanin was still out of power but far from being without political influence. He advocated for neutrality and Serbia did not interfere into this conflict.<sup>21</sup> However, Garašanin was more and more becoming an opponent of Prince Aleksandar Karadjordjević who was becoming ever more autocratic. Over time, Garašanin became a collaborator in a pro-Obrenović plot to change the dynasty. Prince Karadjordjević was by late 1850s in an open political war with the members of the Council.

In 1858 Garašanin was back in the government, again as Minister of Interior. Despite being part of the government, Garašanin was also one of the leaders of the opposition against the prince. He worked closely with other opponents of the prince such as Toma Vučić-Perišić and the influential Serbian trade Miša Anastasijević. The plan was to call for an Assembly where the prince will be dethroned. Since 1848 until 1858 not a single meeting of the Assembly took place. The plan was to do it now. The candidates who were to be elected for the Assembly were to be the supporters of the triumvirate: Garašanin, Toma Vučić-Perišić and Miša Anastasijević. It was Garašanin's task to influence the selection of the Assembly's candidates. In order to do so, Garašanin could rely on his bureaucratic and security apparatus.

#### **1.4.1. 'Načertanijein' Practice**

Preparations for the *Svetoandrejska skupšina* did not go smoothly. The army still supported the prince Aleksandar Karadjordjević and there was a danger of a civil war. Garašanin played here an important role in mediating between the army and the opposition.<sup>22</sup> Once the Assembly's two months long meetings started, events surprised Garašanin. He could not control the events at the Assembly as the new force appeared, the liberals. Young Serbs who were returning from the western universities were becoming a force on their own right. The prince Aleksandar Karadjordjević was deposed but, on Garašanin's surprise, the new elected ruler was the old Prince Miloš Obrenović.

Garašanin could not work with his old opponent. However, Prince Miloš Obrenović died shortly, in 1860. His son, Mihailo Obrenović became the Serbian prince for the second time. Despite previous bitter clashes with Prince Mihailo Obrenović, Garašanin now became his right hand. In 1861, he was named the prime minister. He showed his *Načertanije* to the Prince who fully embraced it. These were the days of enlighten absolutism in Serbia. Garašanin and the Prince agreed that the Serbs were not ready for constitutional state.

Garašanin was given almost free hands in pursuing his foreign policy plan. He thus diligently worked on establishing contacts and finding support for his ideas

21 Jovanović, 1931, pp. 422–431.

22 Mekenzi, 1987, p. 270.

for a Balkan federation. By mid-1860 Garašanin became disappointed in Great Powers realising that any form of such federation cannot count on their support. In this respect Garašanin modified his views stating that the Balkan nations must rely only on themselves. By mid 1860s his plan was that the entire Balkans must rise against the Ottomans in a coordinated way.<sup>23</sup>

In the meantime, in 1862 serious clashes erupted in Serbia between local population and the Ottoman garrisons. The situation was worst in Belgrade. Garašanin was again indispensable, preparing military action but also leading negotiations with the Ottoman commanders. In 1867, after years of international diplomatic activities, the decision was reached that the Ottoman garrisons should leave Serbia.

By 1867 only pieces remained from Garašanin's plans for the Balkan alliance. Only the links with Montenegro were solid, all others were lost. The Balkan federation prove to be a highly unrealistic idea. Despite this, by 1867 Garašanin thought that Serbia was ready for the war with the Ottomans and that national liberations should be continued right away. However, Prince Mihailo Obrenović was hesitant. He actually completely changed his mind believing that the Serbian army was too weak. The opinions between the two were diverging on other matters as well, including the prince 'divorce and plans for a future marriage'. Garašanin was replaced in 1867 and he never returned to power again.<sup>24</sup> He died in 1874.

Garašanin was the politician who gave vital contribution for the creation of Serbia's defensive as well as repressive apparatus. He was also the man who formed modern bureaucracy. He was the forerunner of the so-called *Paris Serbs* who will present the next generation of educated Serbs, the ones who arrived from European universities. Garašanin did not share their ideas and faith in constitutional democracy and free Assembly. He preferred focus on law and order, he liked the *village life of the old days*. However, his opponents liked to underlined that he was no idealised statesman. They spoke about his possibility to shift loyalties as well as his harshness in using the repressive apparatus.

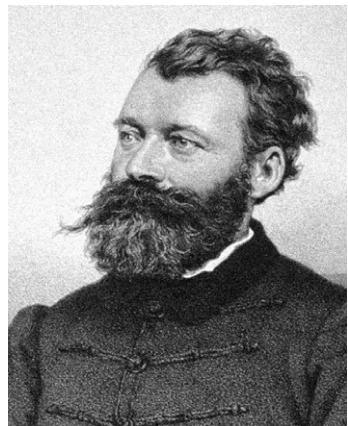
Garašanin ideas about the foreign policy had a great impact on Serbia's thinking thorough the century. His *Načertanije* caused many controversies. It was often taken out the context of the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and treated as a modern nationalistic programme. Without a doubt many expansionistic features were evident. However, for some it was a visionary pro-Yugoslav document that led to 1918 unification, that was centred around the Piedmont's role of the Kingdom of Serbia. For others it was search for exclusively Serbian enlargement (pejoratively seen as a Greater Serbian program). It is important to mentioned that the document was used in the introductory section of the indictment against the former Yugoslav president Slobodan Milošević in front of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY).

23 Jovanović, 1963, p. 85.

24 Ćorović, 1938.

## 2. Svetozar Miletić: A National and Liberal Tribune (1826–1901)<sup>25</sup>

Svetozar Miletić has often been described as the most important Serbian political personality north of the Danube and the Sava rivers in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. He was perceived as a rebel by nature and advocated for an active approach in politics. He claimed the Serbs in Hungary should *fight and not beg for their political rights*. His robust public appearance and eloquent expression of liberal concepts as well as national interests made him a hero of the Serbs in Vojvodina and elsewhere. Ultimately, he was a tragic figure, as persecution influenced his end.



### 2.1. Birth and childhood, early education

Svetozar Miletić was born in the village Mošorin in Vojvodina, in Hungary in 1826. He was one of seven children in a peasant family. The village was mostly populated by the families of soldiers on the Military Frontier. After finishing elementary school in his village and three years in the local German school, Miletić went to the Serbian orthodox gymnasium in Novi Sad. He later continued his education in Bratislava. This was a formative experience for him, as he encountered pan-Slavism and liberalism for the first time.<sup>26</sup>

He first came to prominence during the revolutionary turmoil of 1848–1849. He gave a passionate speech in the village of Čurug to Serbs who were about to be sent as soldiers to Italy. He urged them to stay in their villages and to defend their own homes and called on them to join the emerging Serbian national movement. His pleas failed, however, and the troops went to Italy. The authorities tried to arrest him and he went to Belgrade, trying to direct the people's dissatisfaction against the Ottomans.<sup>27</sup> In Belgrade, in May 1848, Miletić was trying to organise an attack on the Ottoman garrison with local youth. However, as soon as the Serbian authorities found out they said to him that he should *make troubles elsewhere*. Miletić was expelled from Serbia.<sup>28</sup>

25 Svetozar Miletic, Serbian journalist, author, politician, Lithographs by Josef Kriehuber, 1867, in: Wolfgang v. Wurzbach: Katalog der Porträtlithographien Josef Kriehubers (2. Auflage 1955) Nr. 1482, public domain, source of the picture: [https://hu.wikipedia.org/wiki/F%C3%A1jl:Svetozar\\_Miletic\\_Litho.jpg](https://hu.wikipedia.org/wiki/F%C3%A1jl:Svetozar_Miletic_Litho.jpg).

26 Miletić, 2011, pp. 15–17.

27 Kovacević, 2009, pp. 14–15.

28 Mikavica, 2006, p. 28.

## 2.2. *Miletić and the 1848*

The key event in the Serbian effort to fight for their own autonomy within the Habsburg Empire and Hungarian Kingdom was the May Assembly, held from 13 until 15 May 1848. Svetozar Miletić was participating in the proceedings, despite his age of only twenty-two years. The political accord with the Hungarian elite was not reached and the soon the fighting erupted. Svetozar Miletić was mostly occupied with propaganda and diplomacy, but he did fight in one battle. He was sent to Croatia as well as across Vojvodina to keep the moral high ground and to find weapons and equipment.

In December 1848 Miletić published two important articles. There he claimed that Slavic people must win liberty. Natural rights must surpass historical rights of Austria. He was hoping to see a confederate solution for Austria and this would be most favourable for the Serbian request for their own autonomous territory within Hungary. Ultimately, at the end of revolution, in August 1849, Miletić was some sort of front line correspondent, writing detailed and very accurate reports.

After the revolutionary events ended, Svetozar Miletić was disappointed and left the political movement. He had decided to finish his law studies in Vienna. Interestingly, the stipend for his studies came from Serbia, from the prince Mihailo Obrenović. Miletić was already a well-known figure among the Serbs in the Balkans.<sup>29</sup> Afterwards, he worked as a clerk in a small municipality in Vojvodina. After many difficulties, he was finally granted permission to open a law office in Novi Sad in 1857.

## 2.3. *The Energetic Tribune*

Things again became electrified in 1860, when absolutism was abolished in Austria. Svetozar Miletić was back in politics with his entire energy.

He firstly published an article formulating the new postulates of the Serbian national politics in the Habsburg empire. He claimed that *the Serbs have place a line above their accounts with Vienna*. This meant that the Serbs had earned nothing while fighting for Vienna. The new path was to reach a deal the Hungarian liberals, not with Vienna. However, Svetozar Miletić firstly clashed with the Conservative Serbian elite from the Habsburg Monarchy who disapproved with Miletić's views and decided to remain loyal to the court.<sup>30</sup>

Still, Miletić was on the rise and his speeches made a stunning impact on the Serbian public. He published a number of texts and was present in various societies across Vojvodina. He published in the *Serbian journal* (Srpski dnenvik), the Banner (Zastava). He was member of the *Serbian reading room in Novi Sad*. Also, he was one of the founders of the Serbian National Theater in Novi Sad. Besides propagating collaboration with the Hungarian liberals, Miletić argued for the cultural and political unity of the Serbian people. He was active in the movement of United Serbian Youth

<sup>29</sup> Ibid. p. 16.

<sup>30</sup> Miletić, 2001, p. 13; Kovačević, 2009, pp. 31–33.

(Ujedinjena omladina srpska) and he often travelled to Principality of Serbia where he met other liberals. In 1865 he was very active in propagating the Serb-Hungarian friendship. He claimed that it is possible to fight for the autonomous Serbian Vojvodina within Hungary and to remain in good terms with the Hungarian elite.

The new political change took place in 1867 with the Austro-Hungarian agreement. Now, Svetozar Miletić had to adapt his course and underline the importance of preservation of the Serbian national identity in fears of the Hungarian pressure. He claimed, *'as long as there is one Serb in Hungary he should be called the people'*. In 1869 he founded the Serbian Peoples Free Party (Srpska narodna slobodoumna stranka). He was twice the Mair of Novi Sad (1861–1862) and (1867–1868). During his office he, in vain, tried to introduce the Serbian language as one of the official languages in administration. However, his activities place them on the collision course with the Habsburg authorities. He was sentenced to prison in 1870–1871, for three years. The reason was his criticism of the Croatian ban and Croatian Diet.<sup>31</sup>

#### **2.4. The Antistate Element**

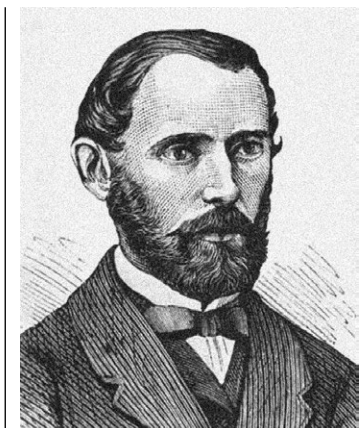
He was continuously perceived as a figure who undermined the state authority with his clear political ideas and their energetic articulation. For the second time he was arrested in 1876. He was deprived of his immunity which he enjoyed as a party deputy. He was sentenced only in 1878. He was sentenced on 5 years for high treason. The conditions were now much worst for him in prison than was the case the first time when he was allowed to read, publish and receive his political colleagues. He was pardoned in 1879, but his time in jail ruined much of his physical and mental health.<sup>32</sup> In 1880–1882 back in the political life, but things had changed. The Serbs in Vojvodina were less enthusiastic about his struggle for change of the position of the Serbian population. Many thought that they should find a way of adapting to the new post 1867 realities. His party lost its initial strength and had to dissolve in 1884. Miletić was a broken men haunted by paranoid visions. From 1883 until 1889 he was in mental hospital in Budapest. He was released but he was not capable for any political activity. He died in 1901.

Svetozar Miletić was a type of a liberal imbued with pan-Slavism, nationalism than spread across Europe as part of the 1848 revolutions. However, Miletić always claimed that national freedom must coexist with citizen's consciousness. National rights must not be protected at the expense of endangering constitutional liberties and citizens' equality. He also fought against the Serbian conservative circles, often imbodyed in the Serbian Orthodox Church. Miletić always underlined the possibility of reaching an agreement with the Hungarian and Croatian side. He strongly believed that the political and territorial existence of the *Serbian Vojvodina* can be achieved on mutual benefit. In this respect he wrote about the federation of Hungary.

31 Kovačević, 2009, pp. 89–91.

32 Mikavica, 2006, pp. 21–22.

### 3. Vladimir Jovanović: A Liberal at Any Cost (1833–1922)<sup>33</sup>



The biography of Vladimir Jovanović reveals the increasing influence the Serbian youth, educated abroad, played in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in the Principality of Serbia. These men became the true exponents of western democracy and liberal principles. Vladimir Jovanović shows that education abroad was important, but that travelling and making international contacts also had an immense role for their formation as liberals. At the same time, this generation of liberal thinkers and activists could not make a distinction between the national liberation and the unification of all Serbs, from the questions of legality or people's

sovereignty. However, the liberal and democratic principals were not welcomed by the Serbian authorities. On several occasions Vladimir Jovanović had to flee from Serbia, while on two occasions, he had to flee from Serbia.

#### 3.1. Birth and childhood, early education

Vladimir Jovanović was born in 1833, in the Serbian border town of Šabac. He was one of the six children. His background was humble but from his mother's side he was the ancestor of one of the key commanders of the Karadjordje Petrović, the leader of the first Serbian uprising against the Ottoman Turks (1804–1813). Jovanović finished elementary and high school in his home town. However, his hard work and capacities were noticed. He got a stipend to be able to continue his education in Belgrade, at the newly established Belgrade Lyceum. At the time, this was the highest-ranking educational institution in Serbia. Jovanović firstly he studied philosophy and later, he went to the legal department. He graduated with the highest merits.<sup>34</sup>

He desired to pursue further levels of specialisation with the aim of studying political economy. However, in 1854, he received a stipend for the agricultural academy in Hungary. He later managed to transfer to the similar institution in Germany. In total he spent only 2 years of his formal education abroad. Much of this time he did not even spend in one place: he travelled extensively across the

<sup>33</sup> Vladimir Jovanović, Serbian politician, Unknown author – Opao, year 1877, digitized by the National Library of Serbia, public domain source of the picture: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vladimir\\_Jovanovi%C4%87\\_\(politician\)#/media/File:Vladimir\\_Jovanovic.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vladimir_Jovanovi%C4%87_(politician)#/media/File:Vladimir_Jovanovic.jpg).

<sup>34</sup> Ćorović, 1922, pp. 459–465.

Netherlands, France, and Belgium to see how the political and economic systems in these countries functioned. He returned to Serbian Principality in 1856.<sup>35</sup>

### 3.2. *Becoming a Liberal*

While abroad, he became acquainted with the youth organisations that students had organised across Europe since 1848 events. Vladimir Jovanović, once back in Serbia, became one of the key personalities in the Serbian Youth Movement (*Družina mladeži srpske*). The society fought for national liberation as well as domestic liberalisation of politics and social relations.

The critical moment for Vladimir Jovanović career came in 1858. This was the year when national Assembly was summoned for the first time in ten years. The plan of influential members of the Serbian conservative elite was to replace the dynasty. The idea was to bring back Prince Mihailo Obrenović to power. However, this calculation was flawed. Namely, the increasing role of the young Serbian liberal intellectuals became very palpable at the Assembly. Consequently, Vladimir Jovanović was named as one of the secretaries at the Assembly (*Svetoadrejska skupština*). In the essence, *Svetoandrejska skupština*, presented a mixture of an assembly understood as a Convent, inspired by the French revolution, and a patriarchal form of democracy, seen at the Serbian countryside.<sup>36</sup>

At the Assembly, the liberals fought for a systematic changes in Serbia. Vladimir Jovanović used the Assembly for presenting the core principles of liberal teachings. As he explained, the essence was that the Serbian people should decide what kind of state does it want. The institution of the Assembly, the liberals claimed, was to serve to reduce tensions in the society and to avoid bloodshed and civil conflict. Vladimir Jovanović underlined the essential role of the powerful Assembly and free and fair elections of the deputies. The sovereignty belonged to the assembled citizens, claimed the liberals.<sup>37</sup>

These principles were included in the Assembly's decisions. Assembly was to meet each year, the elections of the deputies were to be free, while the state budget was to be brought before the Assembly for the approval. In addition, the press was to be free. Even individual ministerial responsibility was introduced. However, in reality, these concept remained a dead letter. The new prince of Serbia was actually its old ruler, Prince Miloš Obrenović, the last person to accept such *novelties*. Vladimir Jovanović even had to leave Serbia due to pressure of the new authorities. After the death of Prince Miloš Obrenović, he returned, but things were far from calm.

The new Serbian prince, Mihailo Obrenović, was suspicious about any opposition and he was not willing to allow any democratic principles to be introduced. Countering the arguments of the liberals the prince claimed that Serbia was still 'half-Turkish' having still the Ottoman pasha sitting in Belgrade surrounded by his

35 Ibid.

36 Bataković, 1998, pp. 235–240.

37 Mijatović, 2011, p. 21.

troops. Any *western based* political change of the system was branded as a dangerous experiment.<sup>38</sup> Jovanović was not discouraged, he launched a new journal, named *Narodna skupština* (National Assembly). The problems started right away. The first number was instantly banned, and the three editors, including Vladimir Jovanović, were sent to prison for 8 days.

Since the educated youth began returning to Serbia, a new division opened up. These newcomers from Vienna, Paris, and Berlin became colloquially known as *the Parisians*, in contrast to the so-called *Germans*, the previous generation of the Serbs who had come from the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy or were educated there. However, Vladimir Jovanović was beyond these categories. His general knowledge was much more comprehensive and his erudition was hard to match.

Despite his opposition to the prince and the government, Vladimir Jovanović obtained a position at the Belgrade Great School (Velika škola). This institution was the forerunner of the Belgrade University. Jovanović thought political economy. At the same, he wrote a lot. The themes varied from political economy, notions of freedom and legality to various social problems including poverty and loans. Soon, he became the true leader of the Serbian liberals. These admirers of democracy and parliamentarism included several prominent Serbian intellectuals such as Stojan Bošković and Alimpije Vasiljević.

The full-scale clash between the liberals and the prince was unavoidable. In 1859 the mandates of the liberal deputies were cancelled and they were forced out of the state service. Vladimir Jovanović managed to keep his post at the university, at least until 1864.

During his lifetime, Vladimir Jovanović was the editor of several journals. In 1859 he was the editor in chief of the *Serbian papers* (*Serbske novine*). However, after the complains of the Ottoman pasha in relation to one of the texts, Jovanović had to flee from the country as his life was in danger. He left for Belgium and England. There he deepened his understanding of the British parliamentarism. During his trips he managed to become acquainted with many high-ranking political figures as well as international emigrants such as Giuseppe Mazzini, Lajos Kossuth or Mikail Bakunin.

Then the 1862 came when a minor incident between the Ottoman garrison in Belgrade and the local Serbian population evolved in an open conflict. Tensions were high across Serbia. Vladimir Jovanović used his international contacts, especially the ones in Britain, to find diplomatic support for the Serbian cause. It became evident that the Serbian liberals could not separate the national question from the issue of citizen's virtues. In London he managed to meet British statesman William Gladstone and other influential figures. It is important to mention his close ties with Italian revolutionaries at the time. With Mazzini Jovanović even made a more detailed plans about mutual assistance during their struggle for national liberation. However, all actions were stopped by the British diplomats as soon as the

| 38 Ćorović, 1922, p. 455. |



plans begun to take a more definite shape. Similar plans were made with the leader of the Hungarian national movement, Lajos Kossuth. Here, talks were held about the possibilities of a Danube confederation. These plans were vague or never came close any materialisation, but they reveal the good will and desire to collaborate in solving similar problems.

### 3.3. *An Activist and a Minister*

Once back in Serbia, Jovanović became very active in the Society of Serbian Literacy (Društvo srpske slovesnosti). The society primarily dealt with the issues of literacy and standardisation of the language. However, over time, political issues became intertwined with its activities. In 1864 Jovanović lost his position and had to leave Serbia again. It was all related to these activities in the above-mentioned society. The reason was Jovanović's brutal criticism of the Serbian elite that surrounded the Prince Mihajlo Obrenović, in one of his lectures held at the Society of Serbian Literacy.

Vladimir Jovanović left for Geneva where he launched a new journal: *Sloboda* (Freedom), later renamed to *Serbian Freedom* (Srpska Sloboda). The journal was short-lived, 1864–1866. Jovanović also collaborated with the Serbian liberals in Vojvodina, in the Habsburg Monarchy. He kept close ties with Svetozar Miletić (1826–1901). For example, when Svetozar Miletić founded the famous Serbian paper *Zastava* (the Banner) in Novi Sad in 1866, Vladimir Jovanović was invited to serve as the co-editor. Together, the liberals from the two countries proclaimed that the young Serbs should unite wherever they are, that their intellectual forces should work together. The idea of youth was linked with the statehood of Serbia. The liberals argued that the entire Serbian nation presents *youth* as the nation was still striving for its independence from the Ottoman rule.

After the assassination of the Prince Mihailo Obrenović in 1867 Vladimir Jovanović was arrested and kept in pre-trial detention for 7 months. Due to his criticism of the government, he was an obvious target. He was, however, released without any charges.

The Serbian rebellion in Bosnia and Herzegovina of 1875 changed many things in the life of Vladimir Jovanović. He believed that the moment was ripe for a national unification and that the general Serbian, and even Balkan-wide, revolt was pending. Consequently, he and other fellow liberals entered the Serbian government. Vladimir Jovanović became the minister of finance. He was in office until 1880. Jovanović left after his clash with Prince Milan Obrenović (1854–1901).<sup>39</sup> The main reason was the prince's plan to allow extraordinary economic concessions to Austro-Hungary. The problem was also Jovanović's writing about the state malversations in construction of the railway system. Jovanović and other liberals were thrown out from the government in 1891 and sent into retirement.

39 Bataković, 2014, pp. 89–95.

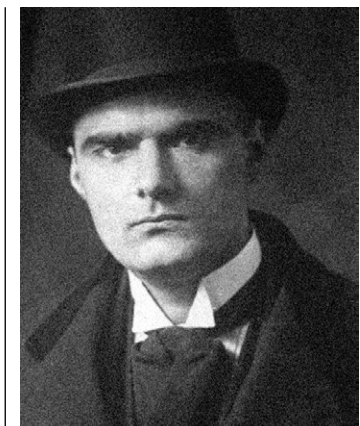
Jovanović left not only the government but the politics and the entire public life. Disappointed with the functioning of the political system and his inability to change it, he went into an internal exile. However he remained an expert for all political matters in Serbia. This absence from daily politics also meant that his biography had nothing to do with the bloody fall of the Obrenović dynasty in 1903. He remained a state advisor 1890–1903 but without any important role. In 1891 he and his fellow liberals published an open letter to all patriots with the call to unite and to leave the partisan policy aside.<sup>40</sup> The public saw this effort as a naïve attempt. His liberal principles did not leave him even in old age.

In 1863 while in London he published his manuscript *Serbia and the Eastern Question*. In 1876 he translated the work of John Steward Mill *Considerations on Representative Government*. In 1870 he published the *Political Dictionary*, a sort of political encyclopaedia encompassing essential concepts and notions.

Vladimir Jovanović died in 1922 after he witnessed the South Slavic unification and numerous political changes. He is remembered as an audacious activist and as a comprehensive liberal theoretician. He understood that liberalism implies not only freedom of exercising political rights but also systematic political education and free press. As he claimed, people cannot go to the elections *blindfolded*. He was most impressed by the British parliamentary system. His son, the famous Serbian intellectual Slobodan Jovanović (1869–1958), said that his father was the first true anglophone in Serbia. Indeed, his fascination with the Western political system of parliamentarism and democracy was undisputed. Vladimir Jovanović was also a thrilled nationalist of the *Mazzini type*. Unfortunately, his memoirs disappeared during the Austro-Hungarian occupation of Serbia.

40 Milosavljević, 2012, pp. 246–250.

## 4. Dimitrije Mitrinović – a charlatan or a visionary of the New Europe? (1887–1953)<sup>41</sup>



Dimitrije Mitrinović is mostly mentioned in Serbian culture as one of the many individuals who were part of the intellectual climate in the Balkans in the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In the artistic sense, he is often found in anthologies of expressionist lyrics. In the political context, he is most often mentioned as one of the ideologues of the political-revolutionary organisation *Mlada Bosna* (*Young Bosnia*). Nevertheless, he had a wide range of interests and was evaluated by his contemporaries and connoisseurs in many different ways; he was alternately seen as poet, charlatan, rascal-guru, spy, playboy, revolutionary, prophet, mystic,

and occultist. His biography can be divided into three periods: 1887–1912, when he lived in Bosnia and Herzegovina; 1913–1914 in Munich; and 1914–1953, which he spent in England.

### 4.1. Birth and childhood, early education

Dimitrije was born on 21 October 1887 in Donji Poplat in today's municipality of Berkovići (Stolac) in Herzegovina as the oldest of ten children. He spent his childhood in Zovi Dol near Nevesinje. His parents – father Mihajlo and mother Vidosava – were teachers. In such a family, he received a solid primary education. He finished primary school in Blagaj, and entered the grammar school in nearby Mostar in 1899. He grew up in an area the citizens of which held vivid memories of the Herzegovinian uprising against the Turks (1875). In Mostar, he first encountered the heated revolutionary and avant-garde teachings of that time. Already in grammar school, he became an active member of secret national revolutionary organisations in the fight against the annexation of the province of Bosnia and Herzegovina to Austria-Hungary. He led the *Matica* literary society and then was a member of the *Sloboda*. In the Mostar grammar school, he attended the same class as Bogdan Žerajić, the idol of the young Bosnian revolutionary youth, the future assassin of General Marijan Varešanin, the Austrian leader of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Even as a grammar school student, he published a large number of poems, art and literary criticism and essays in various magazines: *Bosanska vila*,

<sup>41</sup> Dimitrije Mitrinović, Serb and Yugoslav author, poet, translator and mystic, public domain, source of the picture: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dimitrije\\_Mitrinovi%C4%87#/media/File:Dimitrije\\_Mitrinovi%C4%87,\\_1920.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dimitrije_Mitrinovi%C4%87#/media/File:Dimitrije_Mitrinovi%C4%87,_1920.jpg).

*Nova Iskra, Delo, Brankovo kolo, Srbobran, Pokret, Hrvatski pokret, Slovenski jug*. Like other young people who had just blossomed intellectually, he was caught by a true fever of national, political and literary ideas, from Mazzini, Apis and Kropotkin, to Tomas Masaryk, Chernyshevsky, Ivan Meštrović and Jovan Skerlić, as well as Marinetti and Whitman. Although their ideological notions were not always completely clear and defined, they yearned for freedom from the imperial restraints and fantasised about changing the world.<sup>42</sup>

#### **4.2. Faculty, titles and vocation, influences he received**

After finishing grammar school in Mostar in 1907, Mitrinović continued his studies of philosophy, psychology and logic in Zagreb, Vienna and Belgrade. After two years of study at the Faculty of Philosophy in Zagreb (1907–1909), he became more involved in the work of the magazine *Bosanska vila*, where in 1910 he became the youngest member of the editorial staff. The magazine brought together a wide circle of authors from South Slavic territories. This is where the first works of later well-known Serbian writers Ivo Andrić and Miloš Crnjanski were published and where the Serbian-Croatian cultural unity was affirmed. Mitrinović often travelled to Belgrade, from where he also received material assistance.<sup>43</sup> As a talented orator and literary critic, he was moving within the Belgrade-Zagreb-Sarajevo triangle, acting as a propagator and interpreter of revolutionary Yugoslav ideas. He is one of the contributors to the influential magazine *Slovenski jug*. He is the initiator of the *Zora* monthly magazine of the community of South Slavic students in Vienna. During 1911, he was hired by the Serbian government to promote the works of the sculptor Ivan Meštrović and a number of other Serbian and Croatian artists in Rome. In the magazine *Srpski književni glasnik* (Serbian Literary Herald) Mitrinović praised Meštrović's sculptures as a means of spreading and affirming the Yugoslav idea. He would do the same in 1915, when he was in London, where he organised a large exhibition of Meštrović's works.<sup>44</sup>

For him, liberated and revived sense of Serbian national identity, as well as of Yugoslavian one, would be a small step towards the final plan of United Europe and the unification of the world community.<sup>45</sup> Mitrinović had a significant reputation among younger people in the Balkans, spreading cultural influence and avant-garde European ideas. He led a group of young revolutionaries of the Yugoslav orientation who mixed the national political ideas of Prince Mihailo Obrenović and Ilija Garašanin, Juraj Strossmayer and the Illyrian movement, Vidovdan (Saint Vitus day in Serbian) mythology of Meštrović's poems, and literature that glorified the 'intoxication by the fight for freedom'. Many, under the influence of those teachings, dreamed of themselves shooting the emperor and sacrificing themselves

42 Rigby, 2006, pp. 1–3; Palavestra, 2003, pp. 12–13; Pajin, 2010; Markovich, 2023, pp. 23–24.

43 Rigby, 2006, pp. 3–5; Pajin, 2010.

44 Palvestra, 2003, p. 25; Rigby, 2006, pp. 6–8, 11; Pajin, 2010.

45 In those years, Mitrinović advocated Yugoslavian identity in various texts. One of the most impressive formulations can be found in Mitrinović, 1912; Palavetra, 2003, p. 16; Pajin, 2010.

for freedom and national unification. Mitrinović from the very beginning imposed himself by his intellectual potential, wide views, but also by his talent for conspiratorial work. He collaborated with prominent members of *Young Bosnia* but also with the youngest writers such as Augustin Ujević and Ivo Andrić.<sup>46</sup> *Young Bosnia*, whose ideologist is also considered to be Mitrinović, was an informal organisation. It was a collective name for a wide circle of individuals of various initiatives and actions, from cultural and political ones, to assassinations, which created the impression among many that the whole its orientation was terrorist.<sup>47</sup>

### 4.3. *Munich adventure and acquaintance with Wassily Kandinsky*

In the beginning of 1913, Mitrinović decided to continue his studies in Vienna and Munich, which at that time was an important centre of art studies for many students from the Balkans. He graduated in philosophy in Tübingen in 1914 at the dawn of the First World War. His stay and work in Munich will be marked by his association with the *Blue Rider* art group (Der Blaue Reiter) led by Franz Marc and Wassily Kandinsky, but also other actions, to which he devoted more time and energy than to his studies. In Munich, he increasingly turned away from Yugoslavism towards European utopia. In the beginning of 1914, he met and became close to Kandinsky. He soon prepared the lecture '*Kandinsky and the new art – taking tomorrow by storm*', which he held on 27 February in the hall of the museum in Munich. Friendship with Kandinsky and sharing the same views with him in the sphere of abstract art, soon translated into the field of social action. They tried to establish the *Foundations of the Future* movement, with a messianic-utopian vision of the salvation of 'universal Europe'. Mitrinović promoted the idea of gathering prominent individuals who would enable peace and prosperity for the world. This idea was already initiated by Erich Gutkind and Frederik van Eeden.<sup>48</sup> Gutkind and

46 Serbian Nobel prize winner Ivo Andrić admits that he was influenced by Mitrinović's advice to learn English and to read Whitman, a poet whom he would later mention as one of the most important in his reading: '*who revealed to me that beyond these unfortunate casbahs there are others and better and happier worlds*'. Grujičić, 2005.

47 The members of *Young Bosnia* were many young people attracted to national ideas bili: Pero Slijepčević, Bogdan Žerajić, Vladimir Gaćinović, Pavle Bastajić, Vladimir Čerina, Gavrilo Princip...The first assassination in 1910, on the Austrian general Varešanin, viceroy of the annexed Bosnia and Herzegovina (by Austria-Hungary in 1908), was carried out by Bogdan Žerajić (1886–1910) who fired five shots and killed himself with sixth. The second assassination, more famous one, was the assassination of the heir to the throne, Franz Ferdinand, on June 28, 1914, carried out by minors, Nedeljko Čabrinović (1895–1916) and Gavrilo Princip (1894–1918), which was followed by an ultimatum to Serbia, and then (on July 28) the attack of Austria-Hungary and the beginning of the First World War. Palavestra, 2003, pp. 29–30; Pajin, 2010.

48 They had similar ideas, expressed in the joint book *World Conquest through Heroic Love* (Welt-Eroberung durch Helden-Liebe, Berlin-Leipzig, 1911), and this was preceded by Gutkind's book *Sideric Birth* (Siderische Geburt, 1910.), which Mitrinović much appreciated. Palavestra, 2003, p. 40; Nemanja Radulović, 2022, pp. 139–159; More about this group of intellectuals see in: Van Hengel, 2022.

van Eeden suggested that Mitrinović become a member of their Blut-bund group. Gustav Landauer, Martin Buber, Henri Borel and others were also members, and the group met in the summer house of the Gutkinds in Potsdam.<sup>49</sup> They believed that the working classes needed the leadership of intellectuals with a vision in order to achieve socialism. According to him, positive social changes are possible through personality transformation and cooperation, rather than through class struggles and the conquest of political power. Hence, according to him, an alliance and togetherness of leading minds and spirits was needed, as a moral force that would influence the further development of the world towards peace and harmony. As one of the group's intellectual gurus, he planned for 1915, a collection of works by prominent intellectuals of Europe, with the joint title 'Towards the Mankind of the Future through Aryan Europe'. Mitrinović and Kandinsky planned to make promotional trips and lectures throughout Europe.<sup>50</sup> All these activities were interrupted by the news of the assassination of Crown Prince Franz Ferdinand by his friends from *Young Bosnia*. Fearing arrest, he went to London, where he made himself available to the Serbian embassy. He had entered Britain a few days before 4 August 1914, when Britain and Germany went to war. The war and destruction also caused a split between the German and other members of the Blut-bund group and its dissolution.<sup>51</sup>

#### 4.4. London years 1914–1953

By moving to London, Mitrinović became a member of several other important intellectual circles. In 1914, he issued a platform for the movement, called *Independent Europe*, where he laid the foundations for the concept of uniting the peoples of the European area. He presented a vision of a united 'third Balkan' as a synthesis of the two previous ones – Hellenistic and Byzantine as a link between the New Europe and the New East. Later, he would move away from that idea and go towards the form of a universal utopia and a united Europe and its peoples and a universal

49 An invitation to cooperate was also sent to Rainer Maria Rilke, Dmitry Merezhkovsky, Ezra Pound, Rudolf Eucken, H. G. Wells, Romain Rolland, Upton Sinclair, Rabindranath Tagore and others. More in: Van Hengel, 2022; Pajin, 2010.

50 The list of potential collaborators also included: Henri Bergson, H. G. Wells, Rosa Luxemburg, Gustav Landauer, Maxim Gorky, Peter Kropotkin, Bernard Shaw, Knut Hamsun, Tomas Masaryk, Ivan Mestrovic, Anatole France, Franz Oppenheimer, Pablo Picasso, Houston Stuart Chamberlain, Jean Jaures and others. Mitrinović's proclamation to the intellectuals ends with the following words: 'the peoples, as the immediate bearers of life, that human ocean of the whole of Europe, must convert themselves and unite for that humanity of Aryan Europe, against the will of the states that prepare world wars and maintain the old capitalist order; and that requires trust and faith in Europe as a whole'. Mitrinovic, 1990, II, pp. 196–202; Palavestra, 2003, pp. 41–42.

51 Like Mitrinović, Kandinsky had to leave Germany and returned to Russia. After the war, Kandinsky will return to Germany and participate from 1919 in the creation and work of the Bauhaus. Palavestra, 2003, p. 41; Rigby, 2006, pp. 21–30.

utopia of a united mankind. His biographer Palavestra calls this evolution, a path ‘from national dogma to planetary utopia’.<sup>52</sup>

During 1915, in London and Paris, in cooperation with the Serbian embassy, he organised lectures and exhibitions about the works of Ivan Meštović and his Yugoslav project the Vidovdan Temple. In cooperation with the Serbian priest, on whom he had a great ideological influence, Nikolaj Velimirović and Niko Županić, he wrote the work *the South Slav Monuments*, which was published in English.<sup>53</sup> As a propagator of Yugoslavism, he was nevertheless deeply disappointed with the mode of unification and the national narrow-mindedness that was manifested during the creation of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. For the rest of his life, he will only visit Yugoslavia one more time. After the introduction of the January 6 dictatorship in 1929, Mitrinović came to Belgrade at the invitation of King Alexander Karadjordjević. He was presented as a veteran of the revolutionary movement from which the South Slavic state arose. King Alexander initially thought that help in forming a new Yugoslav ideology could come from Mitrinović, listened to his ideas about the Yugoslav nation, about federation and socialism, about connecting religions and churches, but cooperation did not take place. His radical and utopian ideas and advocacy did not fit into the unitary projects of the ‘king-unifier’ who was soon assassinated. Mitrinović, as a unique and independent personality, found himself ideologically distant both from the king and from the left opposition.<sup>54</sup>

In London in the beginning of the twenties, he joined the circle of intellectuals and artists called the ‘Bloomsbury Set’ (they met in the Bloomsbury quarter), where he brought many pro-Yugoslav intellectuals. He began cooperation with the magazine *New Age*, where Nobel laureate George Bernard Shaw was one of the editors. *The New Age* magazine was known as a representative of the Fabian socialism movement (Fabian society, founded in 1884), and advocated evolution towards socialism without revolutions and upheavals. From 1921–1926, he was contributing to topics about politics, science and philosophy. He wrote under a pseudonym about how man in his actions must not give in to mere force and inertia and fate, but to actively shape the world around him with his actions.<sup>55</sup>

In 1926, he became president of the English section of the Adler Society for Individual Psychology. He then founded the group *New Europe*, which would exist intermittently until 1957. With his old revolutionary passion, Mitrinović devoted himself to propagating utopian ideas – often obscure and exotic ones. During 1932, the group organised a series of lectures under the joint title ‘Dispelling of Popular Myths’, some of which were: ‘Poverty is of God’, ‘Science will solve it all’, ‘The press

52 About his national and political programme and the transition from Yugoslavism to Europeanism, see in Palavestra, 2003, pp. 51–85.

53 Rigby, 2006, p. 50; Pajin, 2010.

54 Palavestra, 2003, pp. 339–341.

55 Rigby, 2006, pp. 54–78; Palavestra, 2003, pp. 303 ff. Pajin, 2010.

informs the people', 'There is nothing be done about it' etc. The first and only issue of the magazine *New Europe* appeared in September 1934.<sup>56</sup>

He was also the editor and founder of the *New Britain Quarterly* magazine, which appeared in October 1932. The contributors were mainly from the circle of members of *New Europe*. His letter to Hitler was published in it, where he tried to make Hitler 'come to his senses', telling him that he was leading Germany into a war that would lead to self-destruction on the continent. During (1932–1934) the group grew into the New Britain Movement (NBM). They differed from the *New Europe* in that they put focus on Britain and domestic conditions, rather than on Europe. The idea was to create a socio-political alternative, which would be above the duality that was fighting in Europe at that time – communism or fascism. In articles in various magazines, he pointed out that communism and fascism annul the individual by referring to the higher goals of the community, hence it was necessary to find a different solution to the relationship between the individual and the community. He advocated for Britain to arm itself and act quickly to stand up for justice and humanity. Otherwise, war would break out on the continent, and a possible German victory in Europe would distort the human universe.<sup>57</sup> After the war, the surviving members of the pre-war group got together at the end of 1945 and founded the *Renaissance Club*. The atomic bombing (of Hiroshima and Nagasaki) was especially condemned. The main activity was public lectures, with the aim of showing people possible ways out of the post-war crisis. The club existed until 1965, organised about 200 lectures, with lecturers from science, philosophy, culture, literature and religion.<sup>58</sup>

#### 4.5. The world of Mitrinović's ideas

'The new mankind will create itself through the union of European republics. The future of humanity cannot be created by blind historical and fateful instincts, through world wars that are being prepared on all sides...'. He wrote prophetically in *Independent Europe* as early as 1914 on the eve of the First World War.<sup>59</sup> He often found his utopian and philosophical ideas by studying and was under influence of other great thinkers of his time. He attached his views to the doctrine of the *Theosophical Society*, but they were also close to the school of psychoanalysis of Sigmund Freud and Carl Gustav Jung.

In the series of articles 'World Affairs' (New Age), Mitrinović gave a detailed vision of the world as a living organism, where each nation played its appropriate role as part of a living whole. In it, even the sides of the world represented certain

56 The president of the society was for a time the famous chemist and Nobel laureate Frederick Soddy in 1932. The society would publish a whole series of publications and become one of the more interesting intellectual circles of the English capital between the two wars. Rigby, 2006, pp. 337–357; Pajin, 2010.

57 Mitrinovic, 1935.

58 Mitrinović's texts on: Pajin, 2010.

59 Pajin, 2010.



aspects of the psyche and internal actions to which we as a whole are prone. He believed that Europe, the cradle of the development of individual self-awareness, had an obligation to take the initiative in the further development of the rest of the world. The first step would be its integration and unification. Mitrinović combined his organicist point of view with the Christian and Hegelian philosophy of the 'All-Human'. He connected the establishment of the 'kingdom of heaven on earth' with his idea of a united mankind, which left behind a history of wars and conflicts. According to him, the self-awareness of the modern individual represents the final stage of a long period of development based on Christianity, which spans millennia. Historical progress and development was subordinated to the leadership of individuals – selected geniuses. Therefore, he sees the salvation of the human race through the creation of a community of individuals, who would take responsibility for the whole of mankind, understood as a unique and divine entity.<sup>60</sup>

He advocated individualism that applied both to individuals and to cultures, i.e. individualism should not be the goal of any new homogenisation, but the voice of the individual should be heard in one general unit, which could be expressed through ritual, belief, language, creativity. He believed that mankind was at a turning point and saw the need for 'crowd creativity'. He saw this through the unification of all cultures, for the merging of all revolutions into one revolution of humanity, for the 'universal parliament of nations'. Mitrinović already warned that humanity must change the course of progress if it wanted to move forward on the path of sustainable development and not on the path of wars and extreme ideologies.<sup>61</sup>

#### **4.6. Death, echoes of his works, reception, influence**

After his illness, Mitrinović increasingly withdrew from London and social life. He lived in Richmond until his death on 28 August 1953 and was buried in Highgate Cemetery, London. His followers then founded the New Atlantis Foundation at the University of Bradford, which still looks after his legacy today and is responsible for the posthumous publication of many of his texts. The collection includes over 4500 documents written in English, German, French, as well as Serbian, and includes some of the books from his private library, from Sanskrit manuscripts, hieroglyphs, romantic and avant-garde adventures in various languages to contemporary philosophical and religious writings. He was a passionate philosopher and theoretician of politics, religion, and esotericism. In 1956, Bradford University left part of his legacy to the Belgrade University library, and in 2003 and 2004, Belgrade donated a part of his writings to Bradford. In May 2021, the first scientific

60 According to his idea, the first revelation – 'totality imbued with the divine' and the second 'Christian revelation of the divine in the human' are finished, and the third is 'the future of mankind that lies on mankind itself', that is, on the 'community of individuals'. With the third revelation of an individual genius, they assume responsibility for the fate of the world. Pekušić, 2013; More texts in: Mitrinović, 2004.

61 *'Thee human spirit is the driver of conscious life. He is the Third Force, the other two are the natural drive to maintain and the drive to get used to another individual...'* Pekušić, 2013; Mitrinovic, 2004.

conference ‘Dimitrije Mitrinović and his legacy’ was held in Belgrade, organised by the Centre for British Studies of the Faculty of Political Sciences in Belgrade and the Anglo-Serbian Society.

Although he was characterised as a utopian, one of Mitrinović’s great ideas did come true – the project of a united Europe. Because as early as 1920, he called on European states and peoples to create an ‘all-inclusive European culture’ as a ‘conscious and self-aware unit’. That idea came to life precisely in the years of his death, admittedly, more as a consequence of the economy, the development of technology and strategic interests than the idea of panhumanism, cultural and religious ecumenism that he wholeheartedly propagated.

## 5. Slobodan Jovanović (1869–1958)<sup>62</sup>: Serbs and Yugoslavia

Slobodan Jovanović was born in Novi Sad on 3 December 1869, in what was then Austria-Hungary. His father, Vladimir Jovanović (1833–1922), was a well-known politician, thinker, and one of the founders of liberalism among Serbs. As a believer in the ideals of the French Revolution, his father Vladimir named his son Slobodan (‘to be free’ in Serbian) and his daughter Pravda (‘justice’ in Serbian). These were the first such names in Serbia, with which he wanted to influence the spread of enlightened and liberal ideas among Serbs. Vladimir lived in Austria-Hungary as a political exile; because of his ideas, he had been fired and transferred from the civil service and was constantly under police surveillance.<sup>63</sup> In 1872, the family moved from Novi Sad to Belgrade, where Slobodan entered the First Boys High School in 1879 and graduated in 1886. After his high school graduation, Slobodan’s father took him to Munich and Zurich (1886–1891) to continue his education. As a state cadet, Slobodan Jovanović enrolled at the Faculty of Law in Geneva. After graduating in 1890, he continued his studies of constitutional law and political science in Paris.<sup>64</sup>



He returned to Belgrade in 1891 and entered the civil service, first as a clerk in a provincial court, after which he was transferred to the Ministry of Foreign

62 Slobodan Jovanović, Serbian writer, politician, Portrait of Slobodan Jovanović by Uroš Predić, 1931, source of the picture: public domain, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Slobodan\\_Jovanovi%C4%87#/media/File:Slobodan\\_Jovanovi%C4%87,\\_by\\_Uro%C5%A1\\_Predi%C4%87\\_\(1931\).jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Slobodan_Jovanovi%C4%87#/media/File:Slobodan_Jovanovi%C4%87,_by_Uro%C5%A1_Predi%C4%87_(1931).jpg).

63 Trkulja and Vučinić, 2009, pp. 11–22; Soleša, 1998, p. 161.

64 Trkulja and Vučinić, 2009; Stajić, 1959, pp. 258–261.

Affairs in 1892, and already in 1893 he was appointed as an attaché in the Serbian Embassy in Istanbul. The following year, he received a promotion and became the head of the Education Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, where his primary task was to provide advice on educational and ecclesiastical issues. First, his task was to organise and spread Serbian propaganda in Macedonia and other countries with a Serbian population that were then under foreign rule. This activity particularly influenced Slobodan Jovanović and his later thoughts on the issue of Macedonia.<sup>65</sup>

### **5.1. Teaching career and the Great War**

At only 26 years old, Slobodan published the study 'On the Social Contract' in 1895, a critique of Rousseau's theory. As early as 1897, he was elected as an associate professor and soon a full professor at the Faculty of Law of the Higher School in Belgrade, which became the University of Belgrade in 1905. After the introductory lecture on state sovereignty, he soon began to publish texts on legal and constitutional issues of contemporary Serbia. He wrote about the issue of the bicameral parliamentary system and the role of the constitution-making body of the Grand National Assembly. He was particularly interested in fine literature and art, and started writing literary and theatre reviews. He was one of the founders of the Belgrade style, he wrote in a 'crystal clear, easy, simple, completely accessible' way. He was one of the founders of the *Srpski književni glasnik* (Serbian Literary Herald) in 1901, which was supposed to deal with literature, science and art, as well as follow modern trends in all countries where the Serbian people lived.<sup>66</sup>

In 1905, he became a corresponding, and in 1908, a regular member of *the Royal Serbian Academy*. He published a whole series of political debates, significant historiographical works and literary reviews.<sup>67</sup> He only stopped working at the Faculty and Academy during the Balkan Wars, as well as during the Great War, when, as a conscript, he was appointed as the head of the press office in the Supreme Command. During 1915, under the pressure of the triple offensive of Austria-Hungary, Germany and Bulgaria, the Serbian army began to retreat through Albania. Slobodan Jovanović accompanied the Serbian Supreme Command to the island of Corfu. In the middle of 1916, still in the service of the press office, he went with the Supreme Command to Thessaloniki, where the Serbian army was transferred to the allied Salonica front. Even during the Balkan wars, he, as the head of the press office, met and befriended Colonel Dragutin Dimitrijević Apis, the head of the intelligence service of the Serbian army. Although Apis was removed from the position of head of the military intelligence service, he still maintained a strong influence on the officer corps, which threatened the authority of both the regent Aleksandar Karađorđević

65 Pavković, 2008, pp. 17–18.

66 Trkulja and Vučinić, 2009, pp. 253–258, 219.

67 From 1911 to 1931, Jovanović wrote a series of eight books covering the political history of modern Serbia from 1838 to 1903. Kosta, 1993, p. 137.

and the Serbian government. The regent, his officers and the Serbian government therefore organised a trial for Apis in 1916 before a military court, where Apis and his two associates were sentenced to death and executed. During the preparations for the trial, Jovanović, as an acquaintance of Apis, was removed from his position in the Thessaloniki press office of the Supreme Command and returned to Corfu, where the seat of the Serbian government was. The then Minister of the Interior unsuccessfully requested that Jovanović also be subjected to an investigation in connection with the accusations against Apis. Jovanović himself had doubts about the legal basis and political expediency of the process against Apis.<sup>68</sup>

Until the end of the war, Jovanović was appointed as an associate of the Serbian government in matters of international law and in that capacity attended the Paris Peace Conference in 1919 as a member of the royal delegation. At that time, he was not a great advocate of South Slavic unification, nor a supporter of the Yugoslav idea. After the First World War, he returned to professorship and lectures. From 1920, he turned more and more to political sociology, sociology of religion and writing in the fields of jurisprudence and history. The focus of his scientific interest was constitutional law, while the main historical works were related to the political, constitutional, and diplomatic development of Serbia in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. He left a strong impact in all of the scientific fields in which he was involved and dedicated his last lectures at Belgrade University to sociology.<sup>69</sup> He spent three years from 1928 to 1931 at the head of the Serbian Academy of Sciences.

### **5.2. Serbian Cultural Club**

Although he was close to politics and was an undisputed political authority, Jovanović avoided taking an active position as a politician throughout much of his life in order to have more space for independent intellectual action and interpretation. He began his active engagement in politics only when the Serbian Cultural Club was founded in 1937; even then, however, he appeared first as an ideologue of the reorganisation of Yugoslavia on a national basis and his role was far from that of a practical and professional politician.<sup>70</sup> After the Marseille assassination of King Alexander in 1934, a large faction of Serbian intellectuals became convinced that the state power was not able to protect Serbian national interests in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. Jovanović believed that concern for Serbian interests had ceased and that the idea of national unity in the form of integral Yugoslavism had been embraced. There was no concern for Serbian national, economic, or cultural

68 Dragutin Dimitrijević Apis (1876–1917) was one of the officers conspirators of the May Coup in 1903, when King Aleksandar Obrenović and Queen Draga were killed. He was also the leader of the conspiracy organisation Black Hand (Unification or Death) (Crna ruka, Ujedinjenje ili smrt in Serbian). He was accused of supplying weapons to the members of Young Bosnia who assassinated the Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand and of transferring them to Bosnia. More in Jovanović, 1990.

69 Trkulja and Vučinić, 2009; Đorđević, 2009, pp. 228–229.

70 Pavlović, 1993, pp. 9–10.

integration, and there was no attempt to bring the Serbs spiritually closer together. There was no space for the concept of a country that held were multiple religions, customs, mentalities, traditions, dialects, and ways of life.<sup>71</sup> According to Jovanović, disappointments in the new state came from both sides of the *'liberated provinces were dissatisfied in Serbia and Serbia was dissatisfied in liberated provinces'*.<sup>72</sup>

Therefore, he led a group of Serbian intellectuals in a campaign to establish a Serbian Cultural Club in Belgrade. In December 1936, the first assembly was held in the premises of the Serbian Literary Association and the club's work was officially approved on 15 January 1937.<sup>73</sup> The Serbian cultural club was created on the model of similar organisations in France and Great Britain, as well as the Serbian cultural society Prosvjeta.<sup>74</sup> The original intention of the Club was to place itself on the Yugoslav stage as a public forum, a gathering of Serbian democratic and patriotic forces of the then Serbian civil society, its democratic opposition and leading intellectual, scientific, cultural, and business circles. The Serbian Cultural Club was intended to be a place of meeting and discussion for all those who were interested in issues of Serbian culture and were not tied to any political ideology. Some members were democrats, some were republicans, there were also unitarians and federalists, but most of them were not supportive of the radicals and the regime. Some declared themselves Anglophiles, others Francophiles; some stood for Serbianism, the others for Slavism. Jovanović believed that an exchange of ideas would undoubtedly be useful and that it would contribute to the unification of views in matters of general national importance. Jovanović was elected as president<sup>75</sup> and the lawyers Dragiša Vasić and Nikola Stojanović were elected as vice-presidents, while Vaso Čubrilović was the secretary of the Serbian Cultural Club.<sup>76</sup>

Jovanović believed that Serbian national culture must be nurtured within the framework of Yugoslavism. For him, cultural unification is a long historical process and can be carried out by the historical forces found in Serbism, Croatism, and Slavism.<sup>77</sup> According to Jovanović, a good Serb, a good Croat, and a good Slovene can also be a good Yugoslav, and it is incorrect that a good Yugoslav can only be one who has stopped being a good Serb, Croat, or Slovene. The basic motto of the club

71 Dimić, 2006, pp. 506–507.

72 Ekmečić, 2017, p. 421.

73 Simić, 2006, p. 11; Dimić, 2006, p. 508; Popović, 1989, pp. 112–113.

74 The Serbian educational and cultural society Prosvjeta was founded in 1902 in Sarajevo with the aim of preserving Serbian culture and identity in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Popović A. Nebojša, 2003, pp. 218–219.

75 Jovanović was the first and only president of this organisation. Jovanović, 2009, pp. 241–242.

76 Of the seventy founders of the club itself, twenty-three belonged to the teaching and scientific staff of Belgrade and other universities, five of whom were rectors of Belgrade University. The eight founders of the Club were at the top of industrial and banking associations. The founders were also heads of judicial institutions. The founders of the club were two retired generals and many artists, architects, engineers, doctors, lawyers, and merchants. Popović, 2001, pp. 218–219.

77 Popović, 1989, p. 114.

and the common goal of the members was formulated as ‘strong Serbism in a strong Yugoslavia’. If the tribal principle of federalisation were to be adopted, he believed that it would have to be implemented consistently, ‘if all Croats were to unite in one banovina (provinces into which Kingdom of Yugoslavia was subdivided), then all Serbs would also have to unite in one banovina’.

### **5.3. Criticism of the Cvetković – Maček agreement in 1939**

At the beginning of the Second World War, with the agreement of 26 August 1939 between the Prime Minister of the Yugoslav government, Dragiša Cvetković, and the leader of the Croatian Peasants’ Party, Vlatko Maček, the Banovina of Croatia, a new political reality emerged. Jovanović and the Serbian Cultural Club soon changed from a primarily cultural movement into a political one.<sup>78</sup> With this agreement, the Banovina of the Sava and Primorje, as well as the districts of Dubrovnik, Šid, Ilok, Brčko, Gradačac, Derвента, Travnik, and Fojnica, were merged into one banovina under the name Banovina of Croatia, with headquarters in Zagreb. All internal affairs were transferred to the jurisdiction of the Banovina of Croatia.<sup>79</sup> However, although the creators of the agreement presented it as necessary for the survival of the country in wartime circumstances, even the Croats were not satisfied with this solution. They demanded their own administration and the right to conduct politics on economic, judicial, administrative, and social affairs. They also demanded autonomy for the Bay of Kotor and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

There was also dissatisfaction among the Serbs, primarily because of the way in which the Agreement itself had been adopted, as well as regarding the territorial delimitation.<sup>80</sup> The Serbian Cultural Club became one of the biggest opponents of the Regulation on the Banovina of Croatia. They took issue with the following aspects of the Agreement: the dissolution of the Yugoslav parliament and the reorganisation of Yugoslavia without a clearer definition of the borders of Serbia, which made the greatest sacrifices for the creation of Yugoslavia; the territorial shaping of Croatia by applying unclear criteria, sometimes ethnic, sometimes historical, sometimes economic-geographical; and the (il)legitimacy of Dragiša Cvetković to represent the Serbs in the negotiations with the Croats.<sup>81</sup> According to Jovanović’s understanding, the creation of the Banovina of Croatia Hrvatska marked the start of the disintegration of the country, but the Serbian question remained unresolved.<sup>82</sup>

78 Ibid. p. 116.

79 The common ruler appointed the ban, Prince Pavle appointed a military volunteer from Thessaloniki, Ivan Šubašić to be the first viceroy. The new banovina included 4.400.000 inhabitants, of which 168.000 were Muslims and 866.000 were Serbs. Dimić, 2006, p. 509; Radojević, 1992, p. 66.

80 Čorović, 1997, pp. 447–448, 117; Ekmečić, 2017, p. 422.

81 Radojević, 1992, p. 66.

82 The first secretary of the Club, Vasa Čubrilović, parted ways with the Serbian Cultural Club due to criticism of the Agreement. His brother Branko Čubrilović, who then represented the Agricultural Party, entered the government of Dragiša Cvetković. Đorđević, 1994, p. 32; Stijović, 2004, p. 17; Boban, 1965, p. 249.

Jovanović's slogan 'Strong Serbia in a Strong Yugoslavia' should have been implemented by organising some kind of conference of distinguished Serbs who would consider solving the problem of the reorganisation of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. Jovanović called together people who advocated for integral Yugoslavism, as well as those who were openly against it. The president of the Serbian Royal Academy, Aleksandar Belić, Archimandrite Justin Popović, and Milan Grol, one of the leaders of the Democratic Party, joined the Serbian Cultural Club. There was also a youth section of the Serbian Cultural Club modelled after the members of the *United Youth of Serbia (Ujedinjene omladine srpske)* and *Young Bosnia (Mlada Bosna)*. Jovanović was more in favour of an organisation with supra-party intentions, while the younger part of the Serbian Cultural Club tended to form a political party. The goal was the delimitation of Serbian territories and the creation of a Serbian unit within the framework of Yugoslavia.<sup>83</sup>

#### **5.4. President and Minister of the Yugoslav Government-in-Exile 1942–1944**

Italy's attack on Greece on 28 October 1940 brought the war to the very border of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. For Slobodan Jovanović, this was sufficient to reduce the activity of the Serbian Cultural Club related to the Agreement. The external danger and the need to face the war as a united front pushed other issues into the background.<sup>84</sup> Yugoslavia's accession to the Tripartite Pact on 25 March 1941, although forced, caused enormous dissatisfaction primarily among the Serbian people, and especially in military and church circles. All this, with the considerable help of the external factor of Great Britain, resulted in mass demonstrations against the pact with Hitler and the military coup on 27 March 1941, which overthrew the Cvetković-Maček government. Testimonies in literature and journalism connected Jovanović with conspirators in military circles. Allegedly, at that time, Jovanović was also an advocate of cooperation with the USSR.<sup>85</sup>

After the German occupation of Yugoslavia, he escaped with the government first to Jerusalem and then in July 1941 to London. In early January 1941, due to disagreements in the government, General Dušan Simović was dismissed. Jovanović received a mandate from King Peter II on 1 January 1942, and all political parties were represented in his government. Jovanović's government introduced two innovations. The first was the appointment of the leader of the Ravna gora movement, Dragoljub Mihailović, as Minister of the Army, Air Force, and Navy. By the end of Jovanović's mandate as president of the refugee government, Mihailović was promoted first to divisional general, then to army general and head of the Supreme

83 In accordance with the new orientation, the newsletter of the club, the *Srpski glas* was launched from 16 November 1939 until 13 June 1940, when it was banned. After the military coup on March 27, 1941, only one issue of the newsletter came out again just to declare the support for the coup d'état. The owner and editor of the paper was Dragiša Vasić. Popović, 2003, pp. 222–223; Simić, 2006, p. 22.

84 Trkulja and Vučinić, 2009, p. 280.

85 Milikić, 2023, pp. 246–254.

Command. This appointment as minister was intended to strengthen Mihailović's position in Yugoslavia and speed up allied aid. Another novelty was the creation of the Prime Minister's Military Cabinet, headed by Major Živan Knežević.<sup>86</sup>

Jovanović's government supported Mihailović's substantial position that he would prefer to wait for the weakening of the occupiers and victory on major fronts before leading active resistance in order to avoid German reprisals against the civilian population. Otherwise, the programme of Mihailović's movement did not differ from the programme of the pre-war Serbian Cultural Club, headed by Jovanović, with its pro-Western orientation, anti-fascism, and anti-communism, and motto that 'strong Serbianism in a strong Yugoslavia'. The Ustaše genocide against the Serbs in Croatia reduced its Yugoslav base. German reprisals against the local population dissuaded him from openly resisting the occupier, while the growing partisan movement reinforced its anti-communist stance. Already in October 1941, upon the first news of Mihailović's uprising in the country, Jovanović said that the moment for the uprising was inopportune because of harsh German reprisals. In May 1942, Slobodan Jovanović expressly ordered Mihailović '*not to take premature actions due to useless and disproportionate casualties and terrible reprisals*'. However, this increased the risk that the resistance movement gathered around the communists would take over leadership from Mihailović. Therefore, Jovanović and his ministers failed to convince the Allies to provide significant material aid to Mihailović with their limited resources.

From 26 June to 10 August 1943, Jovanović held the position of Deputy Prime Minister in Miloš Trifunović's cabinet. When King Petar II, under the pressure of British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, decided to remove Prime Minister Božidar Purić and appoint Ivan Šubasić as Prime Minister, Professor Jovanović opposed this decision and resigned from the government. Then, during the summer of 1944, in accordance with the reason for which he was appointed, Šubasić soon concluded an agreement with Tito. The king and the new government then dismissed Mihailović from the position of Minister of Defense (August 1944) and invited his supporters in the country to join the People's Liberation Army of Yugoslavia led by Tito. Jovanović considered this act of King Peter II and of British politics a betrayal of Serbian national interests and a betrayal of the Yugoslav army in the homeland. According to him, this practically meant handing over power to the communists in Yugoslavia and betraying the four-year struggle.

### **5.5. Political exile and president of the Yugoslav People's Committee (YPC)**

As a prominent liberal and anti-communist, Jovanović remained in emigration after the war because of his convictions and thus repeated the fate of his father Vladimir. As the president of the government-in-exile after 1945, he found himself on the defeated side. Remaining faithful to the foundations and ideals of liberalism, he suffered condemnation and exile from the communist revolutionary

| 86 Ibid. pp. 255–272. |



authorities. In July 1946, at the trial of General Dragoljub Mihailović and a group of twenty-three persons in Belgrade, Slobodan Jovanović was sentenced in absentia by the Military Court 'to imprisonment with forced labour for twenty years, loss of political and certain civil rights for ten years, confiscation of all property and loss of citizenship'. He was convicted of 'treason and war crimes' even though he had spent the entire war in London as president or member of an internationally recognised government. Based on this verdict, a ban on the printing of his works was introduced in Yugoslavia. Even beforehand, without explanation, his name had disappeared from the list of academics in the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts Yearbook for 1945.<sup>87</sup> An attempt to publish his works in Belgrade during the 1980s was personally prevented by Slobodan Milošević, who held the influential position of president of the capital's communist organisation at the time, with the explanation that Jovanović was a Serbian nationalist.

Until his death, Jovanović continued to live in London in the modest and small Tudor Court Hotel. He continued his political activity through emigrant political associations and magazines. He was one of the most significant participants in the public life of the Yugoslav emigration and a contributor to numerous emigrant newspapers. In London in August 1945, he initiated the establishment of the *Yugoslav People's Committee*, with the aim of acting as the main organ of Yugoslav emigration. From September 1945 to the end of the 1950s, the Committee did not miss any significant opportunity in international relations without recalling 'the tragic case of Yugoslavia' under the communist dictatorship. As the supra-party organisation and the legitimate successor of the former emigrant government, it was made up of representatives of all political parties in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia that did not recognise the revolutionary communist government. The *Serbian People's Committee* (SPC) operated within the framework of the YPC, which recognised the YPC as a temporary representative body and subordinated to its leadership. Due to the Yugoslav character, but still with weak support in the ranks of the Slovenes and Croats, the Yugoslav committee was largely reduced to a Serbian organisation.<sup>88</sup> In addition to his political activity, in 1951, Jovanović was the initiator of the founding of *the Association of Serbian Writers in Exile*. In that Association, which organised monthly lectures, Jovanović spoke on the topics of Serbian history and literature.

The political activity of the Committee in unfavourable international circumstances with a bad material situation and emigrant organisations and associations

87 Cvetković, 2015, p. 338.

88 The founding members of the board were Slobodan Jovanović, president; Jovan Banjanin and Bogoljub Jevtić, vice president and member of the Main Board of the Yugoslav National Party; Većeslav Vilder, President of the Executive Committee of the Independent Democratic Party; Dr. Milan Gavrilović, president of the Serbian Agricultural Party, Radoje L. Knežević, member of the Executive Committee of the Democratic Party; Krsta Lj. Miletić and Miloš St. Bobić, members of the Executive Committee of the Radical Party. Later, three more members joined the board: 1948, Bećir Đonlagić, member of the Main Board of the Yugoslav Muslim Organization; 1952, Dr. Prvislav Grisogono and Frano Cvjetiša, well-known national workers. Jovanović, 1955; Bošković, 1971, pp. 110–115.

that were arguing with each other did not provide any serious results. The culmination of the action of these emigrant circles was represented by *the Memorandum of the Yugoslav Political Leaders* sent on 10 September 1945 to the conference of Allied Foreign Ministers in London. The memorandum, in addition to attacking the Provisional Government, called for the creation of a truly democratic all-party government that would organise free elections, as well as the sending of an allied military and civilian mission that would organise a non-political army and police force and monitor the elections. After that, the committee continued to address important institutions of the United Nations and the countries of Western Europe on various occasions and sent numerous petitions, memoranda, and appeals regarding the fate of Yugoslavia.<sup>89</sup> The backbone of the YPC platform was the following ideas: the fight against the communist regime; for democracy and the rule of law; preservation of free and federal Yugoslavia; and that the decision on the form of organisation of Yugoslavia (monarchy or republic) should be made after free elections at the Constituent Assembly.

Slobodan Jovanović published about sixty articles in the *Poruka*, the Committee's official newspaper, between December 1950 and December 1958. The authors of the articles in this newspaper were distinguished politicians, lawyers, academics, and university professors from the post-war Yugoslav emigration. His closest collaborators were Radoje Knežević as editor-in-chief of the newspaper and historian Kosta St. Pavlovic.<sup>90</sup> Through texts and public appearances, Jovanović focused his thoughts and research on the essential issues of democratic reconstruction and European reintegration of Yugoslav society and state after the Second World War. The focus of his analysis was on the possibilities of establishing a democratic legal state and the rule of law on the territory of Yugoslavia, as well as on the dangers of the strengthening of totalitarian forces in society, which would bring both Serbia and Yugoslavia to the brink of collapse.<sup>91</sup>

He died on Friday 12 December 1958, in his ninetieth year in London. He was buried in the Orthodox section of Kensal Green Cemetery in the north-west part of London. The Association of Serbian Writers in Exile erected a memorial plaque to Slobodan Jovanović in the Court Hotel in London, where he had lived from 1945 until his death in 1958. The fact that his books, despite the bans, were always read and highly valued speaks volumes about his work and reputation among the Serbian intelligentsia. He was rehabilitated first unofficially at the University and in the scientific public, and then in wider society. After many years of attempts to print his collected works, due to the unfavourable opinion of the communist authorities, twelve volumes were only printed in 1990. Even before the judicial rehabilitation in 2003, Jovanović's image appeared on the 5,000 dinars banknote.

89 Trkulja, 2020.

90 At the founding assembly, Jovanović was elected as honorary president, writer Miloš Crnjanski as president, and Miodrag Stajić as vice president. Popović, 2003, pp. 352–374.

91 Trkulja, 2020.

Finally, in 2007, Slobodan Jovanović was rehabilitated by the decision of the District Court in Belgrade, and the judgment by which he was sentenced to imprisonment and loss of honour was declared null and void. On 8 December 2011, his remains were transferred to Serbia, where they were buried in the Alley of Deserving Citizens at the New Cemetery in Belgrade. In November 2019, the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts organised an exhibition and a scientific meeting on the occasion of the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his birth.

## 6. Borislav Pekić (1930–1992) – nation and democracy

Borislav Pekić was born on 4 February 1930 in Podgorica (Montenegro) to father Vojislav D. Pekić and mother Ljubica, née Petrović, originally from Bavanište near Pančevo (Vojvodina). Through his grandmother on his mother's side, he also had Aromanian roots. His father, a former Montenegrin komita, was a high-ranking civil servant who had been head of the county before the Second World War and deputy head of the Zeta Banovina in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia.<sup>92</sup> Due to the father's civil service, the family often changed their place of residence. Demonstrations against the pact with Hitler and the military coup on 27 March 1941 found him in Cetinje. This was one of the first important historical events that he later remembered, seeing all the delusion of its protagonists. After the April War in 1941, the collapse of Yugoslavia, and the occupation of Montenegro, Vojislav's father, then head of the department of the Zeta Banovina, was expelled by the Italian fascists. The family moved to Bavanište near Pančevo (Banat, Vojvodina). The German authorities in Banat offered Vojislav a position as a former civil servant, but he resolutely refused.

Borislav was popular among his friends in school and was given the nickname 'Štrk' (Stork) because he was extremely tall. He was also known for being an avid reader.<sup>93</sup> One of Pekić's first childhood traumas was his confrontation with communist revolutionary terror and the vindictive justice of the liberators. This was materialised in the shooting of German families (Volksdeutsche) at the location of the *Konjsko groblje* (Horse Cemetery) in Bavanište after the liberation on 20 October 1944. These terrible events, as well as his later imprisonment under the communist regime, left a strong impression on fourteen-year-old Pekić. He was forever formed as a rebel and a fighter for freedom against all types of totalitarianism.<sup>94</sup>

92 Interview with Ljiljana Pekić, Belgrade, May, 2006; Cvetkovic, 2020, p. 7.

93 Unpublished material of the publicist Ljubomir Boškov from Bavanište in the possession of the author.

94 'When the Deliblato partisan detachment marched into Bavanište with a limping, mustachioed commander. They picked up most of the native Germans and imprisoned them in the school. Among them were those to whom the Serbs owed a lot. A hundred half-naked men and women, tied by two wires, descended into the ravine and sank into the fog. Commander D. R raised the machine gun and fired the first burst into the ravine. The soldiers fired after him. The killed disappeared in the fog. Among the killed Germans from the village was E.D., the little girl I loved..'. Pekić, II, 1991, p. 278; Cvetković, 2020, p. 10.

### 6.1. *Early political activism and imprisonment*

After the liberation in 1945, the family moved and settled in Belgrade. He attended the Third Men's Grammar School, where he joined various illegal youth opposition groups. On the eve of the November 1945 elections, he engaged in anti-communist actions of the democratic opposition centred around Milan Grol and the Democratic Party. Activities were reduced to propaganda actions, distribution of the *Demokratija* newspaper, agitation and the like. Pekić and most of his radical young comrades considered even the symbolic presence of the opposition in the assembly in 1945 as collaboration. They thought that this was giving the necessary legitimacy to the revolutionary government before the international community. The actions of the democratic youth met with a fierce reaction from the fanatical members of the League of Communist Youth of Yugoslavia who kept a watchful eye on any potential 'enemy of the people'. They publicly burned the only opposition newspaper, *Demokratija*, and the colporteurs, among whom was the young Borislav Pekić at the time, were often beaten. Finally, on 8 November 1945, after the seventh issue, the typographical workers did not refuse to print Democracy as a 'treasonous' paper.<sup>95</sup>

Everything that was not in accordance with the People's Front was labeled as treacherous and hostile. The electoral climate before the elections with the 'blind ballot box' was more like a wartime one than a democratic one. The campaign ahead of the assembly on 11 November 1945 and the purge of those who were supposed to be obstacles to the establishment of a revolutionary order began in the fall of 1944 under wartime conditions through proscriptions, arrests, or murders of almost all sympathisers of the old 'unpopulist regime'. The united opposition, which included the young Pekić, refused to participate in the act of legalisation of the party's dictatorship. Thus, on 20 September 1945, it called for a boycott and non-recognition of the elections.

At the beginning of 1946, in the grammar school Pekić attended, he was the victim of a mass action of 'defascisation' by 'reactionary elements' among the students, which was carried out by young members of the League of Communist Youth of Yugoslavia. At that time, throughout Serbia, hundreds of 'reactionary' students were either tortured or expelled from secondary schools and grammar schools.<sup>96</sup> 'Defascisation' seemed to have the opposite effect with Pekić. With his group as a student, and then from 1948, as a student of art history, he continued

95 *'We have the freedom to strike. As far as I know, the workers went on strike because the newspaper attacked and insulted the trade unions. There was a lot of illegality in that paper. The workers felt that they should not print that paper. They have the right to strike and we cannot interfere... Besides, it proves that workers are our subjects, explained Josip Broz Tito'*. Koštunica and Čavoški, 1983, p. 74.

96 *'I don't remember what my indictment consisted of. I mean, among other things, it included in my open attacks on Marxism in classes and propaganda against the actions of the National Youth, but the most important was my editorship of the grammar school wall newspaper'*. Pekić, 1991, pp. 329–331.

to be even more politically active during 1946-1948, both in Belgrade and in the surroundings of Pančevo and Bavanište.<sup>97</sup> The group mainly reduced its activities to propaganda-intelligence work. Such groups were made up of extremely young fanatic idealists who were predominantly of national and democratic origins. Most were the sons of civil families who did not want to come to terms with the new situation, despising the anemic nature of the citizenry and the civil political elite. Pupil and student groups were arrested and severely punished. This was especially true in the period immediately after the end of the 1945-46 war, and during the conflict with the Cominform, when the regime felt threatened.<sup>98</sup> In addition to the illegal youth groups, many opposition leaders and ordinary citizens were targeted by the regime as political or class enemies.

Borislav Pekić was one of the founders and secretary of the *League of Democratic Youth of Yugoslavia (LDYY)*, an illegal youth opposition political organisation. This group of twenty-eight young people who were mostly from Belgrade was active in secondary schools and at the University. It sought to be an alternative to the United League of Anti-Fascist Youth of Yugoslavia, which was controlled by the communists. The programme of the LDYY stated that '*Yugoslavia has become a slave of a bloody government*' and called on the membership to create a '*spirit of rebellion and resistance*', and to '*prepare for the fight against communism with the help of Western democratic states*'. Pekić drew up the Statute according to which the duty of LDYY members, was, among other things, to tirelessly prepare for the idealist – and even, if necessary, armed – struggle against communism by all means. Communism was defined in the programme as an authoritarian movement devoid of a social dimension: '*capitalism exploits the worker in the name of the exploiter's greed, communism exploits the worker in the name of improving the workers' existence*'.<sup>99</sup>

Members of the LDYY were arrested in November 1948 and sentenced to long-term imprisonment. The prosecutor accused them of using violent means to overthrow the existing order, and even demanded the death penalty for some of the defendants.<sup>100</sup> The trial of nineteen-year-old Borislav Pekić and members of the LDYY before the District Court for the city of Belgrade was held between 5-8 May 1949. Twelve young people, most of whom were grammar school students, were sentenced to up to 122 years in prison. Borislav Pekić was sentenced to fifteen years in prison. The difficult time of foreign political tension surrounding the resolution of the Cominform and the split between the Yugoslav communists and Stalin led to much more drastic punishments than usual.<sup>101</sup>

97 Pekić, 1991, pp. 51-82; Testimony and unpublished material of publicist Ljubomir Boškov from Bavanište, May 8, 2007.

98 After the liberation, opposition groups of young people were found in almost every major city in Serbia. Groups of young idealists were falling one after the other (Tonus, Kružok, Dors, Plava Pantljika, Beli Orlovi...); Cvetković, 2020, pp. 28-29.

99 Pekić, 1991, II, pp. 51-82.

100 Danilović, 1993, p. 125.

101 See more in: Pekić, 1991; Cvetković, 2015, pp. 349-350; Danilović, 1991, pp. 125-130.

Borislav Pekić served more than five years as a political prisoner. On 12 August 1949, he came to the Sremska Mitrovica penitentiary to serve his sentence. For one month, he was placed in a cell without a ray of light, in total darkness, completely alone, on bare concrete. In difficult prison conditions and overcrowded prison cells, he fell seriously ill. He was then transferred to the Niš prison hospital, until the great amnesty on 1 December 1953. Prison life had forever damaged his health, giving him permanent lung disease.<sup>102</sup> His three-volume novel ‘Godine koje su pojeli skakvci’ (*The Years the Locusts have Devoured*), inspired by this suffering, is the story of Serbian prison society during the revolution and the chronicle of the downfall of parliamentary democracy. During his stay in the Niš penitentiary, Pekić also ‘killed time’ by reading. He was a kind of prison screenwriter-playwright and staged prison plays. Despite his illness, he never wrote pleas for pardon. After the death of Joseph Vissarionovich Stalin on Republic Day 1953, as a sign of a new, more liberal course, the communist authorities boasted of the largest amnesty of convicts in history. Thousands of prisoners and inmates left the prison, and Borislav Pekić was pardoned.<sup>103</sup>

### 6.2. On ‘gifted freedom’

Borislav Pekić spent the years after his release from prison in a sort of self-isolation. He devoted himself to reading, introspection, writing, and studying psychology in a frenetic attempt to make up for his years in prison and his violently interrupted youth. He remained obsessed with his concept of ‘gifted freedom’,<sup>104</sup> which encompassed the nature of totalitarian regimes and the way in which free individuals or members of the bourgeois class get by in them. Shortly after being released from prison, he enrolled in experimental psychology studies in the group of criminology at the Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade. He only reached the third year and dropped out after being disappointed with the professor and the method of work at the university although, according to his contemporaries, he was one of the best students, well-liked among his company and finished the year with the highest

102 Đokić Velimir, *Robijanje demokrate, književnika i akademika Pekića*, manuscript, p. 182.

103 One detail during his release from prison in the Niš penitentiary clearly outlines Pekić’s character and unshakable moral views. At the prison gate after five years of imprisonment, he was offered a selection of pens to choose from. However, the principled Pekić stubbornly insisted, even then, in front of the prison door, that he needed his own pen. Interview of Borislav Pekić on Radio Studio B 1988, audio recording in the possession of the author.

104 Years after his release from prison, Pekić himself defined his status as a respected writer and former political convict in an unfree society as follows: ‘*Gradually, even in the company of high-ranking officials, whom I was faced by the misfortune of a public call, I acquired freedoms for myself that are not allowed to people of my kind and past. I was proud of my success until I understood that it humiliated me more than silence. Because those freedoms were granted, fleeting, temporary. Always ready to be denied. They did not originate from my civil status, but from a privileged position, which was generously granted to me by someone else’s arbitrary decision*’. Pekić, II, 1991, p. 365.

average grade.<sup>105</sup> At the same time, he wrote and published in magazines under the pseudonyms Borislav, Dimitrije, and Adam Petrović.<sup>106</sup>

After leaving the Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade, from 1958 to 1964, he worked part-time as a playwright and screenwriter in the film industry. He was a noted author of several film scripts. For a time, he worked at the *Lovćen Film*, where he was a synopsis writer, screenwriter, and playwright of several notable productions. He received awards at competitions for the film synopses *Gubavac* (The Leper) and *Odavde do Ararata* (*From Here to Ararat*). In 1958, he received an award for his screenplay for the film *Jedrenjak zvani nada* (*A Sailer Called Hope*), and in 1961 for Zdravko Velimirović's film *Dan 14*. (*The Fourteenth Day*), which was presented in Cannes.<sup>107</sup> In the early 1960s, he also tried his hand as an actor, playing a doctor in the comedy *Ne diraj u sreću* (*Do Not Touch Luck*) (1961) directed by Milo Đukanović. He wrote studiously, preparing for years and carefully studying his characters and subject matter. He devised the concept for his historical novel *The Golden Fleece* over fifteen years. For his novel *Pilgrimage of Arsenije Njegovan*, he 'overturned' an entire library of books on architecture and construction. He said that he had read the Bible more than a hundred times and knew it almost by heart.

His first novel, *Times of Miracles*, was published in 1965 and aroused great interest among the general reading public.<sup>108</sup> At the same time, he was a regular signer of petitions, appeals, and a participant in demonstrations in defense of artistic and human freedoms in Yugoslavia. During 1968–1969, at the time of student demonstrations and the Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia, as a member of the editorial board of the liberal paper *Književne novine*, he was interrogated and detained by the police and courts.<sup>109</sup> The eternal rebel did not stay away from the student demonstrations in 1968. Although he ideologically disagreed with the goals of the protest, he had no qualms that young people should be supported against the communist dictatorship and single-mindedness.<sup>110</sup>

### 6.3. London Years

Due to the constant pressure he faced from the communist regime, Pekić and his wife Ljiljana left for London in the early seventies. Right before his trip to London, his passport was confiscated, so for the whole year, until he received the NIN award for the novel *Pilgrimage by Arsenije Njegovan*, he was under police investigation and separated from his family.<sup>111</sup> His passport had been confiscated due to his critical

105 Interview with Ljiljana Pekić, May 2006.

106 Interview with Ljiljana Pekić, May 2006.

107 Pekić, 1991, III, p. 42.

108 Based on this work in 1989, a film of the same name by director Goran Paskaljević was shot, who was later a notable Yugoslav representative at the Cannes Film Festival.

109 Cvetkovic, 2020, pp. 69–76.

110 Ibid. p. 76.

111 Biografija Borislava Pekića [Online]. Available at: <http://www.borislavpekić.com/> (Accessed: Day Month 2023).

views on the communist regime, which he expressed privately most often in homes and Belgrade taverns, signing anti-regime petitions and criticising constitutional amendments.<sup>112</sup> In the motley spectrum of the internal enemy, Pekić was classified and monitored by the State Security Service as a ‘Serbian right-wing’ and a ‘Serbian nationalist’ due to his anti-communist views and attitude towards the Montenegrin issue.<sup>113</sup>

Escaping the secret police and political persecution, in the peace of his London home far from the boiling Balkan pot, he wrote his best works.<sup>114</sup> Even in emigration, he was sensitive to any human violations in Yugoslavia, especially those regarding artistic freedoms. Thus, after learning that the writer Ivan Ivanović had been sentenced for his work *Crveni kralj* (*The Red King*), he wrote the Association of Writers of Serbia to request their support.<sup>115</sup>

At the end of the seventies, he signed with the Nolit (publishing house) to publish the book *Kako upokojiti vampira* (*How to Kill a Vampire*), but soon the contract was canceled. Likewise, the Serbian Literary Cooperative refused to print plays, because he was a politically unsuitable emigrant. The big issue was his candidacy for admission to PEN. Only after returning to the country, when he was already a famous writer, he was elected vice-president of the Serbian PEN Centre, as well as a member of the board of the Association of Writers of Serbia. At the beginning of the 1980s, although he was mostly occupied with creation in London, he supported various petitions that were then often organised by various committees and individuals in Belgrade for the sake of defending the freedom of thought and expression of artists and public officials in Serbia and Yugoslavia. He belonged ideologically to the oppositional dissident scene that formed in Belgrade in the 1980s after Tito’s death.<sup>116</sup>

As a democrat, devoid of any narrow-mindedness, he had close literary and friendly ties with ideologically different people. However, as an intellectual in Serbia, he was often the target of criticism from opposing ideological sides.<sup>117</sup> In the mid-eighties, Pekić was at the height of his creative oeuvre and was a recognised writer. With the genre novel *Besnilo* (*Rabies*) (1983), along with the *Golden Fleece* and *The Years the Locusts have Devoured* (1991), his works were included in the selection of the ten best novels in Serbian literature from 1982 to 1991, as chosen by readers. He became a corresponding member of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts from 1985, vice president of the PEN Centre Belgrade, member of the PEN Centre

112 Interview with Ljiljana Pekić, May 2006.

113 *Assessment of the actions of the internal enemy and foreign intelligence services in Serbia according to the material of the Republic Secretariate of Internal Affairs from 10.01 1972*, AY (Archive of Yugoslavia), 837, CPR (Cabinet of the President of the Republic) II-5-d, box 202.

114 Biografija Borislava Pekića, 2023.

115 Audio-document: *Intervju Borislava Pekića sa Dragim Stojadinovićem*, London 1974. – in the possession of the author.

116 More about the dissident scene in Yugoslavia in the eighties: Dragovic-Soso, 2004; Cvetković, 2007.

117 Pekić, 2002, pp. 9–10.



London, and a part-time commentator of the Serbo-Croatian section of the BBC in London. He was a member of the Association of Writers of Serbia and of the Association of Film and Drama Artists of Serbia. In the early nineties, he became a member of the Crown Council.

#### ***6.4. Political ideas and practice***

After he returned to the country at the time of the restoration of multi-partyism in Serbia, Pekić committed himself to the restoration of the work of the Democratic Party to which he had belonged as a young man. During 1990, he was one of the founders, vice president, and member of the Main Board of the Democratic Party.<sup>118</sup> At the Founding Assembly of the Democratic Party, on 2 February 1990, Pekić's position as vice president was undisputed. Regarding the programme of the party, he believed that the Democratic Party should be a modern civic party of the centre. In addition to advocating for a market economy, they would fight for a return to the modern form of capitalism, with built-in social corrections commensurate with the country's material capabilities. His ideological and political views were closest to the political centre: 'democracy and nation – yes, democracy or nation – no'. He was a great opponent of political extremes, but he also said that

being a democrat and not being an anti-communist is the same as being a gourmet and not liking to eat [...] I was brought up as a democrat. I strive to behave like a democrat and to overcome innate, human, totalitarian, I would almost say anthropologically given anti-democratic traits stemming from selfishness, lust for power, vanity and bad experience with people.<sup>119</sup>

#### ***6.5. Pekić's ideas about democracy and European integration***

Pekić wrote a series of political essays, many of which have not been published. He believed that without political freedom, there is neither civil nor national freedom. Thus, political freedom is the foundation of all other freedoms. Civil freedom is a reasonable return of a part of the right ceded to the community. This reciprocal and pervasive relationship best defines his understanding of the nation and democracy. Freedom, he believed, cannot be denied even in the name of national interests, because freedom is the supreme national interest, without which the others are null and void. In democracy, as the most tolerable form of all in principle intolerable social systems, we can live together as people, as citizens, and as a nation. In them, we can reconcile disparate personal, group, national, and all other different interests to which we, as humans, are irrevocably condemned.

Like Nostradamus, he made many predictions in his novels that do not seem impossible today. His works present an apocalyptic vision of the world in which man becomes a slave to technology and a new totalitarianism in which the world

118 Pekić and Pantić, 2002, p. 35.

119 Pekić, 1993, pp. 41–43.

is on the brink of destruction, always at war and fiercely divided.<sup>120</sup> Pekić's political vision saw Serbia as a democratic country (with free elections, proportional electoral system) with tolerance that implies respect for different opinions and the dignity of minorities. He advocated for the transfer of power from the office of the President of the Republic to the National Assembly, as well as for media freedom and full public control over the work of all political bodies of the state. He was a great opponent of socialist utopias and all kinds of repression and political violence. In his mature years, Pekić – probably under the impression of the orderly British monarchy in which he had lived for a long time, but also with a deeper acquaintance with Serbian tradition – came closer and closer to the idea of restoring the Monarchy in Serbia. Although he was not an ardent monarchist, guided by political pragmatism and realism, as a great connoisseur of Serbian history and tradition, he believed that the constitutional monarchy was most in line with the Serbian political tradition. However, he believed that this change should only take place if it was desired by the people as expressed in a referendum. He did not approach the monarchy unequivocally, emotionally, or fanatically: he saw it only as a means of establishing democracy in Serbia, reconciling the traditional and modern in the Serbian being, and integrating Serbia into the European political space.

Precisely for rational reasons, he advocated wider European and Balkan integration as a civilisational step forward, towards peaceful coexistence on the continent of all peoples, while overcoming differences and preserving different religions and cultures. For him, the nation is a house in which freedom, order, and tolerance must be established for all individuals and groups and their various interests. In the same way, he viewed European integration as a way to overcome centuries-old divisions and recognise different interests and disputes that were the causes of bloody wars during the 20<sup>th</sup> century and earlier. Within the nation, therefore, democracy reconciles the various interests of citizens, and through European integration, the various interests of peoples within the European continent should be reconciled.

For Pekić, the idea of democracy and the European Union is not the promised paradise, but only the least bad of all possible solutions for the peace and progress of humanity and the Serbian nation within it. Even with his characteristic humour and scepticism, he noticed how many former communists and Bolsheviks, after the fall of the Berlin Wall, now Manicheanly reached out with such zeal for democracy and Europeanism that they excluded all doubt and all criticism in the same way as they had defended the Bolshevik ideology before.<sup>121</sup> Pekić himself, on the contrary, remained reserved and critical of all ideologies, but clearly and unequivocally rejected political extremes and totalitarianism, against which he fought his whole life and paid a high price.

120 Ibid. pp. 276-278.

121 Pekić, 1993, pp. 41-42.

### 6.6. *Death and life after death*

At the end of the 1980s, caught in a wave of revolutions, Eastern European communist regimes began to fall one after another. During the March demonstrations in Belgrade in 1991, even though he was already old and quite ill, Pekić felt that he belonged on the street, with the youth and people who honestly and unreservedly fought against the authoritarian regime of Slobodan Milošević. The eternally young man and rebel, together with many intellectuals, found himself again on the streets of Belgrade on the same task as in 1945 in the fight for freedom. He gave interviews, worked to unify the opposition and harshly attacked the regime, demanding that members of the Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences support the students and their demands for political freedom. He went on protest walks, clashed with the police in the Takovska street and received several blows with a police baton. He began his conscious life, fighting for freedom on the streets of Belgrade, as a colporteur of the *Demokratija* newspaper and in the same way, and ended it almost half a century later: *'the only rebellion I missed was the one from 1954 and I'm sorry, I just got out of prison and I didn't know about it and I can't make up for it anymore [...]*' he wittily noted in an interview.<sup>122</sup>

In the last days of his life, he devoted himself to politics, seeking the immediate application of the moralistic principles of criticism, which had marked his life and creative literary work. At the end of 1991, as a civil intellectual, he agreed to be a candidate for deputy on the list of the Democratic Party in Rakovica, a working-class suburb of Belgrade. His defeat by the nationalist demagogue Vojislav Šešelj seemed to symbolically announced the decline and ten-year ruin of Serbian society. He edited the newspaper *Demokratija*, which inherited the tradition of the banned Democratic Party newsletter from 1945, of which he was a colporteur in his childhood. He tried in interviews and columns to have a sobering effect on the consciousness of the Serbian people with words and ideas. In the midst of that struggle, in which it seemed that he still had something to give, he was overcome by an illness that he persistently dealt with throughout his life. Borislav Pekić died on 2 July 1992 in London. He was buried in the Alley of Meritorious Citizens at the New Cemetery in Belgrade.

He received many honours and recognitions posthumously. It can be said that his importance and reputation and influence in society grows with the passage of time. His Royal Highness Crown Prince Aleksandar Karađorđević awarded Borislav Pekić with the Royal Order of the Double-Headed White Eagle, First Class. His wife, architect Ljiljana Pekić, and daughter Aleksandra, important supports in his life, today live in Belgrade and diligently organise and publish his legacy and unfinished works for the press. The *Pekićeva nagrada* (Pekić Award) was also established, which today represents one of the most prestigious awards in the field of literature. On 1 and 2 July 2000, the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts in Belgrade held a scientific meeting on the occasion of the seventieth anniversary of

122 Pekić and Pantić, 2002, p. 56.

the birth of Borislav Pekić. In recent decades, some streets and schools in Belgrade have been named after him, exhibitions about Pekić's life have been organised and documentary films have been shot. His image is on postage stamps. More recently, he even appeared in a video of the American embassy in Belgrade, which tries to emphasise Serbian patriotism and Europeanism in Pekić as a man of great reputation in Serbian society.

Borislav Pekić was officially judicially rehabilitated by the decision of the High Court in Belgrade on 17 December 2007. The fate of Borislav Pekić as a dissident, freedom fighter and political prisoner was discussed at the exhibition 'In the name of the people' in 2014, which was installed in the Historical Museum of Serbia in Belgrade. He received a memorial bust in the courtyard of the Third Men's Grammar School (2009) and the street where he lived was named after him (2012). Finally, in 2016, on the initiative of the Borislav Pekić foundation, a monument to him was unveiled on 2 March 2016, on the Cvetni trg in the centre of Belgrade.<sup>123</sup>

## Conclusion

The role of the Serbian theoreticians to Central-European intellectual traditions was presented through the most characteristic features of their biographies. The context in which the first Serbian intellectuals operated, at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, implied semi-independent principality and heavy-handed local government. One of the key results of this situation was that the issue of national liberation and unification was placed as the ultimate priority. However, the fates of Vladimir Jovanović and Svetozar Miletić show that the issue of citizens' liberties was not forgotten and that it was seen as inseparable from the resolution of the national question. Dimitrije Mitrinović's case was similar, though it differed: for him, the boundaries of the Balkans or even Central Europe seemed too limited. He was inspired by his visions of a united Europe but also a modern type of individualism.

Struggles for individual rights and cooperation with neighbours of other nations were often without much chance for success. Serbia was primarily focused on achieving full independence and basic security. As shown by the views of the conservative Ilija Garašanin, for many in Serbia, insiting on the powers of an Assembly or Law were 'naïve novelties'. Nevertheless, the liberals did establish the foundations upon which later generations were able to continue their work. This was the case with Slobodan Jovanović and Borislav Pekić; these men reached new heights in the intellectual development of the Serbian and Yugoslav elite and operated in a much broader, Yugoslav, context. Nevertheless, they were the witnesses of Yugoslavia's numerous crises and eventually of the state's downfall. Slobodan Jovanović's aims at reforming the country failed, and he had to experience all the

123 Interview with Ljiljanom Pekić, Beograd, May 2006.

biterness of the Second World War. However, Borislav Pekić also experienced personal problems due to his writing. After returning to the country as a recognised writer, he became involved in politics. He was the founder and vice president of the Democratic Party, an ideologist and advocate of democratic Serbia in the European family. It can be said that this very concept was built on foundations that were at least in part placed by Ilija Garašanin, Vladimir Jovanović, Svetozar Miletić, Dimitrije Mitrinović, and Slobodan Jovanović.

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